Homilies on Psalms

Jerome (c. AD 347–420)

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Homily 1, on Psalm 1

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). The Psalter is like a great house, which has one outer key on the door, but within, in its various chambers, has its own keys. Although the one broader key of the great door is the Holy Spirit, nevertheless each single chamber has its own little keys. If, then, someone were to throw the keys of the house down in confusion, and wanted to open a chamber, he cannot unless he finds the key: so the individual psalms are like individual little cells, each having its own keys. And so the great door of this house is the first psalm, which begins thus:

Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly. Some think that the key of this psalm should be applied to the person of Christ our Lord: so that this blessed man, according to his humanity, is Christ. Good will, indeed, but it is inexperience. For if the blessed man is Christ, and Christ gave the law, how is it now said of Christ, But his will is in the law of the Lord? Then, how is he compared to another tree, and it is said, And he shall be like the tree which is planted beside the running waters? For if he is compared to a tree, and everything that is compared is less than that to which it is compared; then the tree will be greater than the Lord, who is compared to the tree. You see, therefore, that the psalm cannot be interpreted of the person of the Lord, but is spoken generally of the just man. Although many think it was said of Joseph, the one from Arimathea, who did not walk in the counsel of the Jews, and stood not in the way of sinners, and sat not in the seat of the Pharisees: nevertheless what others interpret specifically of him, we interpret generally of the just man.

Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly. We read in Genesis that Adam was cursed, when it is said: ’Cursed is the earth in your works.’ The first curse of man, therefore, is now dissolved by a blessing. As in the old law one blessing is set down: but in the Gospel eight blessings together are pronounced. Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly. Blessed man — not ”human being,” but ”man,” who has come to the perfect man, Christ. Who

has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly. He has described three general sins of men. For we either think, or do, or teach. First we think; then, when we have thought, we turn the thought into deeds: when we have done something, an increase (auxesis) has now been made, so that we teach others what we ourselves had done. Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, who did not think evil: and stood not in the way of sinners, who did not do evil: and sat not in the seat of pestilence, that is, who did not even teach others. And sat not in the seat of pestilence. And stood not in the way of sinners. It is difficult for anyone not to sin. Indeed John the evangelist also says that whoever denies that he has committed sin is lying, and is a liar.

If, then, we all sin, how does he now say, And stood not in the way of sinners? If we all sin, and no one is blessed except him who has not sinned; then, because we all sin, no one is blessed. But see what he says, And stood not in the way of sinners. He did not say, blessed is the man who has not sinned, but blessed is the man who has not persevered in sin. And stood not in the way of sinners. I sinned yesterday, I am not blessed. If I do not stand in the sin, but withdraw myself, I am now blessed. And sat not in the seat of pestilence. Just as there he said ”stood,” so here also he said ”sat”: just as there the man who has not persevered in sin is blessed, so here the man who has not persevered in evil teaching and sat, is blessed. What then? You yourselves see how blessedness is granted in three ways: if we do not think evils, if we do not persevere in sin, if we do not teach the things that are evil. This is what the prophet also says: ’For three and four sins I will not turn her back, says the Lord.’ And he says this eight times. Now Amos speaks this, that is: you thought, I pardoned: you did it, I pardoned: you did not do penance, I pardoned: were you obliged even to teach evils?

This is what is said, For three and four sins I will not be angry with you, says the Lord.

And in his law he shall meditate day and night. He named three things which he ought not to do: not to walk in the counsel of the ungodly, and not to stand in the way of sinners, and not to sit in the seat of pestilence. He named three things which we ought not to do: he names two things which we ought to do. For it is not enough for us to flee evils, unless we attain to goods. But his will is in the law of the Lord. He did not say ”fear,” but ”will”: for many act out of fear, but the fear of the one acting has no reward. But his will is in the law of the Lord, that he may wish to do what the Lord has commanded. And in his law he shall meditate day and night. Speech cannot unfold how much the mind conceives. But his will is in the law of the Lord. Someone may say: Behold, I wish to do the law of God, therefore I am blessed because I wish it. But see what follows: it is not enough to will the law of God, but to meditate in his law day and night. He shall meditate day and night.

Someone may say: This human nature does not bear; for one must walk, and drink, and eat, and sleep, and the things necessary for life must be procured.

How then shall he meditate on the law of God day and night, especially since the apostle says: 'Praying without ceasing'? Can I pray at the time when I am sleeping? Meditation on the law, then, is not in reading, but in doing. Indeed it is said in another place: 'Whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all in the name of the Lord.' If I hold out alms, I meditate on the law of God: if I visit the sick, my feet meditate on the law of God: if I do the things that are commanded, what others meditate with the mouth, I meditate with the body. The Jews, therefore, meditate with the mouth: our meditation is work. He named, then, three things which we ought not to do, he named two things which we ought to do: he who has done this, of what reward is he worthy?

And he shall be like the tree which is planted beside the running waters, which shall give its fruit in its season, and its leaf shall not fall off. Many interpret it simply, and say thus: Just as a tree, if it is planted next to the waters, must needs be green, and is not dried up, because its roots have moisture whereby they live: so whoever meditates on the law of God, the meditation on the law itself makes greenness and life for him. This they interpret simply: but we, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and reading that in paradise was planted the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and that this tree of life was planted in paradise, and that from paradise itself goes forth a fountain which is divided into four heads... We read also in Solomon, if it please anyone to receive the book, for there he speaks of wisdom (Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God): therefore where Solomon says 'It is a tree of life to all who lay hold of her,' there it is said of wisdom. But if wisdom is the tree of life, and wisdom itself is Christ: you see, then, that he who is the blessed and holy man is compared to this tree, that is, to wisdom. You see, then, that this just and blessed man, who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, who did not do those things, and did these things, shall be like the tree which is planted beside the running waters, that is, he shall be like Christ; since indeed 'he has made us sit together in the heavens, and reign together.' You see, then, that we shall reign with Christ in heaven. You see that this tree is planted in paradise, and we all are planted together with him.

And he shall be like the tree which is planted beside the running waters. For from that fountain proceed all the rivers. Which shall give its fruit in its season. This tree does not give fruit at every time, but in its season. This tree does not give in the present age, but in the future, that is, on the day of judgment. This tree now has flowers, this tree now buds, and promises fruits to come. This tree has two things: it has both fruits, and it has leaves. The fruit has the meaning in the Scriptures; the leaves, the simple words. The fruit is in the meaning, the leaves indeed are in the words. Whoever, then, reads the holy Scriptures, if he reads according to the Jews,

he understands only the leaves; but if he understands spiritually, he takes the fruit. And its leaf shall not fall off. Nevertheless the leaves also of this tree are useful. Indeed if anyone understands even according to the history, he has profit for his soul. We read in the Apocalypse of John (that the book is not received in these provinces, yet we ought to know that in all the West, and in the other Phoenician provinces, and in Egypt, the book is received, and is ecclesiastical:

for the ancient ecclesiastical men also, among whom are Irenaeus, and Polycarp, and Dionysius, and the other Roman interpreters, among whom is also holy Cyprian, receive the book and interpret it) — we read there, then: 'And behold,' he says, 'I saw a throne set, and one lamb, and a tree,' he says, 'beside the river, and on each part of the bank the tree itself': that is, it was on this part, and it was on that part. 'And it had,' he says, 'fruits, that tree, and in the year, in each single month, it brought forth fruit twelve times. And it had,' he says, 'leaves, and its leaves were for the healing of the nations.' I saw, he says, one throne set. For although we believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and there is a Trinity, nevertheless the kingdom is one. I saw, he says, one throne set. And I saw, he says, in the sight of the throne one lamb standing. It is said of the Savior's assumption of a body. 'Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world.' And there went forth, he says, a fountain from beneath the midst of the throne. You see, then, that from the midst of the throne goes forth a fountain of graces. Nevertheless that fountain does not go forth from the throne, unless the lamb has stood over against it: for unless we believe the incorporation of Christ, we do not receive these graces.

And a tree, he says, one lofty tree was set. He did not say trees, but one tree. If it is one tree, how is it on this part of the bank, and on that part of the bank? For if he had said, I saw trees, it could be that some were on one part, and others on another. But now one tree is said to be on each part. One river goes forth from the throne of God, that is the grace of the Holy Spirit; and this grace of the Holy Spirit is in the holy Scriptures, that is, in that river of the Scriptures. Nevertheless that river has two banks, both the old and the new testament; and on each part the planted tree is Christ. This tree, then, in the year, that is, in each single month, brought forth fruit twelve times. For we cannot receive fruits from that tree, except through the apostles. If anyone, then, comes to the tree through the apostles, he must needs receive fruits, reap fruit from the holy Scriptures, that is, the divine meaning dwelling in the letter. If anyone, then, comes to that tree through the apostles, as we have said, he takes its fruit; but if anyone has not been able to, he is still weaker, and is not yet a disciple, but is of the crowd, but is from outside, is of the nations.

This man, because he cannot take the fruit, let him take the words, that is, the leaves for the healing of the nations; for it is written, And its leaves for the healing

of the nations. If anyone is still of the nations, if anyone is not a disciple, and is still of the crowd, let this man receive its leaves, that is, let him receive the simple words as a medicine. Indeed it is written, And its leaves for the healing of the nations, that is, for medicine. Why have we said all this, and digressed to the Apocalypse? Because it is written, Which shall give its fruit in its season, and its leaf shall not fall off, and all things whatsoever he shall do shall prosper.

We have spoken of the blessedness of the just man, we have spoken of his reward, that he who has not done three things, and has done two things, is compared to the tree of paradise, that is, to Christ the wisdom. We have spoken, then, of the holy man; now on the contrary let us see what is said of the sinner and of the ungodly. Not so the ungodly. All those kinds of rewards, which we have said of the just, the ungodly shall not receive. Not so the ungodly. He did not say, not so the sinners: for if he had said ”of sinners,” we were all estranged. Not so the ungodly. Between the ungodly and the sinner there is this difference: he who is ungodly denies God; he who is a sinner confesses and sins. Not so the ungodly. In some copies it is read a second time, Not so the ungodly, not so: but let us know that in the Hebrew it is set down once. We have spoken of the holy man and of his comparison, And he shall be like the tree which is planted beside the running waters. Now on the contrary it is said of the ungodly. Just as the just man is compared to a tree; so the ungodly is compared to dust. He who is just is compared to the tree of paradise; but he who is ungodly is compared to dust, which the wind casts forth from the face of the earth.

Dust, although it is of the earth, nevertheless has ceased to be earth. But like the dust which the wind casts forth from the face of the earth. See what is said: so wretched will the ungodly be, that he is not even earthly dust. He seems indeed not to have substance, but he has his own substance. He has nothing solid; but what he has, he has for punishment. He is scattered hither and thither, he is never in one place; wherever the wind has dragged him, thither his rush is directed: so also the ungodly man who has once denied God, wherever the breeze of the devil has dragged him, thither he is led by error.

Since we have said what the just man is, to whom he is compared; what the ungodly man is, to whom he is compared, and we have spoken of the present age: now we ought to learn of the future and eternal. Therefore the ungodly do not rise again in judgment, nor sinners in the counsel of the just. We read in the Gospel according to John: ’Whoever believes in me shall not be judged; whoever does not believe in me is already judged.’ Who then is to be judged, if both he who believes shall not be judged, and he who does not believe is already judged? Who shall be judged on the day of judgment? Let us seek, then, a middle one between the believer and the unbeliever, who is to be judged. He who believes shall not be judged. He who believes does not sin, he who truly believes does not sin, he who has true faith

does not sin. Indeed when we sin, our mind wavers in faith; at that time when we sin, when we grow angry, when we disparage, when we commit murders, when we fornicate, where is faith? Therefore what he says, He who believes in me, shall not be judged; for he has no need to be judged, he is already blessed. But he who does not believe, is already judged; for he is already prejudged unto punishment. Who then is judged? He who believes indeed, but is overcome by sins: he who has good things, has also evil things:

he who at the time when he believes does well, and at the time when he does not believe does ill. Let us see then now what is said. Therefore the ungodly do not rise again in judgment. They do not rise again to be judged, because they are already judged: For he who does not believe in me, is already judged. Nor sinners in the counsel of the just. He did not say, sinners do not rise again; but, they do not rise again in the counsel of the just. They do not deserve to rise again with those who are not to be judged. If they believed in me, they would rise again with those who are not to be judged.

For the Lord knows the way of the just, and the way of the ungodly shall perish. For the Lord knows the way of the just. And what is so great, if the Lord knows the way of the just? But God is said to know those whom he deigns to know. Indeed it is said of sinners: 'Depart from me, workers of iniquity, I do not know you.' The apostle says: 'If anyone knows, he is known.' For the Lord knows the way of the just. He who is a sinner, the Lord does not know him; he who is just, is known by God. We read in Genesis, at the time when Adam transgressed, at the time when he listened more to the serpent than to God, when he hid himself from the face of God, God came after the meal into paradise, and was walking about. See what is said. God seeks Adam, not at midday, but toward evening; for now Adam had lost the sun, because he had no midday. Toward evening, that is δείλινον, evening (deilinon), and he was walking. For God does not stand still for the sinner, but walks. For he knew that he was in paradise, and he was not ignorant of what had been done; but because Adam had sinned, God does not know him. And God said: Adam, where are you? We have spoken of this, how the sinner is not known by God: on the contrary we ought to know how the just man is known by God.

God says to Abraham: 'Go forth from your land and from your kindred.' He came into Palestine, was in Abramium, was in Gerara a long time. When a son, Isaac, had been born to him, and he had received the promise 'That in your seed all the nations shall be blessed,' he took Isaac, and offered him to God, and a voice from heaven was heard, Spare your son. And immediately it is written there, at the time when he had offered his son, what does God say to Abraham? 'Now I have known that you fear the Lord your God.' You who had spoken for so long a time, have you now come to know Abraham? But because great faith had been shown in offering his son, therefore now for the first time God began to know him. Why have we said

all this? Because it is written, For the Lord knows the way of the just. Let us speak also in another way. The way and the life and the truth is Christ: let us walk, then, in Christ, and God the Father knows our way.

And the way of the ungodly shall perish. He did not say, the ungodly shall perish; but if they do penance, they too shall be saved. At the time when the apostle Paul persecuted Christ and his churches, he was ungodly. For if the ungodly shall perish, no place is given for penance. But he did not say, and the ungodly shall perish; but, the way of the ungodly shall perish: that is, the ungodliness shall perish, the ungodly man shall not perish, but the ungodliness itself; the man who was ungodly shall not perish, but, the man doing penance, the ungodliness shall perish. May God, then, grant us this, that we do not do the three things, and that we do the two: that we may be compared to the tree of life, that we may not be ungodly, who are compared to dust: that we may not be sinners, since sinners do not rise again in the counsel of the just, so that the evil way may perish: and let us bless God, to whom be glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Homily 2, on Psalm 5

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). The fifth psalm is headed with this title: Unto the end, for her who obtains the inheritance, a psalm of David. Many think that the titles do not belong to the psalms, and by what reasoning they judge this, they do not know. If indeed these titles were not found in the Hebrew and Greek and Latin volumes, they would rightly think so; but now, since they are found in the Hebrew books — and especially this title which is set at the head of the fifth psalm — I am astonished that they should wish to say this, that there is anything in Scripture without a reason. For if ’one iota and one tittle shall not pass from the law,’ how much more such words or even syllables?

Unto the end, for her who obtains the inheritance, a psalm of David. Our inheritance is not promised at the beginning, but at the end of the world. The Jews thought they had obtained it at the beginning; we obtain it at the end. Whence the apostle John also says: ’Little children, it is the last hour.’ Therefore in the last hour there is the end; at the end, the inheritance. Unto the end, for her who obtains the inheritance. Who is this who obtains the inheritance? It seems to me that it is the Church; for she is the one who obtains the inheritance. A psalm of David. He sings at the beginning what the Church receives at the end. Therefore the fifth psalm is spoken in the person of the Church. Others interpret it in many ways: many speak according to the history concerning the people of Israel, that it wished to return from Babylon into Judea. This they interpret: they have not interpreted Unto the end, nor For her who obtains the inheritance. We therefore, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, shall strive by your prayers to expound this psalm in the person of the Church.

Give ear to my words, O Lord. No one has this confidence except the Church. He who is a sinner has not dared to say, Give ear to my words, O Lord. He who is angry and curses has not dared to say, Give ear to my words, O Lord; but he wishes rather that God would close His ears. Understand my cry. A cry in the Scriptures is not of the voice, but of the heart. Thus to Moses it is said, ’Why criest thou to me?’ though

Moses had not cried out before. Understand my cry. And the apostle: ’Crying in our hearts, Abba, Father.’ Surely he who cries out does not cry in the heart, but cries with the tongue. And how does the apostle say, Crying in our hearts? When therefore our groaning and our conscience make supplication, God understands that cry. Whence Jeremiah also says: ’Let not the pupil of my eye be silent.’ See what he says, Let not the pupil of my eye be silent. And sometimes the pupil of the eye cries out to God. Surely if it cries, the tongue cries, not the pupil of the eye. But just as we cry in our hearts when we entreat the Lord with groaning, so when we pour out tears to God, at that time the pupil of our eye cries out to the Lord.

My King and my God. He has truly dared to say, My King and my God, in whom sin does not reign in his mortal body. My King and my God. Because Thou reignest in me, and sin does not reign, therefore Thou art my God. Thou art my God, because the belly is not my god, because gold is not my god, because lust is not my god. Since Thou art virtue, and I desire to have virtues, therefore Thou art my God, that is, my virtue. In the morning Thou shalt hear my voice. Some interpret it more simply, thus: I rise up at dawn to pray, and I entreat Thee. This interpretation too is valid. What then? Does He hear us in the morning, but not hear us in the evening? Will God not hear us in the middle of the night? But see what he says: As long as I am in the darkness of error, Thou dost not hear me; but when the sun of righteousness has come into my heart, then Thou hearest me. In the morning Thou shalt hear my voice. He did not say, at the third hour, he did not say, at the sixth hour, he did not say, in full light; but see what he says: In the morning, as soon as the darkness has begun to flee, Thou hearest; immediately, at the beginning of a good work, Thou hearest me, Thou dost not require the finishing of it. For to will is mine, to bring to completion is Thine.

In the morning I shall stand before Thee, and I shall see. See the order. In the morning, not in the evening, not in darkness, but in the morning. In the morning I shall stand before Thee: I shall stand firmly, and I shall imitate Moses. In the morning I shall stand before Thee: before Thee I shall stand, not before another. But when it is morning, and I have stood, and I have stood before Thee, then I shall deserve to see Thee. And I shall see. Understood: I shall see Thee. Many read it badly, and say καὶ ἐπόψῃ με (’and Thou shalt look upon me’), but let us know that this is an error: it is rather said καὶ ἐπόψομαι, that is, ’I shall see,’ so that the order may be as we have said: as the light of the virtues begins to rise in my soul, when I have begun to stand before Thee, not to sit, not to lie, but to stand, and Thou hast set my steps upon the rock, then through those steps I shall deserve to see Thee.

For Thou art not a God that willest iniquity. Therefore Thou wilt not hear me in full light, but in the morning; because Thou dost not will iniquity, O God. For when I have begun to withdraw from iniquity, immediately I shall deserve to be heard by Thee. Neither shall the malignant one dwell beside Thee. When someone who is

evil withdraws from us, let us rejoice: this happens in us which happens also in the Lord. For see what the Holy Spirit says. Neither shall the malignant one dwell beside Thee. See what he says, the malignant one shall not dwell beside Thee. 'For what communion has light with darkness? what agreement has Christ with Belial?' When therefore some withdraw from us, let us also say: 'They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would surely have remained with us.' It is said to God: The malignant one shall not dwell beside Thee. For if God is fire, and a consuming fire, whoever is stubble, whoever is wood, flees from the fire, lest he be consumed by the fire.

Neither shall the unjust remain before Thine eyes. When it is said, Neither shall they remain, it is shown that at one time they did remain. For the unjust did at one time remain before the eyes of God, they remained while God awaited their repentance; but since they remained unjust, therefore they did not remain before the eyes of God. Thou hatest all who work iniquity. Unhappy is he whom God hates. Who is that one whom God hates? He who works iniquity. If therefore we all sin, and whoever sins is held in hatred by God, then we are held in hatred by the Lord. But if we are held in hatred by the Lord, how have we been saved by grace? Thou hatest all who work iniquity. He did not say, who have worked iniquity; but, who work iniquity. Those who persevere in sin, they are held in hatred by the Lord: but those who have forsaken it, they are loved by the Lord. Thou hatest all who work iniquity. This is said of sinners, who persevere in their sins. Let us see what else follows.

Thou wilt destroy all who speak a lie. I see a new thing. He who works evil is held in hatred; he who lies, perishes. Let us see which is more, to be held in hatred by the Lord, or to perish. He who is held in hatred by God is indeed unhappy, because he is held in hatred by the Lord: but he still lives. But he who speaks a lie and perishes, has already ceased to be. Therefore he who speaks a lie is more unhappy than he who works iniquity: for he who works iniquity is held in hatred; but he who speaks a lie, perishes. 'For the mouth that lies kills the soul.' And how is it written, 'That God may be truthful, but every man a liar'? But if whoever speaks a lie already perishes, and kills his own soul, and yet we all lie, then shall we all perish? Therefore, from what he says here, Thou wilt destroy all who speak a lie, and from what follows in the psalm, and from the very order, we can understand that he is speaking of heretics. For he who works iniquity kills only his own soul; but he who is a heretic, and speaks a lie, kills as many men as he has led astray. Thou wilt destroy all who speak a lie. Let us see who these are who speak a lie.

The man of blood and the deceitful the Lord shall abhor. Every heretic is a man of blood; for daily he sheds the blood of souls. The man of blood and the deceitful. He rightly said, the deceitful: he is both a murderer, and deceitful. Why is he deceitful? He falsely fashions his own words into the words of the Lord. The man of blood

and the deceitful the Lord shall abhor. See what a heretic is: the Lord shall abhor him. Of sinners he says, Thou hatest all who work iniquity; of false teachers, The Lord shall abhor them. But I, in the multitude of Thy mercy, will enter into Thy house. They in their iniquity go out from Thy house: I in Thy mercy enter into Thy house. I will enter into Thy house, which is the Church. I will worship toward Thy holy temple in Thy fear. That is the house which is also the temple.

Lord, lead me in Thy righteousness because of my enemies. I indeed desire to enter into Thy house, and I wish to enter by Thy straight way: but since my enemies set stumbling-blocks continuously along the paths, and lay snares in the road for me who desire to go into Thy house; therefore I ask Thee, that Thou wouldst direct my feet even unto the end in Thy way. It is mine to set my feet in Thy way: it is Thine to correct my steps. Because of my enemies direct Thy way in my sight: that is, make Thy way straight because of my enemies, who lie in wait for me. But what is this way? The reading of the Scriptures, that is, that I may not fall in Thy Scriptures, through which I desire to enter into Thy Church. For everyone who understands the Scriptures badly falls in the way of God.

For there is no truth in their mouth. The heretics are described; the man of blood and deceit is described, whom the Lord shall abhor. There is no truth in their mouth: they do not have Christ the truth in their mouth, because neither do they have Him in their heart. Their heart is vain. It reads better in the Hebrew: 'Their heart is ἐπίβουλον (treacherous).' For the heart of the heretics truly lies in wait for all whom it deceives. Their throat is an open sepulchre. The heretics are unhappy, who are whitewashed sepulchres, full of the bones of the dead. Their throat is an open sepulchre. Arius, Eunomius, and the other heretics have tongues for arrows, they have their jaws for a sepulchre. Their throat is an open sepulchre. Excellently he said, open: for whenever some deceived person wishes to enter, the heretic is ready, and receives him. Never do the heretics close their mouth, but they always open it. Their throat is an open sepulchre. With their tongues they acted deceitfully. One thing they held in the heart, another thing they promised in speech: they spoke piety, and concealed impiety: they speak of Christ, and hide the Antichrist: for they know that no one can be led on, if they bring forth the Antichrist. They bring forth light, in order to conceal the darkness, in order through the light to lead to the darkness. With their tongues they acted deceitfully.

Judge them, O God. Let them know that Thou art the judge, let them know that Thou dost regard human affairs: Thou who art to judge at the end, judge also in the present: Thou who art to judge in general, judge now in part: let those who are unwilling to feel Thee as Father feel Thee as judge. Judge them, O God. Why? for what cause? It follows: Let them fall from their thoughts. For if in the present Thou wilt render to them what they deserve, they will begin to withdraw from their evil thoughts. As long as they do not feel Thee as judge, they do not fear. Let them fall

from their thoughts. Excellently he said, from their thoughts: for daily the heretics change their doctrines. In short, if a man of the Church, learned in the Scriptures, contends against them, and refutes them from the holy Scriptures, immediately they seek out some other new doctrine to devise. They do not seek how they may be saved, but how they may prevail. Therefore he said now, Let them fall from their thoughts: let them fall from their many thoughts, and let them have Thee as their one thought.

According to the multitude of their impieties cast them out. He did not say from where He should cast them out: whether He should cast them out from heaven, whether He should cast them out from the earth: from where He should cast them out, the Scripture does not say; but it is a ὑπερβατόν (a transposition) and a ὕστερον πρότερον (a putting of the latter first). We ought therefore to read, According to the multitude of their impieties cast them out. What he says is this: cast them out from their many impieties for the sake of Thy mercy, that is, let them not be in their many impieties. It can also be interpreted otherwise: since they have been most impious, and have been unwilling to fall from their thoughts, and heap impieties upon impieties, and daily gather them, and have more impieties, therefore cast them out. From where? From her who obtains the inheritance, that is, the Church, which obtains Thy inheritance. Do Thou cast them out from there, so that, since they do not have the faith of the Church, they may not dwell in the Church either. For they have provoked Thee, O Lord. Thou, O Lord, by nature art sweet; but whoever are sinners and heretics turn the nature of Thy sweetness into bitterness by their own vice.

And let all rejoice who hope in Thee. Let those perish, let those of the Church rejoice. They shall exult forever. Here, forever, we ought not to speak of the present age, but of the age to come. In short, he did not say, they exult in this age; but, they shall exult, it is said of the future. For here there is sadness, but there is joy there. The heretics laugh in the present, but they shall mourn in the future: we, however, mourn in the present, that we may laugh in the future. They shall exult forever. What will be the exultation of the holy men? And Thou shalt dwell in them. Happy will they be, who shall deserve to have Christ as their guest. And Thou shalt dwell in them. Happy are they who shall be the tabernacle of Christ. And all who love Thy name shall glory in Thee. Whoever loves the Lord shall glory in the Lord. See what he says. All who love Thy name shall glory in Thee. Who love: he did not say, who fear, but, who love. For wherever there is fear, there is no love: 'for perfect love casts out fear.' For whoever love the name of the Lord, they shall glory. They shall glory: our blessedness is in the future; all that is promised is of the future. Let others reign, let others possess, let others glory: we are here wretched, that afterward we may be happy. Let us follow Christ our Lord.

He who says that he believes in Christ, let him also walk as Christ walked. Christ the Son of God came not to be ministered unto, but to minister: He came not to command, but to serve: He came not that His feet should be washed, but that He might wash the feet of the disciples: He came not to strike, but to be struck: He gave not a blow, but received one; He crucified not, but was crucified: He killed not others, but Himself suffered: He was poor, that He might make us rich: He received the stroke for us, that we, being scourged, might not feel pain. As often as we are struck, let us offer the cheek, let us present the back, let us imitate Christ. He who is struck imitates Christ: he who strikes, the Antichrist. Why do I say all this? That in the present age we may glorify the name of Christ for what we endure for Christ's sake. While we speak, while we walk, we are suddenly snatched away. I myself, who speak to you today, know not what shall become of me tomorrow. If a slight little fever comes, where is that voice? where is the pride? suddenly it is turned into ash. 'Why doth earth and ash boast?' We are earth and ash. 'Earth thou art, and unto earth thou shalt go.' And earth boasts against its Maker. It follows: For Thou wilt bless the just. Thou wilt bless, in the future: therefore blessedness is deferred.

Lord, Thou hast crowned us as with a shield of good will. In the world one thing is the shield, another the crown; but with God He Himself is the shield, He Himself is also the crown. As a shield He protects, as God He crowns: He Himself is our shield, He Himself is also our crown. And this is what he says, Lord, Thou hast crowned us as with a shield of Thy good will: Thou hast protected us with Thy shield, and Thy protection was our crown, that is, our crown was Thy shield, it was our victory. For the crown is interpreted as victory. Let us give thanks to God, and let us entreat Him, that in His good will He Himself may be our shield and our crown, that we may never withdraw from Him, that we may follow Him, and may say with Jeremiah: 'And following after Thee I have not grown weary.' To whom be glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Homily 3, on Psalm 7

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Names are imposed on individual things, so that from the names the things themselves may be known: so too the psalms have been prefaced with titles, so that from the titles the psalms themselves may be understood. The fifth psalm is prefaced with this title: 'Unto the end, for her that obtaineth the inheritance.' The sixth psalm is prefaced with this title: 'Unto the end, in hymns, for the octave, a psalm of David.' In the fifth it is said, 'For her that obtaineth the inheritance'; in the sixth it is said, 'For the octave.' But in the seventh — since it too was sung under the alleluia, since on that other Lord's day the sixth psalm was read, and we were unable, on account of illness, to interpret it — but now the seventh psalm has been read. It has, moreover, a title of this sort: 'A psalm of David, which he sang to the Lord for the words of Chusi the son of Jemini.' See the mysteries. Have these things, then, been written without a cause? In the fifth it is said, 'For her that obtaineth the inheritance'; in the sixth it is said, 'For the octave'; in the seventh it is said, 'For the words of Chusi the son of Jemini.' You see, then, how great are the mysteries woven together here.

'For her that obtaineth the inheritance' — since in the fifth psalm we discussed, interpreting that the psalm had been sung in the person of the Church, which has obtained the inheritance of Christ. But the sixth pertains properly to the resurrection of the Lord, which is the eighth day. For we have both a first day and an eighth day. For on the eighth day we received the kingdom of heaven. The eighth day is after the sabbath, the first at the beginning. It would take long, if we now wished to speak about the number eight: how there are eight beatitudes in Matthew; how in the hundred and eighteenth psalm each letter has eight verses; how there are fifteen psalms of degrees, how they are seven and eight; how Ecclesiastes too says, 'Give a portion to seven, and give a portion to eight'; how the eastern gate in Ezekiel has seven steps and eight steps. It would take long to tell how David too was the eighth of the sons of Jesse, who received the kingdom. This is what is now said, 'For the octave': for on the eighth we received the kingdom of heaven. Whence he says: 'O Lord, rebuke me not in thy fury, neither chastise me in thy wrath.' But

since we cannot interpret both psalms equally together, it is enough for us to have discussed the title of the sixth psalm.

Now let us come to the beginning of the seventh, which begins thus: ’A psalm of David, which he sang to the Lord for the words of Chusi the son of Jemini.’ I know that many men, and certainly most learned ones, have interpreted this title in this way. At that time, they say, when Absalom rose up against David his father (I beg you to listen more patiently: for we wish to interpret the Scriptures, not to declaim) — at that time, therefore, when Absalom rose up against David, one of David’s friends, by name Chusi, wished to go with David, but David sent him back to Absalom, that he might scatter the counsels of Ahithophel. At the time when Ahithophel gave counsel that Absalom should at once pursue David unprepared and kill him, Chusi then gave counsel and scattered the counsel of Ahithophel. And this Chusi himself sent a messenger to David, saying: Thus and thus is Absalom making ready; and David began to flee and to prepare himself. At the time when Chusi sent the words to David, David sang this psalm to the Lord, because the counsels of Ahithophel had been scattered. This they say, and indeed they have expounded it reasonably. But let us read the Scriptures carefully: for there it is written thus, that this Chusi is the son of Arachi. Then that Chusi is written with a different letter in Kingdoms: there Chusi is written with SAMECH, but here Chusi is written with the letter SIN. Then that Chusi is the son of Arachi; whence many of the Greeks, not knowing, read: ’Chusi the friend of David.’ It is not so in the Hebrew, but it stands written thus: ’Chusi the son of Arachi, the friend of David.’ You see, then, that the Greeks err even in the reading.

It is therefore most manifest, according to the rule of the Scriptures, that that Chusi is the son of Arachi. But this Chusi is called Jemini. Since we said that that Chusi was the son of Arachi, who is this Jemini? And we ought, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, to find the rule of this name. Where do we find ’Jemini’ in the Scriptures? It is doubtful to no one that there is one tribe of the twelve, by name Benjamin. Now Benjamin is interpreted ’son of the right hand.’ For at the time when Rachel died in Ephrata (we see the tomb with our own eyes, we do not seek examples elsewhere); at that time, therefore, when Rachel was dying, ’She bore,’ it says, ’an infant, and the women — or she herself who was dying — called his name Benoni, that is, son of my sorrow.’ But on the contrary Jacob the father turned the mother’s sorrow into glory, and does not call him Benoni, that is, son of my sorrow, but Benjamin, that is, son of the right hand, that is, of my strength. Benjamin, therefore, is a name composed of two parts, of ’son’ and of ’right hand’: for BEN means ’son,’ JAMIN means ’right hand.’ Let us know, therefore, that the tribe of Benjamin is always called Jemini. We read in the book of Kingdoms, at the time when it is written concerning Saul: ’And behold,’ it says, ’a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by name Saul;

the son,' it says, 'of Cis, son of Abiel, son of Jethra, son of Jether, son of Gera, son of Jemini.' And immediately there he is called a Jeminean man, that is, of the Jeminean tribe, that is, of the tribe of Benjamin. Let us give yet another testimony, lest we be able to doubt. That Shimei, who on the Mount of Olives at the time when David was fleeing his son Absalom — Scripture says this: 'And behold,' it says, 'Shimei of the kindred of Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin. And he threw,' it says, 'stones at David, and said: Get out, get out, thou man of blood.' At the time when one of his captains, by name Abishai, says, 'I will go,' he says, 'and kill him,' what does David say to him? 'What is there between me and you, sons of Zeruiah? Behold,' he says, 'he who came forth from my loins fights against me: and do you marvel that the son of Jemini, that is, of the tribe of Benjamin, of the tribe of Saul, who was my enemy?' Why have I said all this? To show that Jemini is the tribe of Benjamin.

We have said who Benjamin is, we have said the name of the father: let us see who Chusi the son of Jemini is. Chus in the Hebrew tongue is interpreted 'Ethiopian,' that is, black and dark, who has such a soul as he has a body, of whom Jeremiah says: 'If the Ethiopian will change his skin, or the leopard his spots.' So this Chusi signifies his black and Ethiopian enemy, Saul. And he says this: As the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, so this man too cannot change his character. Twice he came into my hands, I could have killed him. Whose blood I could have shed, I wished rather to overcome him by kindness; but his malice cannot be conquered. For just as the Ethiopian's skin cannot be changed, so too his malice cannot be changed. Finally, what does he say? 'O Lord my God, if I have done this' — that is, if I have done him any evil. 'If there be iniquity in my hands, if I have rendered evils to them that repaid me.' See what he says: I rendered good things for evils, he evil things for good things. It is manifest, therefore, that the psalm is against Saul, and he gives thanks to God, and prays for his help, that he may not fall into the hands of Saul.

'O Lord my God, in thee have I hoped.' I have not hoped in my sword, I have not hoped in my strength: but I have hoped in thy help. 'Lest at any time he seize my soul like a lion.' This fits Saul, it does not fit Absalom. For how could he call Absalom a lion, of whom he says, 'Spare my boy Absalom'? If there he calls him a boy, and as it were a little child and one that knows nothing, how here does he proclaim him a lion? This, so far, according to the history. And there are many things that might be said, and the whole psalm can be interpreted historically in the person of Saul. But since it is our concern to interpret not only according to the history, but according to the spiritual understanding, we interpret this Chusi the Ethiopian as none other than the devil. It is asked how this Chusi is the son of Jemini, how the devil, an Ethiopian, is the son of the right hand. That he is an Ethiopian, is by his own fault; that he is the son of the right hand, is because he was created by God. Rightly is it said of him: 'Lest at any time he seize my soul like a lion.' 'Our adversary the devil, like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may seize.'

'O Lord my God, if I have done this.' 'Behold, the prince of this world comes, and finds nothing in me.' 'If there be iniquity in my hands.' 'Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.' 'If I have rendered evils to them that repaid me.' They say, 'Crucify, crucify such a one'; I say, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' 'Let the enemy pursue my soul, and take it.' 'The last enemy, death, is destroyed.' 'And let him tread down my life into the earth.' Life cannot be trodden down. 'And let him bring down my glory into the dust.' 'If,' he says, 'I have rendered evils to my enemies for evils, may I not rise again.' 'Arise, O Lord, in thy wrath.' Since they did not perceive thee through kindnesses, let them perceive thee through anger. 'Be exalted in the borders of my enemies.' He prays for his enemies, that he may be exalted in the borders of his enemies. For when they have ceased to be enemies, then thou, O Lord, wilt be exalted in them.

'Arise, O Lord my God, in the precept which thou hast commanded, and a congregation of peoples shall surround thee.' This we say, this believing we speak. For the persons are always changing in the psalms. It would be a great matter now, if we wished to say in the psalms into how many and how great persons they change. 'Arise, O Lord my God, in the precept which thou hast commanded.' This we say: For us thou hast suffered, for us thou hast been crucified; arise and save us. We seem to do violence to the Scripture; but the things that follow free us from this reproach. For what follows? 'And a congregation of peoples shall surround thee.' Therefore arise, that a very great multitude may believe in thee. For when thou hast arisen, what else do we pray? Return to the Father. 'And for her sake return on high.' For whose sake? For the congregation of peoples. That thou didst die, thou didst die for us; that thou didst rise again, thou didst rise for us; that thou didst ascend to the Father, ascend for us. 'And for her sake return on high.' 'No man ascends into heaven, save he that descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven.'

'Judge me, O Lord, according to my justice, and according to my innocence upon me.' This David cannot say; this fits properly the Saviour, who did not sin. 'Let the wickedness of sinners be consummated, and thou shalt direct the just.' My justice cannot be directed, unless their iniquity — namely, of the Jews — be fulfilled. 'Unless ye be converted, he will brandish his sword.' This passage admits a twofold understanding. For many think it is said of God, so that, for example's sake, it is said to sinners. And what does it say? 'Unless ye be converted, he will brandish his sword': that is, unless ye do penance, the Lord will strike you with his sword. But let us see whether the things that follow can be fitted to the person of the Lord. 'He hath bent his bow, and made it ready.' This can be said of God. 'And in it he hath prepared the vessels of death.' This is difficult, for the Lord does not have vessels of death, but vessels of life; but this too can somehow be understood of the person of the Saviour. But that which follows, 'Behold, he hath been in labour with injustice, and hath conceived sorrow and brought forth iniquity, he hath opened a

pit and dug it out,' cannot at all be taken of God. We are compelled, therefore, by necessity, on account of the things that follow which are harsher and more arrogant, not to understand of God, 'Unless ye be converted, he will brandish his sword.'

And so many say that this is said of the devil; that is, unless ye be converted, unless ye do penance, ye will be in his power. 'He hath bent his bow, and made it ready.' The devil always has his bow ready, he shoots arrows with which to strike us. 'And in it he hath prepared the vessels of death.' They fit the person of the devil. 'He hath made his arrows for them that burn.' Beautifully he said, 'for them that burn': for those whose hearts burn with lust and passions, these have been conquered by the devil. 'He hath made his arrows for them that burn.' Beautifully he said 'for them that burn'; he did not say 'for those about to burn,' that is, those who are about to burn with his arrows; but whosoever's hearts he sees burning, those he strikes. The Apostle too says that the devil has burning arrows. 'Behold, he hath been in labour with injustice: he hath conceived sorrow, and brought forth iniquity.' Such a mother, such a father is the devil: thus he conceives, thus he is in labour, thus he nurses, thus he exalts. 'He hath opened a pit and dug it out, and he is fallen into the ditch which he made.' The pit is the devil's own, which is also the ditch. 'He hath opened a pit': but since it cannot hold water, according to Jeremiah, therefore his pit has been turned into a ditch. 'He hath opened a pit, and dug it out.' All the conventicles of heretics are ditches of the devil.

'His sorrow shall be turned upon his own head, and his iniquity shall come down upon his own crown.' Just as if someone throws a stone on high, and is not careful, and the stone comes down upon his head, he is wounded by his own wound; so too the devil is slain by his own pride, he exalts himself and falls in ruin. 'His sorrow shall be turned upon his own head.' The devil now wishes to lift up his head, but cannot. Why can he not lift up his head? Because his sorrow is turned upon his head, and presses him down. The devil (understand, O mystical reader, according to the rule of the Scriptures) is read in Genesis to be himself the snake, himself the serpent in paradise, himself the serpent who spoke to Eve, who reigns on the earth. He is called a snake, because he clings wholly to the earth. Other animals, though they walk on the earth, yet do not have their whole body lying on the earth; though they have feet on the earth, yet they have another part of the body upward. But the devil, that is, the serpent and the old snake, according to Isaiah, is wholly on the earth: he has both his head and the rest of his body level with the ground. Why do I say all this? Because other animals (understand, O prudent reader), though they cling to the earth, yet desire to withdraw from the earth:

but the devil has his head and his tail and his whole middle part clinging to the earth. 'His sorrow shall be turned upon his own head, and his iniquity shall come down upon his own crown.' See what he says: both upon his head, and upon the crown of the head. But since iniquity presses both his head and his crown, where

is the devil's repentance? This is the devil's end: 'His sorrow shall be turned upon his own head, and his iniquity shall come down upon his own crown.' Beautifully he said, 'shall come down': for the everlasting punishment will come to him from heaven.

He shall be condemned in this way. But we who have believed in Christ, who received the inheritance in the fifth psalm; who in the octave, that is, on the day of resurrection, say, 'O Lord, rebuke me not in thy fury, neither chastise me in thy wrath'; since Chus, that is, our Ethiopian, is himself the lion of whom it was said, 'Lest at any time he seize my soul like a lion'; who bent his bow and made it ready, and in it prepared the vessels of death that he might slay us; since he conceived sorrow and brought forth iniquity, opened a pit and dug it out, and fell into the ditch which he made, [and] was cast into gehenna; therefore his sorrow shall be turned upon his own head, and his iniquity shall come down upon his own crown: since he has been thus punished according to his desert, let us say, 'I will confess to the Lord according to his justice, and I will sing to the name of the Lord most high.' Beautifully he said, 'most high': for as much as the devil has been humbled, so much the Lord has been exalted.

Homily 4, on Psalm 9

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Joshua the son of Nun was fighting in the desert, and as Moses prayed he kept prevailing: the one man fought, the other by his prayer conquered. So too do I, according to that which is written, ’Open your mouth, and I will fill it’: I indeed seem to be the one speaking, but there are others by whose prayers I speak. The ninth psalm, which has been sung by you to the Lord, is great in its verses, great in its mysteries. Since, then, we cannot discuss everything, it is enough for the moment to speak about the title. Since we cannot enter into the house (for great is the king’s palace, nor are we able to know all the mysteries of the king), for the moment, as it were standing at the title of the house, in the very vestibule, let us point out whose house it is.

’Unto the end, for the hidden things of the son, a psalm of David.’ The phrase ’unto the end’ does not pertain to the Jews, but to us who at the end have believed. They were the earlier son, we the latest. We therefore who are at the end ought to hear this psalm, because it pertains to those who are at the end. ’For the hidden things of the son.’ What are these hidden things of the son? The mystery which throughout all past ages had been hidden has, at the end, been opened to us. ’For the hidden things of the son.’ In the Hebrew it reads otherwise. For in the Hebrew it has ALAMOTH, which is translated ’for death’: for AL is said for ’for,’ MOTH is said for ’death.’ Therefore it is said ’for death’; therefore ’for the death of the son’ is what is written in the Hebrew. See, then, the Seventy translators: since they were translating for Ptolemy, a Gentile king, and it was harsh to say ’the death of the son,’ they translated it ’the hidden thing.’ They did not say ’for the death of the son’: for they knew that it was being spoken of the Son of God. They saw that it was so written; and yet they were afraid to say that the Son of God would die.

Let this much for the moment be discussed concerning the title, and we ought to understand the whole psalm as being about the death of the Savior. Finally, that you may know it is spoken of the Savior, it is said of the Jews: ’In this snare which they stretched out, their own foot has been caught.’ Then, concerning the calling

of the Gentiles: ’All the nations that forget God.’ And lastly, against the devil: ’God is not before his eyes, he sits in ambush with the rich.’ Unhappy the rich, with whom the devil sits. Finally, see what is said of the devil: ’He sits in ambush with the rich.’ For whoever is rich, unless he has stripped the poor man, cannot be rich: for this reason he said, ’He sits in ambush with the rich.’ Whenever the rich persecute Christians, let us say: ’The devil sits in ambush with the rich.’ He lies in wait to seize the poor man, to seize the poor man while he draws him in: ’in his snare he will humble him.’ This is the impious man, this is the devil. The poor man not only in riches, but also in spirit: ’for blessed are the poor in spirit.’ ’In his snare he will humble.’ Whom? The poor man is understood. See what is said. ’He will humble’; not, ’he will slay’: but when he has humbled the poor man, the humbling of the poor man is the ruin of the devil. For what follows? ’He will bow himself down and fall, while he has dominion over the poor.’ Does not the devil seem to you, in persecution, when he would kill Christians, when he would slay the martyrs, to be slain in the very act of slaying? ’He will bow himself down and fall, while he shall have dominion over the poor.’ The martyr who is slain goes to heaven; that slayer is humbled and falls.

This much, for the moment, has been briefly discussed from the psalm, as to what was said, ’For the hidden things of the son.’ And this was said in the Old Testament; for in the Old Testament it is spoken of the son in a hidden way. Now in the Gospel let us read openly of the open things of the son.

Homily 5, on Psalm 14

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). The fourteenth psalm has been read at just the right moment; and it has come about in due order in such a way that it almost seems to have been read on purpose. The psalm was read in order: I think it has been brought about by God’s dispensation that what was profitable to you should be recited today in the sequence of exposition. The fourteenth psalm has been read, which is titled A Psalm of David. But our David is Christ, as we have often said. Then we read in Exodus that on the fourteenth day the lamb is sacrificed. It is sacrificed on the fourteenth day, when the moon is full, when nothing is lacking to it of its light. See, therefore, that Christ is not sacrificed except in perfect and full light. Since, then, on the fourteenth day the lamb is to be sacrificed for you, now the prophet marvels, and asks:

Lord, who shall dwell in your tabernacle? You, who wish to dwell in the Lord’s tabernacle. Or who shall rest on your holy mountain? See what is said. Who shall dwell in your tabernacle, or who shall rest on your holy mountain? Not first on the mountain, and afterward in the tabernacle; but first in the tabernacle, and so then on the mountain. A tabernacle is not a firm house, a tabernacle has no foundation; but it is moved this way and that, and it migrates along with the one who journeys on. That is why it is called παροικία (a sojourning), not a dwelling. Lord, who shall dwell in your tabernacle? Because it is a tabernacle, therefore it is called παροικία (a sojourning). Let us see, then, what the tabernacle is, and what the mountain is. We have said that the tabernacle has no foundation, but is an uncertain house: whereas a firm house has foundations. The tabernacle seems to me to be the Church of this world. The churches you now see are tabernacles: for we do not remain here as dwellers, but we are going to migrate elsewhere. For if ’the fashion of this world passes away’; and it is said in another place that ’heaven and earth shall pass away’: if heaven and earth shall pass away, how much more now also the very stones of the churches, which we see? Now, therefore, the churches are called tabernacles, since we are going to migrate from these to the holy mountain of God. Who is this holy mountain of the Lord? It is said in Ezekiel

against the prince of Tyre: 'You have been wounded,' he says, 'from the mountain of the Lord.' And who shall rest on your holy mountain?

Since, then, we are going to migrate from the tabernacles to the mountain, we ought to learn who these are who are going to migrate to the holy mountain of God. This that he said, Who shall dwell in your tabernacle, or who shall rest on your holy mountain, belongs to one who is asking. What, then, the prophet asked, the Holy Spirit now answers. And what does he say to him? Do you wish to know, O prophet, who shall dwell in my tabernacle, or who shall rest on my holy mountain? Hear what follows: if you do these things which follow, you shall dwell on my holy mountain. You, therefore, who wish to dwell in the tabernacle, and to ascend the holy mountain of God, need not listen to my words. Hear what the Lord answered the prophet; do this that the Lord commanded, and you shall ascend the holy mountain of God. He who enters without stain, and works righteousness. That is why it is also said in the one hundred and eighteenth psalm: 'Blessed are the undefiled in the way.' At once, at the very beginning, it is said, Blessed are the undefiled in the way. As it is said there, undefiled in the way, so here too it is said, He who enters without stain. And he who enters is in the way. He who enters without stain. See what is commanded. He did not say, he who arrives at the end without stain; but he who is still on the journey, and has no stain.

Someone could say: I have no stain, I have done no evil. It is not enough for us not to do evil, unless we also do good. Accordingly there follows, And works righteousness. See what he says, And works righteousness. He did not say, works chastity; he did not say, works wisdom, works fortitude. And these indeed are excellent virtues. For example, wisdom profits us, fortitude profits us, so that we may resist persecutions; then temperance and chastity profit us, that we may not lose our souls. Righteousness alone is a great virtue, and the mother of all. Let someone say: How is righteousness greater than the other virtues? The other virtues delight the one who has them: righteousness does not delight the one who has it, but others. If I am wise, wisdom delights me; if I am brave, my fortitude delights me; if I am chaste, my chastity is my joy: but righteousness does not profit the one who has it, but the other wretched ones who do not have it. Suppose some poor man has a quarrel with my brother; suppose my brother is powerful, and oppresses another — that is, one who is a stranger to me, a poor and wretched man — through his power: what does my wisdom profit the poor man? what does my fortitude profit the poor man? what does my chastity profit the poor man? Righteousness profits him, because I do not accept the person of my brother, but I judge for the truth. Righteousness does not know a brother, does not know a father, does not know a mother; it knows the truth, it does not accept the person, it imitates God. That is why he said And works righteousness, lest he should seem to have excluded the other virtues. He who is angry for another's relief, who does not delight in the miseries of others, this man is righteous.

Let us speak also of the other things that follow. He who speaks the truth in his heart. Many speak the truth with their lips, but not in their heart; who seem to speak truly, but the heart does not agree with the lips. He who has practiced no deceit with his tongue: he who has uttered in speech what he has pondered in his mind. Nor has done evil to his neighbor. Some think that a neighbor is a brother, or a fellow townsman, or a kinsman, or a blood relation. But our Lord teaches in the Gospel in that parable, where a certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho: a priest passed by, a Levite passed by, and had no pity: a Samaritan passed by, and had pity. And afterward the Lord asks, and says: Which of these was a neighbor? At once it is answered: He who did well. And the Lord adds: Go and do you likewise. All men, therefore, are neighbors to us, and we ought to do evil to none. But if we understand neighbors to be brothers and kinsmen, then are we permitted to do evil to strangers? But far be it to believe so. We are all men neighbors to men: for we have one Father. And has not accepted reproach against his neighbors. A great thing is said. Never, he says, has a neighbor murmured against him; never, he says, has he found any occasion to disparage him. This virtue exceeds the human condition, it is God's grace.

In his sight the malignant man is brought to nothing. See what he says. In his sight the malignant man is brought to nothing. Even if he is an emperor, even if he is a prefect, even if he is a bishop, even if he is a presbyter (for in the church these are the dignities), whoever is evil is counted for nothing in the sight of the holy man. And at once there follows, But he glorifies those who fear the Lord. This holy man, who enters without stain, who despises the powerful who are evil, if he sees anyone fearing God, though he be poor, yet him he glorifies. He who swears to his neighbor, and does not deceive. And here too we ought to understand "neighbor" as above. He who has not given his money at usury. There are many things that might be said, but the hour shuts us out. But since the day before yesterday we spoke about the beginning of the catechesis (κατήχησις), and, with God's favor, you came out of Chaldaea with Abraham, and you remember what we had said: how you came out of Chaldaea, and came into the land of promise — nay rather, the land of promise is promised to you. And indeed, after Abraham came into the land of promise, adversaries were on this side and that, enemies held the land.

The Lord came, and led him outside, and set him on a mountain, and showed him the whole land, and said: 'All this I will give to you and to your seed.' To him he promised it, to us he will give it in return.

Homily 6, on Psalm 66

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). May God have mercy on us and bless us. Let him not be our judge, but be merciful. May God have mercy on us. This is the voice of the apostles speaking to the people gathered from the nations: You have indeed believed at our voice; behold, this Church is gathered together in the name of God; therefore we say, May God have mercy on us and bless us, that by his blessing he may undo the first curse laid upon man. May he make his countenance shine upon us. Let us not see him sorrowful, but rejoicing; let us not see him sorrowful over our sins, but rejoicing in our virtues; let us not experience him as a judge, but as a Father. May he make his countenance shine upon us. What is the face of God? Surely his image. For the apostle too says that the Son is the image of the Father. Therefore let him make us shine with his image — that is, let him make his image, the Son, shine upon us, so that the Son himself may make us shine. For the light of the Father is the light of the Son. He who sees the Father sees also the Son; and he who sees the Son sees also the Father — where there is no distance between glory and glory, both are one glory.

That we may know your way upon earth. This is what we ask: that you may make your countenance shine, that is, your image, upon us — that image which has always been hidden with you, and was, as it were, in the secret and darkness of your mysteries, according to what is written: ”He made darkness his hiding-place. This is what we ask, that you make it shine upon us, so that the mystery which was hidden from the generations, as the apostle says, may be revealed in us. But why do we ask for all this? Why do we desire it? Unless you make your image shine upon us, we cannot know your way and your knowledge. Therefore it follows, That we may know your way upon earth: that your majesty, which is known in the heavens, we may hold known also upon earth. That we may know your way upon earth. ”I am,” he says, ”the way and the life and the truth. That we may know your way upon earth. Let us know it upon earth. ”Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth”; that the one whom the angels adore in the heavens, men too may adore upon earth. But someone may say that the way of God was known. ”For God is

known in Judaea, in Israel his name is great. God was known, but the way of God was not known in Judaea.

Since, then, the way of God the Father was not known among the Jews, therefore he now says: Among all the nations your salvation. Not in one people, but in all the nations. Among all the nations your salvation. Where we have in Latin ”salvation” (salutare), in Hebrew it is called ”Jesus. And indeed the angel too speaks this: ”And you shall call,” he says, ”his name Jesus: for he shall save his people. Among all the nations your salvation. Behold, what the apostles prayed for is fulfilled: among all the nations his salvation is known. Wherever human speech can be, there Jesus resounds.

Let the peoples confess to you, O God, let the peoples confess to you. The Jews? No: all peoples. Just as all the nations, so also all peoples. Let the peoples confess to you, O God. What should they confess? Surely their sins — or at least let them confess that your image is in you: let them confess you in the Son, in him let them see you, in him let them adore you. Let the nations be glad and rejoice. Because they have been freed from the captivity of the devil; because those who before were bent down to adore idols, wood and stones, now with upright face look upon the heavens. Because you judge the peoples in equity. Wherever there is equity and judgment, there is not gladness, but the dread of sinners. And how did he say, May God have mercy on us and bless us; and now he says, Let the nations be glad and rejoice, because you judge the peoples in equity? It seems to be contradictory. For if they need mercy, how are they glad and rejoice, because you judge the peoples in equity? For wherever there is mercy, there is no judgment; but where there is judgment and the equity of judgment, there mercy is far off. But this is the sense. Let the nations be glad and rejoice: why should they be glad? Because you judge the peoples in equity: because you in no way show favoritism to one nation, but are the God of all.

Not the Jews alone are pleasing to you, but the whole world is yours. Someone may say: You are doing violence to Scripture; it did not speak in this sense. Let Scripture interpret itself, which says, Because you judge the peoples in equity. Which peoples? And you direct the nations upon earth. The nations which before did not walk with upright foot, the nations which before did not walk on an upright path, you made them to walk in your way: that we might know your way upon earth, that we might walk in the way, not in the ways, that through one way we might come to you, from whom the way is born. For we do not go to the Father except through the Son. Someone may say: This is the doctrine of the Arians. So, then, one comes to the Father through the Son? I say this: that through the image we go to the face, and in the light we see the light, in the Son we see the Father. It is the mystery and the dispensation that speaks. But if anyone thinks it blasphemous that we have called the Son the way, and that through the way we go as it were to

God, let us see what this very way says. ”No one comes to me, unless my Father draws him to me. So, just as the Son leads to the Father, so also the Father leads to the Son. These are human words.

But both the Son leads to the Father, and the Father leads to the Son: and there is one nature, one substance.

Let the peoples confess to you, O God — he had already said this above, and in this little psalm he repeats these two verses again. For he had said above, ”Let the peoples confess to you, O God, let all the peoples confess to you. Let the nations be glad and rejoice,” and so on: and now again he repeats these very verses. It is as though the apostles lead the chant for all the nations. ”Often have they fought against me from my youth, let Israel now say: often have they fought against me from my youth. See how they lead the chant, and the throng of all the nations responds. So too now, when they say at the beginning ”Let all the peoples confess to you,” and when they urge the peoples and say ”Let the peoples confess to you, O God, let all the peoples confess to you” — because they see them falling silent, therefore they rebuke them with the same words, and say, Let the peoples confess to you, O God, let all the peoples confess to you. Once we have said it, and you did not hear; let us say it again, that you may sing. But why have we said all this, both once and a second time, that the peoples should confess to God? Why do we say this? Why do we urge this? The earth has given its fruit. The earth — holy Mary — from our earth, from our seed, from this clay, from this mud, from Adam.

”You are earth, and into the earth you shall go. This earth has given its fruit: what it lost in paradise, it has found in the Son. The earth has given its fruit. First it gave a flower. He says in the Song of Songs: ”I am the flower of the field and the lily of the valleys. This flower, then, has been made fruit, that we might eat him, that we might feed on his flesh. Do you wish to know what this fruit is? A virgin from a virgin, the Lord from a handmaid, God from man, a son from a mother, fruit from the earth. See what this fruit himself says. ”Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it cannot bear much fruit. The earth has given its fruit, it has given the grain of wheat: which grain of wheat fell into the earth and died, and therefore brings forth much fruit. It was multiplied in the ear of corn: what had fallen as one thing, rose again with many. For the grain of wheat fell into the earth, and an abundant harvest sprang up. The earth has given its fruit. Therefore Let the peoples confess to you, O God, let all the peoples confess to you: the earth has given its fruit.

What is this fruit? May God bless us, our God; may God bless us. God — the Father; our God — the Son. For he himself is our God. ”And you shall call,” he says, ”his name Emmanuel” — that is, God with us. Our God. May God bless us — the Holy Spirit. See the mystery of the Trinity comprehended in one little verse, The earth has given its fruit with many; in this fruit the mystery of the Trinity is contained.

May God bless us, our God. He who is the God of all by nature has been made our God in a proper sense. May God bless us. May he drive out the old curse. The curse cast us out of paradise: may the blessing bring us back. May God bless us, our God; may God bless us.

And let all the ends of the earth fear him. He did not say, Let all the ends of the earth love him: ”for perfect love casts out fear. To fear belongs to beginners, to love belongs to the perfect. He who still fears is placed at the start, he does not have perfect and full faith; but he who loves God, all things turn out to good for him. This little sentence seems brief and simple: but let us fan it out, and in these simple words we shall discover immense mysteries. We shall find within what lay hidden without. ”But to those who love God all things work together for good. Job, the holy man, was tempted: he lost his sons and daughters, his house collapsed, he lost everything, he lost all things suddenly — neither father nor master; for nothing sound remained to him in his body, except only his tongue with which he might blaspheme. See the tempter, the devil. ”From the sole,” he says, ”of his foot to the crown of his head he struck him with a most grievous wound” — that is, with elephantiasis. From it worms flowed over his whole body, and gore, and rottenness. His tongue alone he kept intact for him, that he might be able to blaspheme his God. ”In all these things Job did not sin with his lips. See the greatness of the temptation, see the greatness of his virtue. See and consider that the apostle’s saying is fulfilled:

But to those who love God all things work together for good. At the time when he was losing his possessions, when he was losing his sons, the things that had happened did indeed seem to him to be adverse: but because he loved the Lord, those evils, which he brings upon him, work together to his good. Those worms of his body were preparing for him the crown of heaven. Before he was tempted, God had never spoken to him: but after he was tempted, God came to him, and speaks familiarly, as a friend with his friend. Let the plagues come, every kind of punishment, so long as after the plagues Christ arrives.

We have gone out of the psalm, but not uselessly; because we had said And let all the ends of the earth fear him, and we had said that to fear belongs to the little ones, but to love belongs to the perfect; and to prove this we had cited from the apostle, But to those who love the Lord all things work together for good. And let all the ends of the earth fear him. By no means Judaea alone, but all the ends of the earth. But according to the figurative sense (tropology), all the ends of the earth — not all the middles of the earth, not those who are in the middle of the earth, but those who are at the end of the earth, who leave the earth behind and hasten to go to heaven. This, then, which the apostles said at the beginning, let us say at the end. May God have mercy on us and bless us: may he make his countenance shine upon us, and have mercy on us.

Homily 7, on Psalm 67

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin).

Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered. This psalm is understood both in a special sense and in a general sense. In the special sense, of the Lord himself, that he should rise from the dead and scatter his enemies — that is, the devil and his army, or the Jews. But in the general sense, whenever we are in tribulation and distress, and we say, ”Arise, why do you sleep, O Lord? and help us”; just as the apostles too, in the little boat, wake the Lord who was sleeping, saying: ”Master, save us, we perish. And let those who hate him flee from before his face. He did not say, let them perish, but, let them flee: because sinners cannot stand in the sight of God. As smoke fails, let them fail: not that they should be reduced to nothing, but that they should rest from their sins. As wax flows away before the face of fire. Just as wax is melted, and does not lose its nature, but grows soft: so let these too not perish, but lay aside their hardness, and thus turn to repentance, and be saved. So let sinners perish from before the face of God: because sinners are not worthy to see God. And let the just feast. Those who remain in their righteousness, who have no vices, let them be delighted in the Lord. Let them exult in the sight of God, and let them be delighted with gladness.

It is great confidence, to exult in the sight of the Lord. Just as a steward who has badly handled and lost the substance entrusted to him by his master fears his master’s presence; so also he who has managed it well exults in his master’s presence. Sing to God, sing a psalm to his name. ”Sing” — in Scripture this always signifies contemplation (theoria): that is, consider the mysteries and the meaning of divine Scripture. But ”to make melody” (psallere) Scripture signifies as a good work: for example, that the hearing should furnish its own work, and likewise the mouth, and the eyes, and the hands, and all the members should as it were agree, and thus strike the psaltery in the virtues. Make a way for him who ascends above the sunset: the Lord is his name. If the sun of iniquity does not set for us, the sun of righteousness cannot rise for us, whose healing is in his wings.

God is in his holy place. God always dwells in his holy ones: wherever holiness is, there is the dwelling-place of God. God makes those of one manner to dwell in a house: those who are of one manner, and are not changed. Since indeed the just man is not changed, because once for all he has resolved to remain in righteousness. But the sinner is changed: ”for the fool shall be changed like the moon.” In the Hebrew, however, it has ”The Lord makes monks to dwell in a house”: that is, in those in whom sin does not dwell alongside. Who leads out the bound ones in strength. God himself by his own power leads out those who are bound by the devil in sins: like that woman in the Gospel, who had been bound eighteen years by the devil. Likewise those who provoke him, who dwell in the tombs. God is by nature sweet: but those who lead him to bitterness are sinners, and they make God bitter for themselves. He does not change his own nature, but the sinners themselves make God bitter for themselves. Who dwell in the tombs. ”Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, for you are like whitewashed tombs.” Just as the holy man is a temple of God, so the sinner makes himself a tomb.

O God, when you went out in the sight of your people. This is according to the history, when God went before his people as they went out of Egypt. When you passed through in the desert. God does not linger in the desert, but passes through. The earth was moved, for the heavens dripped down from before the face of the God of Sinai. The heavens dripped down: that is, the manna. Sinai is interpreted as ”temptation.” Therefore God dwells in those who are tempted and overcome; but in those who are among delights, he does not dwell. You will set apart a voluntary rain, O God, for your inheritance. He speaks of the law, which was given through Moses. And it was weakened, but you have perfected it. The law was weakened, because no one was able to fulfill it except the Lord, who said: ”I have not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it.” And according to the apostle: ”For what was impossible for the law, in that it was weakened, God sent his own Son,” and the rest. Your animals dwell in it; that is, in the inheritance. But by ”animals” he meant those who live in God, that is, the holy ones. You have prepared in your sweetness for the poor man, O God. ”Blessed are the poor in spirit.” You have prepared the rain, that is, the law. The Lord will give the word to those who preach the gospel with great power. In the Hebrew it has ”the women who preach the gospel”; that is, to those women who were made evangelists to the apostles, where he says ”Go, tell my brothers,” and the rest. Or else it signifies the souls which have believed in Christ. But according to the Seventy translators he speaks to the apostles, because the Lord gave them the power to preach the gospel.

The king of the powers of the beloved. ”King,” the Father; ”of the powers,” that is, of the holy ones; ”of the beloved,” of the Son. ”Behold my beloved Son, hear him.” ”Of the beloved.” If anyone loves someone, he always has him on his lips: therefore the Holy Spirit, because of the love which he has for the Son, frequently makes mention of him. And to the beauty of the house to divide the spoils. The

apostles themselves divide in the churches the spoils, which they have taken from the idols. If you sleep among the midst of the lots (cleri): that is, if you rest between the New and the Old Testament. The individual books too are called ”lots” (cleri): that is, Genesis, Exodus, Judges, the Gospels, the Apostle. The wings of the dove covered with silver. You will find in the two Testaments the grace of the Holy Spirit. ”Covered with silver”: it signifies the clear word of divine Scripture. And the hinder parts of its back in the paleness of gold: that is, in the inner things the mysteries are understood spiritually.

While the heavenly one distinguishes kings over her. By ”kings” he meant the holy ones, who reign over their own passions. These holy ones, then, are divided among the churches: for example, Paul among the Gentiles, Peter among the circumcision. They shall be made white as snow in Selmon. This is what he says: although they are holy, yet nevertheless in this world they are as it were a shadow, knowing in part. For Selmon is interpreted ”shadow.” The mountain of God, a rich mountain. This is the mountain which in Ezekiel wounds the prince of Tyre. And by ”mountain” they mean the Lord himself. Why do you suppose the curdled mountains? This he says to the Jews, who think that Moses and the prophets are like the Savior. The mountain in which it is well pleasing to God to dwell. It signifies the fleshly presence of the Savior, that the deity dwelt in a body: for in no other did the Holy Spirit dwell continuously, except in the Savior, John saying, ”He upon whom you shall see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, this is he.” For indeed the Lord shall dwell unto the end: in the body which he took from holy Mary.

The chariot of God is ten thousandfold manifold. Hyperbolically he speaks of the ministering powers and spirits, that they are innumerable, as he said in Daniel: ”Thousands of thousands ministered.” And in Ezekiel he describes the cherubim as having four wings in four corners, four faces, whose charioteer is God. And ”cherubim” is interpreted ”multitude of knowledge.” And it signifies the face of the lion, the kingly, that is, to reign over the passions; the face of the man, the rational; the face of the calf, in work; the face of the eagle, in contemplation, that is, in theoria, which exalts us in the virtues. But that we may say all at once: the throne of God is in the holy ones. The Lord is among them in Sina, in the holy place: that is, God is in the holy ones when they are tempted, and after the temptation holiness follows. For it is impossible for anyone, however holy he may be, to pass through this world without temptation, according to Job: ”The life of man upon the earth is a temptation.”

You have ascended on high, you have taken captivity captive. You have ascended into the heavens: you have taken us captive, we who were held captive by the devil. You have received gifts among men. He said it well, ”you have received.” From the Father he received: he receives as man, he gives as God; and what he received, he received for men, that he might give. For he himself is full, and lacks

nothing. For indeed those who do not believe that the Lord dwells. And these too you have saved, who did not believe that it is possible for God to dwell in a man, that is, for the Savior to take flesh. The Lord God blessed. These who before did not believe that it is possible for God to dwell in a man, they themselves, believing, say: The Lord God be blessed. Blessed be the Lord day by day. He who makes progress can bless God daily. For what does it profit me, if I blessed yesterday, and today I cannot bless? The God of our salvations will make our journey prosperous. Be secure, O sinner, do not doubt that you can daily bless God: for behold, he says, God will make our journey prosperous. Therefore God helps us, and works together with us. Of our salvations. He said it well in the plural, ”of salvations”: because however many sins we have committed, so many salvations also do we have. Diapsalma. In the Hebrew it has ”sela,” that is, ”always and continually”: therefore God always helps us.

Our God is the God of saving, and the outcomes of death belong to the Lord: because he himself rose from the dead, and made us rise together with him. Otherwise, the devil is the entrance of death: but the Lord leads out. But nevertheless God will shatter the heads of his enemies: of the devil, and all his powers. ”You have shattered the heads of the dragon in the water.” As many as the sins are, so many heads does the devil have. The crown of the hair of those who walk in their own trespasses. For his head is so shattered, that there does not remain in him any power by which he may goad those who sin. The topmost of the head is the hair, and the crown of the hair: therefore he says this, that there should not remain in the devil even the least thing that is not shattered.

The Lord has said, From Basan I will turn back: that is, from the confusion of this world I will turn back the human race; that is, through my passion and cross, which these people think foolishness and confusion, I will turn back my people. Since indeed Basan is interpreted ”confusion.” I will turn back in the depths of the sea: that is, from the deep vices and sins of this world, from the commotion and the waves I will turn back my people. That your foot may be dipped in blood. Because his own foot was dipped in his own blood. ”I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the nations there was no man with me.” And again: ”Who is this who ascends from Edom? his garments red from Bosor.” Edom is interpreted ”blood,” Bosor ”flesh”: it signifies our Lord himself crucified. The tongue of your dogs from the enemies, from him. By ”dogs” he means the Jews themselves, who cried out: ”Crucify, crucify such a one: we have no king but Caesar.” And ”from the enemies”: prompted by the demons to deny the Savior, and to blaspheme him. Otherwise: because you yourself came of your own will and suffered, and of your own will you were crucified by the Jews.

They have seen your entrances, O God: because in the sight of five hundred men and all the apostles and the cherubim and all the angels you ascended into the

heavens. The entrances of my God, of my king who is in the holy place. Because you who are the God of all and the Lord of those who rule and the King of kings, in a special way you are my God, just as also the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob and the God of the Hebrews. The princes went before, joined with those making melody. The apostles themselves went before, and those who through them believed followed: or certainly the churches. But he says ”of the timbrel-players” because their body is dead to sin. And Miriam the sister of Moses and Aaron, holding a timbrel in Exodus, went before those making melody, and said: ”Let us sing to the Lord, for gloriously has he been honored.”

In the churches bless God. O you who glory in abstinence, do this in the churches, and do not defend heresy for your own selves. These things can be said to Tatian, who is the chief of the Encratites. The Lord from the fountains of Israel. The Manichaean cannot bless the Lord, because he does not bless from the fountains of Israel: that is, because he does not receive the Old Testament. From the fountains of Israel, not of Jacob: since indeed Jacob is interpreted ”supplanter,” and is still in the wrestling; but Israel is perfect, seeing God with the mind. There is Benjamin the young lad in ecstasy of mind. He means holy Paul: ”there,” in the church: ”the young lad,” the last of all the apostles, of the tribe of Benjamin. The princes of Judah their leaders. The apostles are the princes of Judah, that is, of the Lord, just as Jacob says: ”Judah, may your brothers praise you.” The princes of Zabulon, the princes of Nephthalim. Zabulon is interpreted ”flowing of the night,” Nephthalim ”breadth”: when we have been freed from the passion of lust, that is, from that flowing, then we begin the broad spaces of the virtues.

Confirm this, O God, which you have worked in us. This salvation, which you have granted us through your passion, confirm, and give aid; because we are men, and we cannot advance in the virtues, if we have not obtained your help. To you the kings shall bring gifts. He says ”kings,” those who reign over their own selves, according to what is written: ”The heart of the king is in the hand of God.” These shall bring gifts to God. The virtues of the holy ones are gifts to God. Rebuke the wild beasts of the reed, that is, the heretics, who compose and write against you, so as to deceive us. ”For there must also be heresies among us.” For they are called ”wild beasts” from the fact that they seize souls and kill them. But it can be understood also of the devil and his angels. The assembly of bulls among the cows of the peoples. It signifies the heretics themselves, because they can deceive no one, except the simpler ones and the little ones, that is, the lesser cows: for they cannot deceive the bulls, that is, the great ones. That they may shut out those who have been proved with silver. And for this reason they deceive the simpler ones, that is, the multitude, so as to come even to the holy ones, and shut them out from the kingdom of heaven.

Scatter the nations that desire wars: that is, scatter the heretics, who attack the church. Legates shall come out of Egypt. Egypt is interpreted ”darkness”: out of the darkness of this world. Ethiopia shall stretch out her hand before to God. Because we who were black with sins and passions went before the Israelite people, and believe in the Savior: just as she who had a flow of blood went before the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, and is healed. Who ascends above the heaven of heaven to the east. Because above he said, Who ascends above the sunset; here he says, to the east. For when the passions and the sun of iniquity set for us, the sun of righteousness rises for us: that is, the Lord ascends over us, and dwells in us. Behold, he will give to his voice a voice of power. ”Lazarus, come forth.” Behold, he will give to his voice a voice of power; his magnificence is over Israel. The magnificence of God is in Israel, who sees God. And his power is in the clouds, that is, in the prophets and apostles. ”I have commanded my clouds, that they rain no rain upon Israel.” God is wonderful in his holy ones. In this God is wonderful, because he so loved the human race that he works signs through his holy ones. In these God is more wonderful than in the rest of the creatures.

Homily 8, on Psalm 74

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). For the end, do not corrupt, a psalm of Asaph, a song. In the Hebrew it does not have ”for the end,” but has ”to the victor.” And the Seventy translators did not err greatly, since victory is something perfected. Well did he say, For the end, do not corrupt. This phrase is interpreted in many ways. David says even to one of his friends: ”Do not corrupt him” — that is, Saul. See what he says. And in another place we read that David blessed the Lord because his hands were kept — that is, that he should not slay Saul. And so we too, when we do not kill anyone, our hands are kept. Some say that this psalm was composed by David and sung by Asaph; others, however, that Asaph himself both composed and sang it. Therefore, according to the Seventy, he says this: O Lord, who have kept me from laying my hand upon your anointed Saul, keep me even to the end.

We will confess to you, O God. Here ”we will confess” does not signify penance, but glory. And we will call upon your name. The name of God is Father: for previously he was unknown. For the Lord says: ”Father, I have revealed your name to men.” For every son is the name of the father. We will tell of your wondrous works. This the Church says, this the multitude of believers says. We will tell of your wondrous works. This verse is joined with the preceding ones, but the one that follows is spoken in the person of the Lord: for so the ancients interpreted it. When I shall have received the time, I will judge righteousness. For now he is not a judge, but he will be: for if he were now a judge, sinners would not be lifted up and obtain riches in the world. Does this scandalize you, that the righteous flee, and sinners persecute them? Does this scandalize you, that iniquity reigns in the world? Hear the Lord saying: When I shall have received the time, I will judge righteousness. For the time of judgment has been reserved. In the present there is no judgment, but a contest. ”For the Father does not judge anyone, but has given all judgment to the Son.” But hearing this, do not be scandalized and say that the one who receives from the one who gives is lesser; but see what he says in the Gospel: ”For the Father does not judge anyone, but has given all judgment to the Son: because

he is the Son of man." He renders the reasons why he received judgment: because he is the Son of man. You hear "Son of man," and do you doubt why he received it?

Homily 9, on Psalm 75

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Before the cross gave light to the world, before the Lord was seen upon the earth, God was known in Judaea, and his name was great in Israel; but when the Savior came, his sound went out into all the earth, and his words unto the ends of the world.

And his place was made in peace: which in Hebrew is said ”in Salem.” So it seems, according to the letter, to speak of Jerusalem, that is, Salem, which formerly was called Salem, and afterward Jebus, and then was called Jerusalem. This is that Salem in which Melchizedek was king. We read, ”Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.” He did not say, after the order of Aaron, but of Melchizedek. What did he mean to say, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek? It is plain that in that passage it is spoken of Christ. But why does he say, after the order of Melchizedek? Aaron offered victims, Aaron poured out the blood of sacrifices; Melchizedek did none of these things, but offered only bread and wine. This, then, is what Melchizedek did: and therefore it is said, after the order of Melchizedek. In the Hebrew it has, ”And his shelter was made in Salem.” See what he says: according to the tropology, there is no shelter of the Lord except where there is peace. Where there are quarrels and discord, there God is not a protector. Let us speak also according to the Septuagint. The place of God is nowhere except in the soul that has peace: therefore the soul that does not have peace, let it know that it is not the place of God. ”My peace I give unto you, my peace I leave with you.” This is the Savior’s inheritance. And his dwelling is in Zion. According to the letter we can speak of Jerusalem and Zion, since the temple was there; but according to tropology and anagogy we say that the dwelling of God is in Zion. Zion is interpreted ”watchtower”: therefore in whatever soul there is knowledge of the Scriptures and teaching, there God dwells.

There he broke the strength of bows. There. Where? In Jerusalem and Zion. Jerusalem is interpreted ”peace,” Zion ”watchtower”: let us see, then, what is peace, and what is the watchtower. Let us interpret it in two ways: either the

human soul, in which is the peace of God and contemplation; or else the Church, or else the holy Scripture. For there is peace, and there is the dwelling and the watchtower of God. There he broke the strength of bows: those burning arrows which the devil used to shoot. The shield, and the sword, and the battle. And the battle: that of which it is said in another place, ”Scatter the nations that desire wars.” And what follows? Selah, which the Septuagint interpret ”diapsalma,” and in Hebrew it is said ”always.” See, then, that the Lord always breaks the shield and the sword and the battle. Thou dost give light wondrously from the everlasting mountains. We interpret the mountains in two ways: in the Old Testament, the prophets; in the New Testament, the apostles. Of these mountains he says: ”I have lifted up mine eyes unto the mountains, whence shall come my help.” Upon these mountains also is the city of God set, ”A city set upon a mountain cannot be hid.” We were all sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death; and the Lord gave light to us from the everlasting mountains, that is, from the prophets and apostles. All the foolish of heart were troubled. This verse we can speak of the unbelievers.

They slept their sleep, and found nothing. Truly this life is a sleep, and riches too: for when we seem to hold them, at once we lose them. Just as that which is written in the prophet: ”As one who is thirsty sleeps, if he finds water he drinks; afterward, when he has awakened, the thirst itself remains,” so also are riches in this world: while we hold them, we lose them.

They slumbered who mounted horses. Let us speak according to the tropology. Indeed Pharaoh mounted horses, and slumbered, and perished. And the Egyptians had horses, but they perished. Hence too it was commanded in the Law that a Hebrew should not have a horse. Indeed Solomon too did not have a horse from Jerusalem or from Judaea, but bought them for himself from Egypt. Horses are always sold in Egypt. ”These in chariots, and these in horses: but we will call upon the name of the Lord our God.” Those, then, who mounted horses, slumbered and perished. Our Lord also has horses, and he has shining mountains: on the contrary, the devil too has dark mountains. As, then, there are shining mountains and dark mountains, so also are there good horses and again bad horses. We have spoken of the bad horses; let us speak also of the good horses. At that time when they came against Elisha to seize him, the servant went out and saw the army of the Assyrians round about, and Elisha said: ”Fear not, for there are more with us than with them.” And there it is written: ”Lord, open the eyes of thy servant, that he may see.” And when his eyes were opened, the servant saw the chariots and horses. These were the helpers. See, then, what he says, chariots and horses. There was no man upon them, but there were only chariots and horses. This is what he means to say: the multitude of angels. They themselves were both chariots and horses: but the rider was the Lord. Therefore he says in the canticle of Habakkuk: ”And thy riding is salvation.” This is said to God. O that we too might be the horses

of God, and that God might deign to ride upon us. Those contrary horses, then, slumbered, and their riders.

From then thy wrath. From what time is the wrath of God? When the people cried out to Aaron in the wilderness, saying: ”Make us gods whom we may follow: for this Moses, who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what has become of him.” Thou didst bring them out of the land of Egypt, and immediately they denied thee. From heaven thou didst make judgment to be heard. Thou didst speak from heaven, all the people heard and trembled: and yet they did not believe in thee. The earth feared and was still. But Israel neither feared nor was still.

For the thought of man shall confess to thee. This is what is said in another place: ”From my hidden faults cleanse me, and from those that are alien spare thy servant.” Alien to thee, which the devil sends in. And what follows? ”If they shall not have had dominion over me, then shall I be blameless.” If evil thoughts do not overcome me, then shall I be clean in thy sight. And what follows immediately? ”And I shall be cleansed from the greatest offense.” See what he says. If the thought does not overcome me and does not carry me through to the deed, I am freed from a great sin. For the thought of man shall confess to thee. ”For none is clean in the sight of God, not even if his life be of a single day.” ”The stars are not clean in the sight of God,” ”and against his angels he devised something perverse.” Why do I say all this? Because if the stars are not clean, and if in the angels something perverse is found, how much more in the thought of men? Where are those who say: ”Depart from me, for I am clean”? Every day, in what we suffer, we know what is in our thoughts, and we blush to say it. There are many who have not done evil works, there are others who have not even spoken them: but of those who have not sinned in thought, no man is found. Therefore now he says: For the thought of man shall confess to thee.

To the terrible one. To whom? To God. And to him who takes away the spirit of princes. When we see certain powerful men, for example, emperors, prefects, and men exceedingly powerful in this world, let us too say to God: Who takes away the spirit of princes. By ”spirit” we can speak both of the soul, and we can speak also of pride. Let us understand it also in another way. Who takes away the spirit of princes. Let us here understand ”princes” as the saints. For example, Solomon was a prince, the other saints too were princes, Judas the apostle also was a prince: and because they sinned, God took away from them his spirit. Let no one, then, say: I am a bishop, I am a presbyter or a deacon or a monk, I am a prince in this world: God is able to take away the spirit of princes. Indeed, that you may know that God takes away the spirit, the good spirit of God departed from Saul, and the malignant spirit choked him. It follows: ”And the evil spirit of God choked him,” that is, from God. Does God, then, have an evil spirit? By no means: but God had departed for this reason, that afterward the evil spirit might choke him. Therefore

the spirit is called God’s evil spirit. Indeed, the holy David, knowing that he takes away the spirit of princes, prays to God and says: ”And take not thy holy spirit from me.”

To the terrible one among the kings of the earth. This is understood also according to the letter. But may God grant to us also that we may be kings of the earth: kings of the earth, that we may rule over our flesh. Whence the apostle also says: ”Let not sin reign in your mortal body.” And in another place it is written: ”The heart of the king is in the hand of God.” Was the heart of Julian the persecutor in the hand of God? Was the heart of Saul in the hand of God? Was the heart of Manasseh in the hand of God? Was the heart of Ahab in the hand of God? And were the hearts of all the impious kings of Judah in the hand of God? You see that it cannot stand according to the letter. Kings, then, are the saints, and the heart of these is in the hand of the Lord. Let us therefore also ask God that we may be kings, and may rule over our flesh, that it may be subject to us. Whence the apostle also says: ”Therefore I chastise my body and bring it into servitude, lest by chance, while preaching to others, I myself should become a castaway.” Let our soul rule, let the body serve: and at once Christ will come, and will dwell in us. Indeed, what does he himself say in the Gospel? ”I will come,” he says, ”and will stand before the door, and will knock: and if anyone shall open to me, I will come in,” he says, ”and will sup with him.” Every day Christ stands before the door of our breast, he desires to enter. Let us open, he enters into us, and he is our guest and our fellow-diner: that is, he both dwells in us and eats with us.

Homily 10, on Psalm 76

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). With my voice I cried out to the Lord: with my voice to God, and he gave heed to me. In the day of my tribulation I sought out God. See how he is in tribulation, and he beseeches God, God, God — and yet God is one. With my voice I cried out to the Lord. A cry is necessary at that time when he who cries is far off. So what this man says is this: since on account of my sins I am far from you, therefore I cry, that you may hear me. With my voice to God, and he gave heed to me. It is the same thing he says also in another place: ”To the Lord, when I was in tribulation, I cried, and he heard me.” In the day of my tribulation I sought out God. He is speaking of a difficult thing. When we are in tribulation, we are cast down to the ground, we think of nothing else but our trouble; but this man in his tribulation is prompted to beseech God. For example: I have lost my son, my house has been burned, I have come to beggary — I do not seek what I have lost, but I seek the Lord. For if I find him, in him I find all things. ”Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.”

With my hands by night before him: and I was not deceived. In the Hebrew it reads otherwise: ”My hand is stretched out by night, and does not rest. With my hands by night before him. Understand: I cried out. See, then, that our very works cry out to the Lord while we ourselves are silent. Therefore it is said: ”The word of the Lord came in the hand of the prophet Aggeus. It does not come to him in his mouth, that is, in speech, but in his hand, that is, in work. ”For the kingdom of God is not in speech” but in the hand, that is, in work. With my hands by night: that is, I cried out, I cried out with my hands. Therefore it is also said to Moses: ”Why do you cry to me? And surely it is not written there that Moses cried to God; but because his heart cried ”Abba, Father,” and his heart cried out, therefore he says, Why do you cry to me? Hence it is that it is said in Jeremiah: ”The pupil of my eye was not silent. See, then, that even the pupil of our eye is not silent, but as often as we shed tears, so often do we cry out to God with our hands. By night before

him. Hence it is said: ”In the nights lift up your hands to the holy places, and bless the Lord.

In the night of this world and in the darkness, while others hastened to their vices, I lifted up my works to you alone. And I was not deceived. Because I cried out thus, and cried out in work, I was not deceived. It is understood in two ways: either I obtained what I wished, or at least I was not deceived by the snares of the devil, which were eager to encircle me. But in the Hebrew it is written: ”My hand is stretched out by night, and does not rest. The hand is always stretched out to virtues, it is never drawn back for sins.

My soul refused to be comforted. Insofar as it depended on my sins, I could not comfort myself with having no hope. I remembered God, and I was delighted. Insofar as it lay in my sins, I could find no comfort; again I thought of God, and in his mercy I was delighted. In the Hebrew it reads otherwise: ”I remembered God, and I was troubled.” I considered his gentleness, I considered his tenderness, I considered his purity; and seeing myself unclean, I was vehemently troubled. And I was exercised, and my spirit failed. In the Hebrew it reads better: ”I was speaking within myself, and my spirit failed” — whether from despair, or from longing for God. My eyes anticipated the watches. In the Hebrew it reads otherwise: ”I held in check the gaze of my eyes, I was struck dumb and did not speak.” What he means is this: considering my sins, I did not dare to lift my eyes to heaven. ”For to the sinner God has said: Why do you declare my statutes?” Therefore I was struck dumb, I was afraid, I could not speak. This is according to the Hebrew. My eyes anticipated the watches. Before anyone else was awake, I was awake. We read also in Daniel: ”And behold,” he says, ”an ir,” that is, a watcher. ”He shall not slumber nor sleep, who keeps Israel.” Therefore the monk who does not keep watch cannot say this verse. I was troubled, and I did not speak. This is what the apostle says: ”Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” I was troubled, as a man; I did not speak, as a Christian. Anger began in my heart, but I did not bring the anger forth into words.

I thought upon the days of old, and I had the eternal years in mind. Insofar as it lay in my sins, I was despairing, and my soul had refused to be comforted. I began to think from the beginning of the world, when God made man, all the way to my own year, from Adam down to my own time. I meditated by night with my heart, and I dug over my spirit. I was not thinking of my anger, I was not thinking of my enemy; but my whole thought was of God. The night, which is wont to be either for rest or for lust, was for me a thinking upon the virtues. I meditated with my heart, and I dug over my spirit: that is, I dug like a field, that there I might cast the seed of the Lord’s teachings. Will God cast off for ever? This was my whole thought. God made man from the earth, and promised him eternal life: how then was he cast out of paradise, out of the kingdom of God? And will he no more be pleased to show

him favor? Or will he cut off his mercy for ever, from generation and generation? That is, will he cast off both generations, both of the former people and of the later? Suppose he had cast off the people of the Jews: will he cast off the people of the Gentiles too? Or will he in his anger hold back his mercies? He could not have said it more beautifully. However long he restrains himself so as not to have mercy, yet his mercy conquers him.

And I said, Now I have begun. In the Hebrew it reads otherwise: ”And I said, It is my weakness” — that is, what I suffer is not from the cruelty of God, but from my sins. This is the change of the right hand of the Most High. That the Lord should have mercy, that he should give his grace to the whole world, that he should not hold back his mercies in his anger — this is the change of the right hand of the Most High. Unless his right hand, that is, his Son, had been changed and had taken the body of a man, we could not receive mercy. And I said, Now I have begun: this is the change of the right hand of the Most High. ”Who, though he was established in the form of God, did not think it robbery to be equal with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant.”

I was mindful of the works of the Lord: which he had done for Moses, which he had done for the saints. For I will be mindful of your wonders from the beginning: and I will meditate on all your works, and I will be exercised in your devices. My whole thought is of your virtues. I consider how you had mercy on those men, and about myself I do not despair. God, your way is in the holy place. Whoever, then, is not holy, the way of God is not in him. What is the way of God? ”I am the way, and the life, and the truth.” This the Savior says. The way of God, then, is the Son. But the way of God is only in the holy one. If we wish that Christ should dwell in us, let us be holy: for the way of God is in the holy one. What God is great like our God? For just as ”there are many gods, and many lords” (this the apostle says. ”God stood in the assembly of the gods.” ”I have said: you are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High.” And to Moses, ”I have made you a god to Pharaoh”): they are called holy gods. Those are gods according to grace, but you are God by nature. You are the God who does wonders. He did not say, who has done; but, who does. Daily God does wonders, and works — both the Son, and the Holy Spirit. You are the God who does wonders. Yesterday a robber, today a Christian: yesterday a fornicator, today continent: yesterday you were seizing what belonged to others, now you hand over what is your own.

You have made known your power among the peoples. ”Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God”: ”the mystery which had been hidden from the ages”; now you have made known your power among the peoples. You have redeemed with your arm your people. ”Lord, who has believed our report? and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” You have redeemed with your arm your people: that is, in Christ. The sons of Jacob and of Joseph. Both peoples, both of the Jews

and of the Christians: Jacob, in the people of the Jews, and Joseph, in the people of the Gentiles. Indeed, Joseph is interpreted in the Hebrew tongue as ”increase.” Those, then, went before, and we have been joined on: therefore it is said ”the sons of Jacob and of Joseph.” The waters saw you, O God, the waters saw you, and they feared. For the moment let us speak according to the letter; let us cling to the earth for the sake of the simpler folk. When the people passed through the Red Sea and through the Jordan, the waters understood their Creator, and the people did not understand. And the depths were troubled. ”The sea saw, and fled: the Jordan was turned back.” The great sound of the waters. ”The clouds shook out the waters,” it has in the Hebrew. The clouds gave forth their voice. And this they interpret of the time when God was seen on Mount Sinai. For your arrows pass through: the voice of your thunder in the wheel. And this they interpret of the lightnings, and they say: When God thunders, he makes a sound like a wheel. You see how I still cling to the earth and speak according to the letter that kills.

Your lightnings shone upon the world. Here what do you do, O Jew? Your way is in the sea, and your paths in many waters. Make even this to be said either of the sea or of the Jordan. And your footsteps shall not be known. This, according to the letter, how do you understand it? For the sake of the simpler folk we have spoken according to the letter: let us return, then, to the spiritual understanding. The waters saw you, O God. Let us speak from the Revelation of John. ”The many waters,” he says, ”are many peoples. The waters saw you, O God. What waters? ”And let the waters that are above the heavens praise the name of the Lord. The waters saw you, O God. What waters? Pure minds and souls. The waters saw you, and they feared. The fear was not from hatred, but from faith. And the depths were troubled. Let us say something according to the spiritual understanding. In the beginning of Genesis it is written: ”And over the waters,” it says, ”the Spirit was borne. And then it is written: ”Over the depths,” it says, ”darkness was borne. See, then, what is said in the beginning of Genesis. This according to the spiritual understanding. Over the waters, it says, the Spirit was borne. Already at that time baptism was signified. For there could be no baptism without the Spirit. But over the depths, darkness. This is the abyss into which the demons beg not to be sent by Jesus.

Over the depths, then, darkness. In the waters was cleanness, in the depths darkness. What the depths are, you understand while I am silent: since the demons dread to go into the abyss. The clouds gave forth their voice. The clouds are the prophets: who kept silence to the Jews, but spoke to us. The clouds gave forth their voice. For your arrows have passed through. The preaching of the word of Christ has run into the whole world. The voice of your thunder in the wheel. Thunder is properly a great voice. Indeed, at that time when God spoke, ”This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” there was made a voice of thunder like a wheel. Indeed, therefore it is written: ”Deep calls to deep in the voice of your cataracts”:

that is, the two testaments, the new and the old. The voice of your thunder in the wheel: the voice of your preaching in the wheel. Therefore it is called a great voice, because the preaching is great. The voice of your thunder in the wheel: in the whole world round about. It is not only heard in Judea: but you speak, and it is heard unto the age. This we have said in a general way: but let us speak also in particular of the inner man. The wheel stands upon the earth with only some small trace of contact, and it not only stands, but as it were runs on: it does not stand still, but touches and passes by:

finally, when it is rolled, it always mounts up to higher things. So too the holy man, because he is in the body, has the necessity of thinking some things about earthly matters; and when he has come to food and clothing and the rest of such things, having food and clothing, with these he is content, touching the earth, and he hastens to higher things. In him who runs and hastens to higher things, in him is your word. We read also in the prophet: ”Holy stones are rolled upon the earth. See what he said: Holy stones are rolled upon the earth. For because they are wheels, therefore they are rolled upon the earth and hasten to higher things. Do you wish to know of more wheels? We read: ”And a wheel within a wheel”; we read in Ezekiel: ”The wheels cling one to another. The two wheels are the new and the old testament. This wheel clings to that, and that to this. Yet see what is said in Ezekiel: ”And wherever,” it says, ”the spirit was leading, thither the wheels also followed. This is said also in Ecclesiastes, at the consummation of the world: ”And the wheel,” it says, ”shall be rolled over the cistern. There are many things that might be said about wheels: but the discourse hastens on to the rest.

Your lightnings shone upon the world: the apostolic preaching. The earth was moved and trembled. Unless our earth had been moved and troubled, we would not be Christians. The earth was moved and trembled. For the Spirit of the Lord rests upon no one, save upon him who is humble and quiet and trembles at his words. Your way is in the sea: where the waves are, where the bitter water is, where the dragon dwells, where the little tiny fishes cling. Your way is in the sea. You who were in heaven came down to earth. According to the letter we can say: At the time when Moses led the people out, it was you who led them out. Your way is in the sea. Then we can also, according to the history, say it otherwise: The seas were a way for you. But that he did once; for the rest, daily he speaks to the sea: ”Be still, be silent.” The Lord calms you, that we may be able to pass through this world. Your way is in the sea. He came, the fountain of life, to sweeten the sea, the bitter sea, the Dead Sea. Therefore, according to Ezekiel, there goes forth from the temple of the Lord a fountain of living water, and it goes to the Dead Sea, which had nothing living. For no little fishes could be in the Dead Sea, nothing lived in the Dead Sea. From the temple of the Lord, that is, from his bosom, the Savior went forth, and sweetened the Dead Sea and the bitter waters. Your way is in the sea. And your paths in many waters. Therefore your way is in the sea, that you

might make a way, and your apostles might follow you. And your paths in many waters.

And your footsteps shall not be known: you led out your people like sheep. The good shepherd led out his people like sheep. By the hand of Moses and Aaron. This he did according to the letter: for the rest, daily he does it in us. By the hand of Moses, that is, in the law (and we know that the law is spiritual): in the spiritual law. And of Aaron: that is, in the priesthood. In your spiritual law, and in your spiritual priesthood, you led out your people. Let us understand this according to the letter of Moses and Aaron. Moses indeed was led out, and Aaron, but not led into the land of promise. Jesus succeeded him. See what is written. Moses died in the desert, Aaron died, Miriam died; and this is what is written in the prophet: ”And I will strike,” it says, ”three shepherds in one month. They died: for they could not enter into the land of promise. They only saw over against the land of promise, and could not enter. The Jews saw the land of promise, and could not enter. For they died in the desert, and their corpses are in the wilderness, of those who died in the desert. We, the sons, under Jesus as leader, came to the Jordan, and entered into the land of promise, and came to Gilgal, and were a second time circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, and the reproach of Egypt was taken away from us.

Then Jesus himself our leader holds the sword, and always goes before us, and fights for us, and conquers our adversaries, and for seven days we go around Jericho, that is, this world. We sing with the priestly trumpets, and we go around Jericho, that is, this world, and its walls fall, and we enter in, and we are the victors. Then we conquer the city of Ai: afterward we come to Jebus, we come to Hazor, we come to other cities; we conquer the adversaries whom under Moses we could not conquer. Let us give thanks, then, to our leader Jesus: for with him as leader, with him fighting, we conquer. He commanded the sun to stand still, and it stood still, and that great man was a type of this one: he was commanding, but the Lord was accomplishing it. He came forth the victor: he, as I have often said, slew five kings in the cave: he led us into the land of promise. To him let us give thanks; he is the son of Nun, which we read as Nave: he it is who was called Osee, which we read as Ause. For according to the Hebrew truth it is not said Ause, but Osee, that is, ”savior. Truly a savior: for he saved us, and led us out of the desert, and led us into the land of promise.

Homily 11, on Psalm 77

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Divine Scripture commands that, when we have been invited to a rich man’s banquet, we should with understanding put forth our hand to the dishes. And so for us too the banquet of Scriptures has been set out as a rich man’s feast. We have come into a meadow; it has very many flowers: here the rose is red, there the lilies gleam white, there are flowers of every kind. Our soul is drawn this way and that, to gather from wherever it may the more beautiful flowers. If we pick the rose, we leave the lily behind; if we take the lily, the violets are still left for us. So too in the seventy-seventh psalm, which is mystical and wrapped up in very many sacred mysteries, whatever letter you look at, they are flowers, flowers of every kind, and we cannot choose them all. But let us choose all that we can: from a few we can also contemplate the remaining excellence of the flowers.

”The understanding of Asaph.” It is headed with this title. The very title summons us to understanding. Asaph was one of the choir-masters, just as also were the sons of Korah, and Idithun, and the rest. Therefore this man too is one of the prophets from among the choir-masters. Since, then, the understanding is straightforward, and in the psalm a history is narrated, we are compelled of necessity to understand everything that is written according to that understanding. It is written: ”In the land of Egypt, in the field of Tanis: he split the sea and led them out; he set the waters as if in a wineskin, and led them out in a cloud by day, and all night in the illumination of fire,” and so on. We see that a straightforward history is narrated. If, then, we understand it just as it is written, the title ”The understanding of Asaph” has been prefixed for no reason. But if we understand it as the title indicates, we are compelled of necessity to have one thing in the letter and to find another in the spirit.

”Attend, my people, to my law; incline your ear to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter propositions from the beginning.” You see that it is well written above, ”The understanding of Asaph.” Indeed, the very prophecy

begins thus: ”Attend, my people, to my law” — not Moses’ law, but ”my law.” ”Incline your ear to the words of my mouth.” This is what he says in the Gospel: ”He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” ”I will open my mouth in parables”: to you I will open what is closed to the Jews; to you I will open my mouth in parables. ”And without a parable,” it says, ”he did not speak to them”; but to his own disciples he unfolded the parables in private. ”I will open my mouth in parables”: what I speak to those others outwardly in parables, to you I will open up inwardly. ”I will utter propositions from the beginning.” In place of ”propositions” the Hebrew has ”riddles (enigmas).” Therefore everything that is said is a riddle.

The riddle is not that which is said, but something else which is signified by the riddle. Let someone say to me: You do violence to Scripture; for since the title has ”The understanding of Asaph,” you interpret this saying for me from the person of Christ. If we are Christians (and we are Christians, we who have received the baptism of Christ, and not only confess but also profess it) — because we are Christians, we ought to believe the evangelists. It is written in the Gospel according to Matthew: ”When,” it says, ”our Lord and Savior had spoken in parables, and those men did not understand,” and the rest of what is written in the Gospel. And afterward what did the evangelist add? ”All these things,” he says, ”were done, that there might be fulfilled that which is written: I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter propositions from the beginning.” You see, therefore, that the evangelist Matthew understands this from the person of Christ. For when he had introduced the Lord speaking in parables, and those men did not understand: ”This,” he says, ”was done, that there might be fulfilled that which is written, I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter propositions from the beginning.”

It seems to us that no question has remained, but attend carefully: for it is my concern not to declaim in the manner of a rhetorician, but to grasp the sense of the Scriptures. Indeed, what did the Lord and Savior himself say? ”Search the Scriptures, and there you will find how it is written concerning me.” And he said another thing to the Jews: ”You err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.” See what he says. ”You err.” Why? ”Not knowing the Scriptures.” But since you do not know the Scriptures, therefore you do not know Christ, who is the power of God and the wisdom of God. It is said, then, in Matthew: ”These things,” it says, ”were done, that there might be fulfilled that which is written in Asaph the prophet.” Thus it is found in all the old codices, but ignorant men removed it.

Indeed, many gospels to this day have it thus: ”That there might be fulfilled that which is written through Isaiah the prophet: I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter propositions from the beginning. This is not spoken by Isaiah, but by Asaph. Indeed, that impious Porphyry too puts forward this very thing against us, and says: ”Your evangelist Matthew was so unskilled that he said, that which is written in Isaiah the prophet, I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter

propositions from the beginning. Therefore let us say it simply: just as, in the Gospel, it is written — it is written in Matthew and John that our Lord was crucified at the sixth hour, while again it is written in Mark that he was crucified at the third hour. This seems to be a discrepancy, but it is not a discrepancy. It was an error of the copyists: in Mark too ”the sixth hour” had been written, but many, in place of the Greek episēmon (the numeral sign), thought it was a gamma. For just as there it was an error of the copyists, so here too it was an error of the copyists, that in place of Asaph they wrote Isaiah. For not knowing (since the early church was gathered from unskilled Gentiles) — therefore, when they read in the Gospel ”That there might be fulfilled that which is written in Asaph the prophet,” the one who first was copying the Gospel began to say:

Who is this Asaph the prophet? He was not known among the people. And what did he do? So that while he corrected the error, he made an error. Let us say something similar, and in another place in the Gospel according to Matthew — when Judas brought back the thirty pieces of silver, and the priests were unwilling to accept it or to put it into the corban, since it was the price of blood; and from it they bought the potter’s field for the burial of strangers. The price of Christ is our burial; and that field is called Akeldama, which is ”the field of blood. It is the field of blood of the Jews, but it is our burial. For we were strangers and sojourners, we had nowhere to rest. He was crucified and died, and we were buried together with him. ”That there might be fulfilled,” it says, ”that which is written in Jeremiah the prophet. He brought back,” it says, ”the thirty pieces of silver, the price that was written,” and so on. ”As it is written,” it says, ”in Jeremiah the prophet. This is written in Matthew. We searched in Jeremiah, we could not find this at all; but we found it in Zechariah. You see, therefore, that here too there was an error, just as there.

”How great the things we have heard and known.” These little verses, from ”Attend, my people, to my law” up to this verse, ”I will utter propositions from the beginning,” are spoken from the person of Christ; the Savior himself speaks. Now the remaining verses, up to the end of the psalm, we must take as from the person of the apostles. When, then, the Lord says, ”Incline your ear to the words of my mouth” — O apostles, what you have heard in secret, he says, proclaim upon the rooftops — what do the apostles say? ”How great the things we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.” These things, O Lord, which you speak to us, our fathers the patriarchs and the prophets have also spoken to us. ”And our fathers have told us.” ”They were not hidden from their children unto another generation.” Therefore they spoke, so that we, their children, might know. ”And he established a law in Israel. How great the things he commanded our fathers.” He spoke these things carnally, but we understand them spiritually. ”That they might make them known to their sons”: this is, to us. Therefore he spoke to them, so that they might pass them on to us.

”The sons who shall be born and shall rise up, and shall tell them to their sons.” ”In place of your fathers, sons have been born to you.” We are their sons. They told us, and we have told our sons: we are their sons. ”That they might place their hope in God.” That they might now no longer believe in idols, but believe in God. ”And not forget the works of God.” That they might see the order of creation, and from the creation understand the Creator. ”And seek out his commandments.” Let them not despise them like the Jews, but seek them out like Christians. ”That they might not become like their fathers.” That they might not murmur, as certain ones murmured in the desert and perished; that they might not murmur thus like the Jews, and perish in the desert. ”A generation crooked and provoking.” It is not I who say this: your own prophet says this about you. ”A generation crooked and provoking.” ”An adulterous and most wicked generation seeks a sign, and a sign shall not be given to it, except the sign of Jonah.” Why did he say ”crooked”? ”Because they were turned into a crooked bow.” For a bow is never drawn against the one who shoots it, but against the adversaries. But this generation, though it had been created upright by God, and was held in the hand of God like a bow, so that he might shoot arrows through it, was turned like a crooked bow, blaspheming against their Creator.

”A generation which did not direct its heart.” To this day Israel is crooked. ”And its spirit was not directed with God.” Since it did not receive the Son, therefore it did not receive the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the Holy Spirit, when it descended in the likeness of a dove, did not descend upon the crowds of the Jews, but upon the one Jesus. If, then, you wish, O Jew, to receive the Spirit, believe in Jesus: since the Holy Spirit rests upon Jesus.

”The sons of Ephraim, bending and shooting the bow. O how great the mysteries, O how many the flowers! I say not a day, but a whole month cannot suffice for the understanding of this psalm. In individual words there are meanings. We have also a treasure in these earthen vessels. Many interpret this of the body and the Holy Spirit: that is, ”we have a treasure in earthen vessels. That understanding indeed exists too. But this one is much better, since we have a most precious treasure in earthen vessels, that is, in the rustic words of the Scriptures. ”The sons of Ephraim, bending and shooting the bow, were turned back in the day of battle. They did not keep the covenant of God, and in his law they were unwilling to walk. And they forgot his benefits, and his wonders which he showed them. We read in the books of Kingdoms that under Rehoboam the son of Solomon, Jeroboam the son of Nabat tore the people away from the rest of the people, and led ten tribes into Samaria. But the tribe of Judah and Benjamin remained under the rule of Rehoboam; and many of the tribe of Levi, who dwelt in Jerusalem as priests and Levites, as is written in Chronicles, returned to the temple of God, that is, in Jerusalem. There were, then, three tribes, that is, in Judea: Judah itself the royal tribe, and Benjamin, and afterward the Levites, where they had come from various tribes to the temple.

Those, then, who were in Samaria had a king from the tribe of Ephraim. For just as those who reigned in Judea had a king from the tribe of Judah and from the lineage of David, so also those who reigned in Samaria had a king from the tribe of Ephraim, and their kings were called Ephraim. Let us read Hosea the prophet, and we find his whole prophecy against Ephraim; and it is said there: ”Ephraim,” it says, ”has become like a foolish dove. See what he says: ”a foolish dove. It has abandoned the temple, and dwells in the woods. For the dove always dwells in houses. But Ephraim, my dove, has abandoned the temple, has abandoned the house, and dwells in the woods, dwells in the deserts.

This much for now according to the letter; for we ought also to set forth the history. But now, after the letter, we ought as if by certain steps to ascend to greater things. Let us say, then, that the sons of Ephraim are all the heretics. For these too have departed from the house of God, and these too have forsaken David and the kingdom of David, and they dwell in the deserts. And they are indeed called doves, because they too read the Scriptures, but they understand them foolishly. There are many things that might be said. ”The sons of Ephraim, bending and shooting the bow.” Look at all the heretics: who have forsaken Jerusalem, who have forsaken the temple of God, who dwell in Samaria — where did they make the golden calves? In Bethel and in Dan. And see what he says: they made golden calves in Bethel, in the house of God. In the house of God they became idolaters. And they made that thing in Dan, that is, unto their own judgment and unto their condemnation. They forsook the house of the Lord, and they think of nothing else but gold. Let someone say: Why did they make golden calves? Our treasure is stored up in earthen vessels. For the men of the church are rustic and simple, but all the heretics are Aristotelians and Platonists. Indeed, that you may know that all worldly eloquence is called gold — that is, since their tongue, as if for its splendor, is called gold: ”Babylon is a golden cup in the hand of the Lord.” See what he says: ”Babylon,” of confusion. Therefore this world is a golden cup. From this golden cup all the nations are given drink.

”The sons of Ephraim, bending and shooting the bow.” Whomever of the heretics you see, they all have superstitions. ”They were turned back in the day of battle.” They do not know him who said, ”My peace I give to you, my peace I leave to you,” but they are prepared for words. They have words; but let them hear that which is written: ”Scatter the nations that desire wars.” Let someone say that it is our own opinion. Let us look at what follows. ”They did not keep the covenant of God, and in his law they were unwilling to walk, and they forgot his benefits.” They rose up against him who regenerated them in baptism. ”And his wonders which he showed them: before their fathers the wonders which he did.” See the sense of the Scriptures, how from the sons of Ephraim it comes to past histories; so that it shows that what is written, ”I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter propositions from the beginning,” was said parabolically.

”Before their fathers the wonders which he did in the land of Egypt, in the field of Tanis: he split the sea and led them through; he set the waters as if in a wineskin, and led them down in a cloud by day.” Let someone say: You do violence to Scripture: for it is said simply of the people of Israel, when they were led out of the land of Egypt, and therefore it is said according to the history; and we read that the ten tribes forsook God, and became idolaters, and that they followed the golden calves. Let us look at the time in which Asaph the prophet lived. Certainly at that time when David lived. But under David the ten tribes had not yet been separated. David reigned forty years; again Solomon another forty years; after eighty years, later under Rehoboam, the ten tribes were torn away. You see, therefore, that what is said is not said of the ten tribes, but it is prophesied concerning the heretics.

”Before their fathers the wonders which he did.” The heretics, then, having forgotten their father, the wonders which he did in the land of Egypt, in the darkness of this world, how he freed them — they were reborn in the church, and afterward, once they were born, the church displeases them. ”In the land of Egypt, in the field of Tanis”: where idolatry was, where the king of Egypt was, where the horsemen of Egypt were, where Jannes and Mambres the adversaries of Moses were, where idolatry was. We were all in Egypt, and we have been freed by the Lord. ”He split the sea and led them through.” The Lord walked upon the sea, and calmed the waves of the sea, and led us through. ”He split the sea and led them through.” To this day, O faithful monk, when you are led out of Egypt, the sea is split, and thus you are led out. ”He set the waters as if in a wineskin.” In the Hebrew it does not have ”wineskin,” but ”heap.”

”And he led them down in a cloud by day.” ”Behold, the Lord comes into Egypt upon a light cloud.” By the light cloud we ought to understand either, properly, the body of the Savior, because it was light and weighed down by no sin; or certainly by the light cloud we ought to understand holy Mary, weighed down by no human seed. Behold, the Lord comes into the Egypt of this world upon a light cloud, the Virgin. ”And he led them down in a cloud by day.” Beautifully he said ”by day”: for that cloud was not in darkness, but always in light. ”And all night in the illumination of fire.” ”And the darkness is not hidden from you: as the light is to you, so also is the night to you.” ”And all night in the illumination of fire.” ”Our Lord is a consuming fire.” A consuming fire. He did not say what it consumes: he left the understanding to us. Those who have built upon the foundation of Christ wood, hay, stubble — to them the Lord is a consuming fire. Fire has a twofold nature: it both gives light and burns. If we are sinners, it burns; if we are righteous, it gives us light.

”He split the rock in the desert.” The rock has been split for us in the wilderness. The rock was struck, and the waters flowed: that rock which says, ”Whoever thirsts, let him come and drink”; from whose belly rivers flowed. ”And he gave them water

to drink as if from a great abyss." In the desert, where there was no water, an abundance of waters was made for us.

There are many things that might be said, and the psalm is boundless, and we are shut out by time. But let us pray the Lord that for us too he may split the sea, that for us too the rock may pour out waters, lest our corpses too perish and lie with the people in the desert. For you know that the corpses of our fathers lie in the desert to this day. Believe me: as often as I see synagogues, I always have in my mind that which is said by the apostle, that we ought not to exult over the olive tree whose branches were broken, but to fear; since if the natural branches were cut off, how much more should we, who are grafted in from the wild olive, fear lest we become like our fathers, "a generation crooked and provoking, a generation which did not direct its heart, and whose spirit was not held faithful with God." Since they do not have the Spirit of God, therefore they are dead, and their corpses lie in the desert. I understand their synagogues to be nothing else but tombs in the desert. Read the old books. But let us pray the Lord that these tombs too may rise again. For if the children of Abraham have been made from stones, the children of Adam, who are dead, can rise again, if Jesus wills it. For although they are dead and lie in tombs, even if they are four days dead, even if they stink, Jesus can say to them: "Lazarus, come forth."

Homily 12, on Psalm 78

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Since we have become poor. Since you became poor for our sake, therefore we too have become poor. ”The prayer of the poor man, when he is in anguish, and pours out his prayer before the Lord.” Since you became poor, though you were rich, we too have become poor. Help us, O God our Savior. In the Hebrew it has ”Help us, O God our Jesus.” For wherever there is ”Savior,” there the Hebrew has ”Jesus.” Thus Gabriel, when he came to Mary, said, ”And you shall call him Jesus: for he shall save his people.” Help us, O God our Jesus. See what he says: ”help.” He who says ”help” is himself also striving to be set free: for God does not help us while we sleep, but while we labor.

For the glory of your name, O Lord, deliver us: since your new name has been invoked over us, which is blessed among the nations. And be merciful to our sins for your name’s sake. You are the Savior, you are Christ, and we are Christians: have mercy on us for your name’s sake.

Let the groaning of the fettered enter into your sight. This is what those who follow the teachings of Origen are accustomed to say: The groaning of the fettered — that is, of the angels, they say, who have been fettered in bodies. For just as, if fetters are put on the feet, they weigh down the body and do not allow it to run; so also our bodies enclose souls — that is, angels — and weigh them down upon the earth. And with what words do they prove this? ”Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” And that which he says, ”I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ” — to return and to be with Christ. See, he says, what the apostle says. Whoever says ”I desire to return” says it precisely of that place where he had been before. Let the groaning of the fettered enter into your sight. But I, in plain rustic simplicity and in the simplicity of the Church, answer you thus — for so the apostles answered, so they spoke, not with rhetorical and diabolical words: ”For it is better to return and to be with Christ.” For so it stands in the Greek; it does not have ”to be dissolved” but ”to return.” To return, and to be with Christ. Where

Adam my father was, there I too long to be; from where he was cast out, I desire to return. In Adam we have all been cast out of paradise. Let the groaning of the fettered enter into your sight. For why should I not understand this to have been said plainly of the martyrs, who were shut up in prisons? For how many were even sent to the mines? But I say that God truly hears the voice of those fettered ones.

According to the greatness of your arm possess the sons of those who have been put to death. All of us, if indeed we are worthy, are the sons of the martyrs. The apostle, when he was in prison, was fettered: all the apostles, when they were in prisons, were fettered: all the martyrs who were slain in prisons were fettered. Therefore it is now said, Possess the sons of those who have been put to death. Render to our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom. It seems to me that he does not ask against them, but for them: that is, give them your sabbath. Now ”sabbath” is interpreted as rest. What he says is this: make them rest in their wickedness. Or else, otherwise: render it to them here, and do not render it to them in the time to come. But we your people and the sheep of your pasture. When he says ”sheep,” he signifies innocence. Sheep have nothing but a shepherd. We will give you thanks forever. We will confess: either we do penance, or, what is better, we glorify. From generation to generation; among the first people, and among the second people. Although according to the historical sense it is said otherwise in Ezekiel, nevertheless according to the spiritual understanding we say this, since these two peoples — that is, the two rods — are joined together in Ezekiel, and become one kingdom. From generation to generation we will proclaim your praise. It is the voice of the apostles: Peter among the people of the circumcision, and Paul and Barnabas among the nations.

Homily 13, on Psalm 80

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). To the end, for the winepresses, of Asaph. In the Law it is written that there are three solemn feasts: Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Before the Feast of Tabernacles, ten days before, there was a fast, and the fast lasted until evening. At that time they sounded the trumpets — that is, they fasted, and during the fast they sounded the trumpets — and after ten days came the Feast of Tabernacles. Attend carefully. There are three solemn feasts described in the Law: first Passover, then Pentecost, then the Feast of Tabernacles. Before the Feast of Tabernacles, a fast; and during the fast they sounded the trumpets. Notice what Scripture signifies. Lift up the veil that was placed before the eyes of Moses, and see that we cannot become tabernacles unless we first fast. But that very fast, unless it has the sign of victory that frightens off our adversaries, Amalek is not conquered. Since therefore there are three solemn feasts — Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles — for that reason three psalms too have the title ’for the winepresses’: the eighth psalm, and the eightieth, and the eighty-third. You see, then, how three psalms have been written in the psalter that are inscribed ’for the winepresses.’ See what it says: the eighth psalm, and the eightieth, and the eighty-third.

And before we argue about the number, let us say what these winepresses mean to signify. For the winepresses. Winepresses are found nowhere except where there is a vineyard and an unbounded vintage. For the winepresses. Therefore the Lord and Savior says: ’I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the nations there was no man with me.’ Therefore he transferred a vine out of Egypt and planted it. And he says in Jeremiah: ’I planted you a true vine, wholly chosen: how have you turned into bitterness for me, you strange vine?’ And Noah drank wine and became drunk. It is said also by Solomon, said in a mystery: ’Drink, friends, and become drunk.’ We read also in another place that Joseph, that holy man who went before as a type of the Savior, who was sold by his brothers, whom his brothers sold, and reigned in Egypt — just as our Lord and Savior too was sold by the Jews and reigned in the Egypt of this world. That Joseph, then, the holy man, that outstanding one,

who overcame cruelty with love; who for this reason was sold into Egypt, that he might feed Egypt and his brothers who had sold him — that Joseph, then, invited his brothers. But see: 'And he became drunk at midday.' And is this true, and can it stand according to the letter, that a holy man became drunk? Noah too became drunk, but he had truly become drunk.

Joseph was drunk, Noah too became drunk, and he became drunk in his own house. See the mystery. Let us first see what it signifies in mystery, and afterward let us discuss what it signifies in its plain sense. After the flood of this world Noah drank, and became drunk in his own house, and his thighs were uncovered, and his shame appeared. And the elder brother came and mocked; but the younger brother covered him. All this is said of the Savior, since he had drunk his passion on the cross. 'Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me.' He drank, and became drunk, and his thighs were uncovered: that is, the ignominy of the cross. The elder brother came, the people of the Jews, and mocked; and the younger, the people from the nations, covered the ignominy. Therefore 'cursed be Canaan, he shall be a servant to his brother.' Behold, that curse persists to this very day. We, the younger people, command the elder people of the Jews. As therefore the Lord became drunk in his passion, so too the saints are daily made drunk in the ardor of faith, and are made drunk with the Holy Spirit. You who yesterday were gathering gold, today throw it away: do you not seem mad in the eyes of those who do not know you?

Finally the apostles too, because the Holy Spirit had descended upon them and filled them, and they were speaking in various tongues, for that reason were said to be full of new wine. Many are the things that might be said about the mystery of wine and about drunkenness. To the end, for the winepresses, of Asaph. The eighth psalm, and the eightieth, and the eighty-third. No other number could have the winepresses except the eighth, and the eightieth, and the eighty-third. The eighth is the day of resurrection in the single number. Again, in eight decades, the eightieth, another and greater number. You see, then, that these winepresses are prescribed only on the day of resurrection, the eighth, and the eightieth. Someone may say: Why is 'winepresses' said afterward in the eighty-third? These winepresses pertain to the mystery of the Trinity. Therefore there are also three choirmasters. In the eighth it says, 'A Psalm of David'; in the eightieth, 'of Asaph'; in the eighty-third, 'of the sons of Korah.' The eighth is David, which is interpreted 'strong in hand.' For our first victory involves a fight and a struggle: therefore he is called 'David, strong in hand.' But the second, that is in the eightieth, 'of Asaph.' And Asaph is interpreted 'synagogue' (assembly). In the eighth, then, we conquer, and in the eightieth we are gathered together with the Lord. But in the eighty-third, 'of the sons of Korah.' Korah is interpreted 'Calvary' (the place of the skull). 'Go up, bald one; go up, bald one.' This the boys said also to Elisha, because he had suffered in the place of the skull. Many are the things that might be said as to

how Elisha was mocked at Bethel by forty-two boys. These are the winepresses of which the Savior too says: 'Make yourselves friends of the unrighteous mammon, that they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.'

For it is a commandment for Israel, and a judgment of the God of Jacob. What is the commandment of God? To sing to God in victory: not to think it one's own, but the Lord's. When he came out of the land of Egypt, he heard a tongue which he did not know. We too, when we came out of Egypt, heard a tongue which we did not know. Which of us knew the Gospel? which the Apostle? which the prophets? We came out of Egypt, and we heard a tongue which we did not know; we learned a tongue which we did not know.

And immediately there follows: He turned his back away from burdens. When we were in Egypt, we were building the cities of Pharaoh, we were carrying mud and brick, and our whole soul was seeking straw. We had no wheat, we had no heavenly bread that comes down from heaven: we were not yet receiving manna from heaven, the serpent had not yet been lifted up for us in the wilderness, the rock had not yet sent us water, we were not yet stretching out our hands and Amalek falling. We sat in the mud, and we did Egyptian works, we were building the cities of Pharaoh. He turned his back away from burdens. How great were the burdens we once had. Therefore our Moses says: 'Come to me, all you who are laden with sins, and I will refresh you.' His hands served in the basket. Whose? Israel's. The baskets of Egypt are one thing, and the baskets of Jesus another. Jesus too has his own baskets, and our Savior filled twelve baskets from the fragments. O wondrous thing, signifying immense mysteries! Five thousand of the people were dwelling in the wilderness, apart from the little ones and the women; in a deserted place there are found only as many as five loaves; for the place was a desert. I ask you, you who follow only the letter: in a deserted place there are found only five loaves — and how are twelve baskets found? If the place was a desert, surely it could not have twelve baskets. But all this is signified: that the Lord led his people out of Egypt into the desert of this world; he fed them with his loaves, and whatever was left over he stored up in twelve baskets — that is, in the twelve apostles; so that what had perished in the twelve tribes might be saved in the twelve apostles.

In tribulation you called upon me, and I delivered you. The prophets and the psalms are for this reason obscure, because suddenly, when you are not expecting it, the speaker is changed. Up to this point the prophet has been speaking: now suddenly the person of God is brought in, speaking to the people. In tribulation you called upon me, and I delivered you. Whoever you are that are in tribulation, be secure: call upon me, and you will be heard. I heard you in the hiding-place of the tempest. That tempest which was pressing upon you, and dragging you this way and that as if with waves: I was in the midst of the tempest. I proved you at the water of contradiction. According to the letter it is said of Moses and Aaron that at the

water of contradiction they offended God. Indeed, for this reason they did not enter the land of promise. But to us God says: I proved you at the water of contradiction. Simon was proved at the water of contradiction, because in hypocrisy he received baptism. Whoever, therefore, receives baptism in hypocrisy, he is proved at the water of contradiction.

Hear, my people, and I will testify to you. God is speaking to us. Whatever he said to the people, he speaks also to us. Israel, if you will hear me. Why do you ask that I hear you? Let us see what he commands. There shall be no new god in you. He whose god is his belly, a new god is his. As many vices as we have, as many sins, so many new gods do we have. I have been angered: anger is a god to me. I have seen a woman, and I have lusted: lust is a god to me. For each one, whatever he desires and reveres, this is his god as well. The greedy man has gold for his god. Nor shall you adore a strange god. Our God is virtue; the god of others, vices and sins.

For I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. It is we who have been brought out of the land of Egypt — if indeed we have gone out, if we are in the wilderness, if we long to see the land of promise. If we have left Sodom, let us not look back to Sodom: we have been saved on the mountain. Let us not desire the flesh-pots of Egypt, let us not say: How well off we were in Egypt, when we ate flesh in the cauldrons, and the rest, and the cucumbers. Do you wish to receive the Lord's foods? do you wish to eat your Lord and Savior himself? Hear what he says. Open wide your mouth, and I will fill it. Open wide your mouths: he himself is both the Lord and the bread. He himself exhorts us to eat, and he himself is our food. As much as you open wide, so much will you receive: it is therefore not in my power, but in yours. If you are willing, you will receive me whole; if you are unwilling, you will receive at least a part.

And my people did not hear my voice. I stand before the door, I knock. I want you to open, and I will come in: and you are unwilling to open. And Israel did not attend to me. And I let them go according to the desires of their heart: they shall go on in their own devices. Unhappy is he who is not corrected by God. If anyone sinning is not struck, he is wretched. Therefore he says: I let them go according to the desires of their heart. For this reason I let them go, because I often struck them and they did not accept discipline. I entreated, they did not hear; I struck, they did not feel the pain. I let them go in their own wishes, so that, sated with their vices, they might even so do their repentance. If my people had heard me. O most merciful Father, O compassionate God! He entreated, and was not heard; as though angered, he lets go the wanton son. Again he sees him perishing, and grieves that he perishes. And what does he say? If my people had heard me, if Israel had walked in my ways, I would perhaps have humbled their enemies for nothing. Was it a great thing for me to deliver you from tribulation? could I not

send forth my majesty and rescue you from danger? But because I have left you to free will, and have set the stadium before you, and I do not crown any but the one who has fought, for that reason I leave the victory to your own choice.

The enemies of the Lord have lied to him. In the Hebrew it better reads 'the enemies of the Lord shall deny him' — that is, the Jews, his enemies, shall deny him. But these enemies who are going to deny him — will they then perish? will there then be no remnant? And how did you swear to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that their seed should be as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the sea? Why did you promise to the fathers, and not repay the sons? The enemies of the Lord shall deny him. But what does it say? And their time shall be forever. 'When the fullness of the nations has come in, then all Israel shall be saved.' In the future they will believe; only now they have not believed. Now let me speak to the Jews. For they are wont to applaud themselves and say: And their time shall be forever. Let us say: It is true, for some of the Jews are going to believe. Indeed we read also in the Apocalypse of John that twelve thousand from each of the tribes — that is, a hundred and forty-four thousand — are going to believe; and this is said to be of virgins. But where the number of virgins will be so great, how great will be the number of those who are not virgins? Therefore let us too say to the Jews: Your time shall be forever — that is, in the age to come. But to you, who today do not believe, what does it pertain? And their time shall be forever. Such as belongs to the enemies of God, such shall their time be.

And he fed them from the fat of the wheat. He led them into the land of promise: he fed them not with manna, as in the desert, but with the wheat that fell, that rose again. And he fed them from the fat of the wheat. See the mystery of the Scriptures. From the fat of the wheat. Does wheat have fat? does it perhaps even have entrails? But he wished to show the bounty and richness of spiritual grace, and therefore he named it 'fat.' And with honey from the rock he satisfied them. He himself is the wheat; he himself is also the rock, who satisfied the people of Israel with water in the desert. Spiritually, he satisfied them with honey and not with water: so that whoever have believed and received the food may feel honey in their mouth. 'How sweet are your words to my throat, above honey to my mouth!' Finally our Lord too, after the resurrection, for this reason ate the honeycomb, and was satisfied with honey from the rock. I say something new. He himself the rock, he himself ate the honey, that he might bestow honey and sweetness upon us: so that those who under the Law had drunk myrrh — that is, bitterness — might afterward in the Gospel eat the honey of the Gospel.

Homily 14, on Psalm 81

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). God stood in the assembly of the gods. There are many postures. For frequently we sit, sometimes we stand, sometimes we lie down, sometimes we run, sometimes we walk. So too God is described according to the variety of human beings, and his posture is introduced as varied. If we are holy, and are like Moses, it is said to us: ’But you, stand here with me.’ For this is what God says to Moses. For Moses was standing upon the rock: therefore God too was standing for him. But if we were holy first, and afterwards sinners, God no longer stands for us, but walks: that is, he who before had stood for us moves from his place. After we have been moved, he too is moved together with us. Finally, Adam too, as long as he was in paradise and kept the law, God stood for him. But after he transgressed, he heard the voice of God walking in paradise. Do you want to know that God was walking for him? What did he say to him? ’Adam, where are you?’ He who had not fled from God while he stood, afterwards fled from him as he walked.

We have spoken of the one standing, we have spoken of the one walking: let us speak of the one sitting. Whenever God is introduced as sitting, he is introduced in two ways: either as a king, or as a judge. If as a king, one sees him as Isaiah did: ’I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up.’ There he is introduced as a king reigning. But when he is introduced as a judge: ’The thrones were set, and the books were opened.’ It is written in Daniel. What is said? The thrones were set, and the books were opened: that is, the Lord about to sit as a judge, and about to read over the works of all. The books which are now folded up shall then be opened. Everything that we do, that we speak, that we think — even for an idle word we are going to render an account: it is written in the books of God. Someone thinks there are books in heaven, where our sins are written. I think the books are our consciences, which shall then be opened, and each one shall see what he has done. ’Nothing is hidden, that shall not be revealed.’ Therefore the thrones were set, and the books were opened. How many things are written in my book, and I dare not confess even to my brother nor to my friend. The angels know what I have

done, the thrones know, the seraphim know: the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit know.

We have said concerning God that for some he stands, for others he walks, for others he sits either as a king or as a judge: but for others he sleeps. If ever he abandons us to temptations — even though we may be holy, nevertheless we are left to temptations, that we may be tested — at that time the Lord sleeps for us. Finally, what does the psalmist too say? 'Arise, why do you sleep, O Lord?' And when the apostles were in the boat, and the boat was being battered by the waves, the Lord was sleeping for them: for this reason the boat was being battered by the waves. Finally, they rouse him, and he awakes, and immediately the storm grows still.

We have spoken of the four postures of God: that for some he stands, for others he walks, for others he sits, for others he seems to sleep, and for others he wakes and rises up. God stood in the assembly of the gods. Because they were gods, therefore God stood for them. In this very assembly of ours God has different postures: for some he stands, for others he sits, for others he walks, for others he sleeps. Although he himself is unchangeable, according to our variety he is changed. See the dignity of man. God stood in the assembly of the gods. He grants us the name, that he may grant also the merit. And in the midst he judges the gods. Like a commander in the midst of the army he judges the gods. He judges the gods. A fearful thing, a thing full of terror. If he judges the gods, what does he do about the sinner? These two little verses the prophet spoke, as it were. But this which follows, How long will you judge iniquity? — God himself speaks to the judges, that is, to the leaders of the people. Specifically these verses which follow are spoken to the judges. If the judges of the world, it is plain: but if the judges of the church, let us understand it of bishops and presbyters. How long will you judge iniquity? He who judges iniquity is a judge of iniquity. He is the judge of iniquity of whom it is said in the Gospel, that he did not fear God, and did not respect man. How long will you judge iniquity? I have given you power over my flock and over the people of God: you ought to be judges, not wolves.

And you accept the persons of sinners: judge for the needy and the orphan, do justice to the lowly and the poor: rescue the poor and the needy, and the rest. When a case comes to you, you do not consider the cause, you do not consider the judgment, but the persons of those who have the cases. For instance, if a poor man comes having a just case, and a rich man comes having a bad case: you look at the persons, not the case. This so far according to one interpretation. But there is also another, more sacred interpretation. In the theaters one man frequently is accustomed to have different persons. Now he enters into a woman, now into a man, now into a king; and he who had come forward as a king, again comes forward as a slave. I have given the example, so that from the carnal we may be

able to come to the spiritual. We too take on different persons. For when I grow angry, I take on the person of a lion: when I seize the goods of others, I take on the person of a wolf: but when I am cruel and kill, I take on the person of a cruel man. But just as those who are sinners have different persons in their sins: so on the contrary those who are holy, they too have different persons, but in the good. When I give alms, I have as it were the person of a merciful man: but when I judge well, I have the person of a good judge: but when I suffer wrong and am humble, I have the person of a humble man. Unhappy is he who has many persons in evil: happy is he who has different persons in the good.

They knew not, neither did they understand, they walk in darkness. Who? The bad judges. Those whom I was calling gods, by their own vice have been called bad judges. They knew me not, neither did they understand my judgment: they walk in darkness. Because they forsook the light, therefore they walk in darkness. I said, you are the light of this world: and you turned aside from the light, and became darkness. Because, then, they have done this, let us see what follows. All the foundations of the earth shall be shaken. See what kind of recompense the evil princes have: because of bad judges the foundations of the earth are shaken. This so far we have said first according to the letter, that the shaking of the whole world comes because of bad judges. But let us say it also in another way. All the foundations of the earth shall be shaken. I will overturn the bad judges, who have set their foundations on earth, and not in heaven: who ought to have Christ as their foundation, whom the architect Paul laid, but they were unwilling, and set their foundations on earth.

I said: you are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High. Let Eunomius hear, let Arius hear, who say that the Son of God is a son in the same way as we are. That we are gods, we are so not by nature, but by grace. 'For as many as received him, he gave them power to become sons of God.' Therefore I made man, that out of men gods might be made. I said: you are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High. See how great the dignity is: we are called both gods and sons. I made you gods, just as I made Moses a god of Pharaoh: that after you have been gods, you may be made worthy to be sons of God. Consider the divine Scripture. 'There is no respect of persons with God.' He did not say: I said: you are gods, the kings and the princes, but all: to whom equally I have given a body and a soul and a spirit, equally I have bestowed both deity and adoption. We are all born equally, both emperors and the poor: equally we also die. For our condition is equal.

But you shall die like men. You see, then, that he who is a man dies. For God does not die. And Adam, as long as he kept the commandment and was a god, did not die. But after he tasted of the forbidden tree, immediately he died. Finally God says to him: 'On whatever day you taste, you shall die the death.' It has it better in the Hebrew: 'But you shall die like Adam.' Just as he was cast out of paradise,

so we too have been cast out. And you shall fall like one of the princes. Since he had said 'all of you sons of the Most High'; one cannot be a son of the Most High, unless he too be most high. I said that you should all be most high, as I am most high. But you shall fall like one of the princes. Since we were most high, therefore we are said to have fallen. Where are they who say that the devil was made a devil? Where are they who say that an evil nature was created by God? According to the Hebrew two things are said here. But you shall die like Adam: just as your father was unwilling to hear the commandment of the Lord, and fell, so you too shall die. Therefore that was said concerning Adam. But this which follows, And you shall fall like one of the princes: who is this one of the princes, who fell?

If you should wish to say Adam, it was already said in the earlier verses, But you shall die like Adam. And at the same time see the significance of the word. But you shall die like Adam. Since Adam died, we too die. But the devil, who was a prince, and fell, did not die. For angelic dignity cannot receive death, but only ruin. Therefore he said, you shall fall like one of the princes. 'How is Lucifer fallen, who rose in the morning?' Behold, both here he fell, and there he fell. He fell for this reason, because he always dwelt among the heavenly things. This is he to whom it is said in Ezekiel: 'You are the unsealing of the likeness.' See what he says, the unsealing of the likeness. He did not say, You are the seal of the likeness: but, the unsealing of the likeness. God had sealed you, and had made you like himself: but you afterwards unsealed yourself. After the likeness and image of God you too were formed. Finally it is said in that same prophecy: 'In the midst of the cherubim you were nourished, among the stones of jasper and carbuncle you were in the paradise of God. And you fell,' he says, 'and were wounded from the mountain of the Lord.' This prince of Tyre: now prince of Tyre from the time when he fell: since Tyre in the Hebrew tongue is called sor, that is tribulation.

Therefore this prince too, who at first was in heaven, has now been made prince of Tyre, that is, of the tribulation of this world. You shall fall like one of the princes. When he says 'like one,' he shows that there are others also. Read the Apocalypse of John: when the dragon fell from heaven, he drew with him a third part of the stars.

Up to this point God has spoken to men, and again the prophet speaks. Arise, O God, judge the earth. Arise, because our boat is battered by the waves. Arise, O God, judge the earth: since the bad judges do not judge, but overturn your law, and tear your flocks. Do you arise, who are the true judge. Because, then, the bad judges have died like Adam, and have fallen like one of the princes: therefore do you arise, do you judge, do you save your creature. But the hireling, when he sees the wolf, flees, and leaves the sheep: he cannot grieve for another's as one grieves for father and mother. Let us say it also in another way. Arise, you who suffered for us, who died for us: arise, and save us. Let us say it also in another way. You

who came humble and despised, come as a judge, and vindicate us. Arise, O God, judge the earth. See the significance and the properties of the words. He did not say, Judge heaven, but the earth. Therefore the earth is judged, not heaven. If, then, the earth is judged, and not heaven, then in heaven sins are not committed. But if sins were committed in heaven, he would say: Arise, O God, judge the earth and heaven. See the mercy of the prophet. He did not say, Slay the earth: but judge, judge and save. He did not say, Judge through angels, judge through your ministers.

For they, if they judge, cannot show mercy, because they are executors of your sentence. But you, if you judge, can yourself show mercy. Arise, O God, judge the earth. An emperor can change his sentence, a prefect cannot. Therefore we entreat you as judge, not despising, but praying. For men and angels in comparison with you are cruel: you alone are the most gentle judge. Do you want to know that God is merciful, and every man is cruel? While the master of the house was sleeping, an enemy man oversowed tares. The servants want to pull them up, and the master of the house says: 'Let be, allow them to grow, lest while you pull up the tares, you uproot the wheat also together with them.'

For you shall inherit among all the nations. Therefore we entreat you as judge, because you have had mercy on all the nations. Why did he not say, You shall possess all the nations, but, You shall inherit? Wherever an inheritance is set, there death has gone before. Therefore we are called heirs and coheirs. He said heirs of Christ, because he died for us; coheirs, because he is going to reign with us. You shall inherit. For you sent your servants (let us return to the apostles), one to the circumcision, another to the nations. As long as you had sent Moses, as long as Isaiah, as long as Jeremiah, as long as the other prophets, God was known in Judea, in Israel his name was great. In a small land the knowledge of God's name was carried. You sent Peter, Peter the fisherman, who had left even his net, who from his work had a callused hand. You did not send an orator, you did not send a philosopher: you sent a rustic man, a fisherman. This fisherman, this rustic, went from Jerusalem to Rome: and the rustic captured Rome, which the eloquent could not capture. Again the apostle Paul went, from Jerusalem he preached as far as Illyricum, and preached where the Gospel had not been preached, lest he lay a building upon another's foundation. Then he says that he would go from the city of Rome to Spain. See Paul the persecutor, who in Judea had been a persecutor, preaching among the nations.

Where are they who proclaim Alexander the Great, the Macedonian commander, that in a short span he conquered so many nations? He had an army, he had also huge crowds: and he could not do any such thing, but only some small thing. But this Paul, once a persecutor, who said 'Though unskilled in speech, yet not in knowledge,' who makes solecisms in speaking, carries the cross of Christ, and as though

triumphing captures all. He subdued the whole world from the ocean as far as the Red Sea.

Someone may say: They did all this for the sake of gain. For this is what Porphyry says: Rustic and poor men, since they had nothing, worked certain signs by magic arts. But it is not a great thing to work signs. For the magicians in Egypt too worked signs against Moses. Apollonius worked them too, Apuleius worked them too: and they worked countless signs. I grant you, Porphyry, they worked signs by magic arts, that they might receive riches from the rich little women whom they had led astray: for this is what you say. Why did they die? why were they crucified? Others too worked signs by magic arts: but they did not die for a dead man, for a crucified man. These know that the man is dead, and they die without cause. Happy, then, is our victory, which was consecrated in the blood of the apostles. Our faith is not proven except through their blood. Let us therefore bless God, to whom is glory forever and ever. Amen.

Homily 15, on Psalm 82

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). O God, who shall be like unto you? Since there is none like you, we seek no other author but you. Be not silent, neither be still, O God. We keep silent; do you speak on our behalf. It is the voice of the righteous man: he who says, ”Neither be still, O God,” is confident of his own righteousness.

For behold, your enemies have made a noise. We can interpret this, according to the tropology, of the Church and of the heresies. But we can also interpret it, according to the letter, of the people of the Jews and of the other nations that were assailing Judaea round about. For behold, your enemies have made a noise. He chose to call the voice and the disparagement of his adversaries a ”noise.” For behold, your enemies have made a noise. See what he says: they have made a noise — that is, just like a tinkling cymbal, so they made a noise in my ears. It is properly called a ”sound”: only the sound is heard, and the voice is not understood. Therefore what he says is this. They indeed were speaking, as though they wished to accuse me; but I, for my part, was hearing not a voice, as it were, but a sound. And they that hate you have lifted up the head. See what he says. Therefore he who raises up his head hates God. ”For God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” And they that hate you have lifted up the head. If ever you have something against someone, if your brother disparages you, and you are humble for Christ’s sake, and he is proud on account of the devil, you imitate him who says, ”Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.” But he who exalts himself imitates the one who says, ”I will ascend into heaven, I will set my throne above the stars of heaven, I will be like the Most High.” And they that hate you have lifted up the head.

Against your people they have dealt maliciously in counsel. It is enough for anyone, if he be the people of God. And they have taken counsel against your saints. This needs no interpretation: to have read it is to have understood it. They have said: Come, and let us destroy them from the nation. Let there be no nation, for it is

the people of God. And let the name of Israel be remembered no more. Let him be remembered no more who sees God with his understanding.

For they have taken counsel with one accord together. Unhappy are we, unhappy the people of God: it cannot have as great a concord in what is good as the wicked have in what is evil. Against you they have arranged a covenant: the tabernacles of the Edomites and the Ishmaelites. See the mysteries of the names. The tabernacles of the Edomites and the Ishmaelites, Moab and the Hagarenes, Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek, and the foreigners with them that dwell at Tyre: for Asshur also is come with them, they are become a help to the sons of Lot. There are eleven who fight against the saints. Therefore, since they fought against the saints, they could not come to the perfect number, that is, to the twelfth. The tabernacles of the Edomites. They have no foundation at home, but tabernacles which quickly pass away. Edom is interpreted in two ways: either ”bloody” or ”earthly. See therefore who they are that fight against the saints: the tabernacles of the Edomites, the earthly ones. And the Ishmaelites. The Ishmaelites are interpreted as ”those obedient to themselves”: that is, whatever the heart and the evil thought may have conceived, they straightway do it. Therefore it is said in Ezekiel: ”Son of man, speak against the prophets who follow their own heart, and whatever their thought impels them to, they do. But we ought not to follow our own thought, nor to be called Ishmaelites, that is, ”obedient to themselves,” but Ishmael, that is, ”obedient to God.

Moab, ”from the father,” that is, those withdrawing from God the Father. The Hagarenes, ”proselytes. They who ought to be dwellers with God have been made proselytes. Gebal is interpreted ”empty valley”: ge means ”valley,” and bal is interpreted ”empty. These, then, who are against the people of God, are not of the mountain, but of the empty valley. And Ammon is interpreted ”turbulent people”: that is, those who trust in a multitude, and not in simplicity. Amalek is interpreted ”licking the earth. For whoever fights against the people of God does not eat the heavenly bread, but licks the earth like a serpent. The foreigners. Where it says ”foreigners,” the Hebrew has Philistines. And the Philistines are interpreted ”falling by drink”: that is, those who are made drunk from the cup of the devil, and being drunk have fallen. With them that dwell at Tyre. Tyre in the Hebrew tongue is called sor, which is interpreted ”straitness” and ”tribulation. They who ought to have been sojourners in this world have become dwellers. These, then, who assail the people of God, dwell in Sor, that is, in the straitness and tribulation of their own soul. So then, these so many nations that fight against the saints — let us see whom they have as their prince, the Savior or the devil. What follows? For Asshur also is come with them. Asshur, Nebuchadnezzar, the adversary of God, who led the people of God into captivity.

Although the nations may seem to have very many fighting on their behalf, yet they have Asshur, that is, the devil, as their prince, who are become a help to the sons of Lot. Lot is interpreted ”declining. The demons were formerly angels, and afterward fell with the devil, and became his satellites, as it is written in the Apocalypse of John, that the dragon fell, and drew with him the third part of the stars. So then, what does he say? These, who came with so many nations, and assailed your people, and Asshur came with them, and they have the devil as their prince, are become a help to the sons of Lot — that is, to the demons who declined from you: they do the same work that the demons also do.

You see that these are most difficult passages, you see that they are obscure, and that in each single phrase there are great mysteries, and we are compelled by necessity to dwell rather long on the Hebrew words that are full of mysteries. For we are not now airing out some rhetorical commonplace: but we are striving to interpret that which was spoken by the Holy Spirit. For unless we interpret it as we have said, what does it profit the churches of Christ to read ”the tabernacles of the Edomites, and the Ishmaelites,” and the other names?

Since, therefore, they came against your people, let us see what the psalmist imprecates upon them. Do to them as to Midian and Sisera. You have read the book of Judges: this is that Midian whom Gideon assailed. And Sisera, and Jabin. Jabin and Sisera are those whom Deborah and Barak assailed. At the torrent of Kishon, they perished at Endor. Deborah and Barak slew Sisera, the commander of the army. Therefore what he says, see what it means. Lord, since they have such great pride, since they come with so great an army, since they have Nebuchadnezzar the prince of the Assyrians, since they are become a help to the sons of Lot, since they do the very thing that the demons do, since their pride has been raised up even to you: therefore I pray you, that to their disgrace they may be conquered not by a man, but by a woman. They are become as the dung of the earth. Who? Midian, and Sisera, and Jabin: these three are become as the dung of the earth. Midian is interpreted ”abandoning judgment.” Whoever fights against your people does not consider that there will be a judgment to come. Sisera is interpreted ”the sight of a horse.” These who fight against your people are not of your flock and of your cattle, but of the horses that rage madly after females. These horses, then, are always ready for battle. As Jabin. Jabin is interpreted ”understanding.” Those who trust in their own wisdom, and not in the glory of God, are become as the dung of the earth. Those who gloried in their army, who had Asshur as their prince, and were saying, ”I will ascend into heaven,” not only fell to the earth, but became dung upon the earth.

Make their princes. Whose? Of those who fight against your people. As Oreb and Zeeb, and Zebah and Zalmunna, all their princes. I think you have read the history in the book of Judges, that Gideon, who is called by another name Jerubbaal,

fighting on behalf of the people of God, conquered these four kings, and slew them. And see what sort of men the princes of the Midianites are, who forsook the judgment of God. Oreb and Zeeb and Zebah and Zalmunna. Who thinks that in these words there are mysteries of the Savior? The philosophers read this, and mock; the rhetoricians read it, and now think it to be nonsense. And not only the rhetoricians, but the Jews also: they have not the key of knowledge, since a veil is placed before their eyes. Oreb is interpreted "a hole," into which a snake enters; Zeeb is interpreted "a wolf." See the names of the princes who are adversaries of Christ. Zebah, "a victim," that is, those whom the wolf has strangled; and Zalmunna, "perfected in malice." See, therefore, the mysteries of the names. Who said: Let us possess the sanctuary of God by inheritance. They said it, but they did not accomplish it: for the Lord was fighting for his people.

O my God, make them as a wheel. See the clemency of the prophet: he does not pray against them, but for them. See what he says. O my God — you who are the God of all, but properly my God: O my God, make them as a wheel. Those who have, as it were, a foundation in malice, let them have no foundation, but let them totter, and not stand firm in malice. As stubble before the face of the wind, as fire that burns up a forest. As stubble: not as wheat, but as stubble. What he says is this: if there is among them anything that is stubble and chaff, let it perish. As fire that burns up a forest. He did not say "fruitful trees," but "forest," which has no fruit. If anyone, then, is stubble, and has no wheat; if anyone is a forest, and has no fruit — let this perish. As a flame burning up the mountains: let the pride in them perish.

So shall you pursue them in your tempest, and in your wrath... What? will you kill them? No: you will trouble them, that they may be saved. Fill their faces with shame, that they may be confounded. Why this? And they shall seek your name, O Lord. You see, then, that he prays not against them, but for their salvation. Finally, in what follows also, see what he says. Let them be ashamed and troubled for ever and ever, and let them be confounded and perish. Let them perish according to that which is evil in them, and let that which is good be saved. Finally, see that "perdition" here does not signify abolition, but salvation. What follows? And let them know that your name is Lord: you alone are the Most High over all the earth. Let him who wishes exalt himself, and let him be exalted: let us say, You alone are the Most High over all the earth. However much anyone exalts himself, we have God, than whom there is none higher.

Homily 16, on Psalm 83

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). To the choirmaster, for the winepresses, a psalm of the sons of Korah. There are three psalms which are inscribed ”for the winepresses”: the eighth, the eightieth, and the eighty-third. The eighth is inscribed to David, the eightieth is inscribed to Asaph, the eighty-third is inscribed as of the sons of Korah. I give you a certain rule, so that you may know what you ought to observe in the Scriptures. Whatever psalm is inscribed as of the sons of Korah has nothing sad in it, but always signifies joyful things. For since Korah and Dathan and Abiram acted against Moses, and were punished by the Lord, the sons of Korah, who did not follow their father, were blessed with eternal joy. And since Korah is interpreted ”skull,” and it is plain that the skull signifies the place of the resurrection, whoever is a son of Korah is a son of the resurrection. And whoever is a son of the resurrection can have nothing that is sad.

How beloved are your tabernacles, O Lord of hosts: my soul longs and faints for the courts of the Lord. Then it is said, ”Blessed are they who dwell in your house.” See that there are three things: the tabernacles, and the courts, and lastly the house. How beloved are your tabernacles, O Lord of hosts. What are these tabernacles? Let us look at the Gospel, whether it may offer us some meaning. The Lord speaks, and says: ”Make yourselves friends of the unjust mammon, that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.” What is it that fails? This, that is, the unjust mammon. May they receive you into the eternal tabernacles. You see, therefore, that the unjust mammon fails in this world. Yet consider that this unjust thing prepares righteousness. In the Hebrew tongue riches are called ”mammon”: not gold, as some suppose. Of the unjust mammon. There is also a certain saying of the philosopher that is true: ”Every rich man is either unjust, or the heir of an unjust man.” For this reason the Lord and Savior says that the rich enter with difficulty into the kingdom of heaven. Someone may say: How did Zacchaeus enter into the kingdom of heaven, who was rich? But he gave away his riches, and at once he exchanged his riches for the kingdom of heaven. He did not say, Whoever

are rich shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he said, that the rich enter with difficulty into the kingdom of heaven.

How beloved are your tabernacles, O Lord of hosts. Others desire possessions, others the riches of this world, others to hold office in the churches of this world, and to have some glory among men: for me this alone is my desire, to see your eternal tabernacles. Those tabernacles are beloved to me, where there is a gathering of virtues, not of vices. My soul longs and faints for the courts of the Lord. This is my only desire, this is my only love, that I may see your courts. See the order. First he desires the tabernacles, tabernacles which have no foundation, tabernacles which are quickly changed. For a tabernacle is always being changed, and is carried from here to there. But the courts are indeed not the house, yet they have some foundations, and from the court we enter into the house. Therefore this man first desires the tabernacles, and afterward faints and melts with love that he may see the courts: and when he has been in the court, then he says: ”Blessed are they who dwell in your house.”

My heart and my flesh have exulted in the living God. It is difficult that both the heart and the flesh of anyone should agree together in common. For if, according to the apostle, the spirit fights against the flesh and the flesh against the spirit, how does he here say: My heart and my flesh have exulted? This no one can say, except him who is fixed with his whole mind in the love of God. My heart and my flesh. This is what he says also in another place: ”My soul has thirsted for you, how manifoldly my flesh for you.” And my flesh. This is the flesh that desires the Lord, of which it is said in another place: ”And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” But that flesh, of which it is said ”All flesh is grass,” does not desire the Lord. My heart and my flesh. Show me some abstinent man, who reckons the death of his flesh to be the gain of his soul. And these are the fastings and the afflictions of the flesh. Finally, what does the apostle also say? ”Whom I have handed over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved.” Unless the flesh has died, the spirit cannot be made alive. For this reason the apostle also says: ”When I am weak, then I am stronger.” Let each one consider himself, when he is wearied and worn out with fasting, how the soul flourishes, how the mind considers nothing else except God, how it always says: How beloved are your tabernacles, O Lord of hosts.

For indeed the sparrow has found itself a home, and the turtledove a nest for itself where it may place its young. For the moment let us interpret it simply. See what he says. I desire, O Lord, your eternal tabernacles: my soul longs and faints for the courts of the Lord: I desire to have some seat and little nest for my soul and my body. The birds which wander freely here and there, yet after they have flown, have a place and little nests where they may rest: how much more ought my soul and my flesh to prepare for themselves a place, where they may be able to rest?

Now let us ascend to something higher. ”In the Lord I trust: how do you say to my soul, Migrate to the mountains like a sparrow? See therefore, that no one migrates to the mountains, except him who is a sparrow. And the turtledove a nest for itself. This is the turtledove, of which he says in the Song of Songs: ”The voice of the turtledove has been heard in our land. The turtledove a nest for itself. The turtledove is an animal of chastity, the turtledove does not dwell in low places, but always makes its nests for itself in the lofty trees.

As therefore the sparrow and the turtledove, most chaste birds, make their nests for themselves in the higher places, so therefore the tabernacles and the courts and the house are not on this low earth, but on high, that is, in the kingdoms of heaven. Finally, see what he says. Blessed are they who dwell in your house. In the tabernacle we do not dwell, but we sojourn. And as long as we are in the court, we do not dwell, but we sojourn: for from the courts we pass into the house. But when we have come into the house, what is said? Blessed are they who dwell in your house. The house, which has a foundation: because from the house it is not permitted for us to go out, but from the courts it is permitted.

Blessed is the man whose help is from you. We indeed desire your tabernacles and courts and house: but this very thing, that we may be able to attain it, is not of our own strength, but of your help. He has arranged ascents in his heart. Who has arranged ascents in his heart? Blessed is the man whose help is from the Lord: he has arranged ascents in his heart. Whoever is holy is daily stretched out toward the things before, and forgets the things that are past. For this reason there are also said in the Psalter the fifteen psalms of the steps, and the first is said, ”To the Lord when I was in tribulation I cried out.” And in the second, ”I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains, from where my help shall come.” And in the third, ”I was glad in the things that were said to me.” And he always proceeds, and advances, and ascends to loftier things. What he says is this. He has arranged ascents in his heart. Happy is he who daily advances, who does not consider what he did yesterday, but what he may do and advance in today. The holy man places ascents in his heart, the sinner descents. As he who is holy daily advances, so he who is a sinner daily decreases. Blessed is the man who arranges ascents in his heart. See the sequence of the Scriptures.

In the valley of tears, in the place which he has set. Where ”in the valley” is said, it is necessary that we understand, by contrast, also the mountain. Therefore whoever arranges ascents in his heart, where has he been placed? In the valley of tears. Let us consider that we are in the valley: we are not on the mountain, we are not in paradise, in the height of paradise; but in the lowliness of the earth, the accursed earth, which brings forth for us thistles and thorns, which is the serpent’s food, of which it is said to Adam, ”You are earth, and to earth you shall go.” As long, therefore, as we are in the valley of tears, we ought not to laugh, but to weep. For

this reason the Lord also says: ”Blessed are they who weep, for they themselves shall laugh.” For the time being, therefore, we are in the valley of tears, and this world is a world of tears, not of joy. We ought not to laugh, since this world and this time is of tears, that other is of joy. In the valley of tears, in the place which he has set. What is it that he says, In the place which he has set? In the place, that is, in the valley of tears. In the place which he has set: God has set us for the contest, that we may always fight in this. This place, therefore, that is, the valley of tears, is not of peace, is not of security, but of contest and of wars.

For indeed he who gave the law will give blessings. Someone may say: In the valley of tears, in the place which he has set for the struggle, that is, for the contest. Why has he set us for the struggle? Why has he willed us to fight? The psalmist himself has answered himself, and says: For this reason in this place he has willed us to fight, that he may be able to bestow crowns. For indeed the lawgiver will give blessings. This lawgiver, that is, our judge of the contest (agonotheta), for this reason has willed us to fight, that he may be able to bless us. See the sequence. But what are the blessings of this judge of the contest? They shall go from strength to strength. Here they conquer, that there they may be crowned. If here a man appears strong, there he becomes more robust. They shall go from strength to strength. Therefore, unless here we have had strength, there we cannot have greater strength. For he did not say, they shall go from weakness to strength: but, they shall go from strength to strength. Do you wish to be strong there? First be strong here. Do you wish to be crowned there? Fight here. They shall go from strength to strength. We can also say it another way. ”Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. He who has had strength here, will have that same strength there also. They shall go from strength to strength.

What gain will they have, when they have gone from strength to strength? what reward will they have? The God of gods shall be seen in Zion. ”Blessed are the pure in heart, for they themselves shall see God. It suffices for the victors, it suffices for those who have fought, the face of Christ: to see God is an infinite crown. The God of gods shall be seen in Zion. How great a joy it is, how great a happiness, to go from strength to strength, and to have this very reward, that we may be counted worthy to see Christ!

Our protector, look, O God, and look upon the face of your Christ. See what he says, And look upon the face of your Christ. And a man prays, that the Father may look upon the face of the Son. But see what he says. Since the apostle said, ”Do you seek proof of him who speaks in me, Christ?” and again the Savior himself said, ”He who receives you receives me,” therefore this is what he says: Look upon us: for in us you look upon your Son, who dwells in us. For better is one day in your courts above thousands. See what he says, ”one day.” Someone thinks it should be understood thus: It is better for me to have a little in the kingdom of heaven,

than here the whole, that is, in this world. This understanding, indeed, is not a bad one. But let us say: If it could happen that someone should be for one day in the kingdom of heaven, and afterward be cast down headlong, he would rightly say: Better is one day in your courts. But now, in that he says ”one day,” this is what he says: The kingdom of heaven is one day; it does not have night and darkness, but always there is light. He therefore who has been for one day in the kingdom of heaven, is always there.

I have chosen to be an outcast in the house of my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners. This is what the Savior also says about John: ”Amen I say to you, that among those born of women there is not a greater than John the Baptist.” Then he says that he himself is an angel. And then he says: ”But he who is lesser in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” The sense there is this: John is greater than all men, and, if you wish to know, he himself is an angel; but this one who on earth is an angel, is the least in the kingdom of heaven, that is, he is lesser than the angels; but he who is lesser in the kingdom of heaven, that is, the angel, is greater than this one who on earth is greater than all. This, therefore, is now what the prophet says: I have chosen to be an outcast in the house of my God, that is, I have wished to be the least in the kingdom of heaven, rather than the first in this world. I have chosen to be an outcast in the house of my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners. Consider what he says, Rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners. Tabernacles have no foundation, but they pass away: yet he who is a sinner never merely sojourns on the earth, but dwells in it and possesses it.

For God loves mercy and truth. Two things God loves, mercy and truth. If he were only merciful, he would provoke us all to sins: if he loved only truth, no one would have hope of repentance. For this reason he seeks two things, and tempers the one by the other. If you are a sinner, hear that God is merciful, and do not despair, and do penance. But if you are righteous, do not be negligent, because God is clement: since God is also just, and loves truth. The Lord will give grace and glory. He did not say, He will give glory and grace: but what did he say? The Lord will give grace and glory. First he forgives sins, and afterward he crowns. He will not deprive of good things those who walk in innocence. It has it better in the Hebrew: ”in perfection.” For innocence is not a perfect virtue: since he who is innocent, unless he also has prudence, is not of perfect and consummate virtue. For this reason he also says in the Gospel: ”Be prudent as serpents, and simple as doves.” O Lord of hosts. See what he says, O Lord of hosts. Therefore when we have any sins in us, God, who is the Lord of hosts, is not our Lord: because the Lord is not the Lord of sinners, but of the righteous. Blessed is the man who hopes in you. He hopes in the Lord, who has no conscience of sins, who lifts free eyes to heaven. This man hopes, who knows that he has not offended his Lord.

Homily 17, on Psalm 84

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin).

Unto the end, a psalm of the sons of Korah. The eighty-fourth psalm is headed with this title. I have often said: wherever there is the title ”Of the sons of Korah,” nothing is sorrowful, but always joyful. For the sorrow of the father is consoled by the joy of the sons. Read the psalms through carefully, then, and wherever you find the title ”Of the sons of Korah,” you will find nothing sorrowful. I have often said: Korah, which is interpreted as ”the place of the Skull,” must signify something joyful. So then, who is this Korah? He is the one who was going up from Jericho to Bethel. Bethel, ”the house of God. Note this carefully. Whoever is in Jericho, and wishes to go to the house of God, must go up. Therefore our Korah went up from Jericho — that is, Elisha — to the house of God, Bethel; and there come out from Bethel, that is, from the house of God, that is, from the synagogue, where formerly there had been the house of God, there come out forty-two boys, and they mock Elisha, our Korah, and say, ”Go up, baldhead, go up, baldhead. He comes to his own house, and is mocked by the little children of Bethel. But that most patient Elisha, who had come to Bethel for this very purpose, to save it, at length turned round upon them: he turned round, and gave orders that two bears should come out of the wood, and they killed forty-two boys.

So too our Lord, that is, our Korah, when He had come to Bethel and wished to go up, mocked by the little ones, gives orders that two bears come out — that is, Vespasian and Titus — and they killed forty-two boys. Who are these forty-two boys? From the ascension of Christ up to the overthrow of Jerusalem there are forty-two years. Look carefully, and you will find it so. And so He gave them room for repentance for forty-two years, even after His resurrection, when He went up to Bethel. But because they kept mocking, ”Go up, baldhead, go up, baldhead,” the two bears came out and killed them.

You have blessed, O Lord, Your land. This is spoken of the coming of the Savior. This properly according to the history; but according to the tropology, after we

have spoken of the history, we shall discourse afterwards. You have blessed, O Lord, Your land. This we have said of the coming of the Savior. The land which had offended You, which had been defiled with idolatries, was saved when You came. You have blessed, O Lord, Your land. Let the sinner speak, and then, having obtained pardon: You have blessed, O Lord, Your land. Although it brought forth thistles and thorns, yet it is Your creation, and therefore it was saved. You have turned away the captivity of Jacob: of those who have believed in Christ. You have turned away the captivity of Jacob. Whoever is in sins is held captive. You have remitted the iniquity of Your people. Not on account of their works, but on account of Your mercy, You have saved Your people. You have covered all their sins, and right up to the end the psalm is about the coming of the Savior, as I said. Mercy and truth. Nevertheless His salvation is near to those who fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land. For truly the glory of God dwelt in our land, and thereafter righteousness looked down from heaven. For the Lord shall give loving-kindness. What loving-kindness? Our land shall yield its fruit. Mary, our land, our flesh, yielded her fruit. Righteousness shall walk before Him. The virgin land gave forth its righteous fruit.

This much, for the moment, we have said according to the history; now let us speak according to the tropology. You have remitted the iniquity of Your people. No one remits anything except what is owed. You have covered all their sins. You have covered them with virtues, and therefore the sins do not appear. For example, You have covered iniquity with righteousness, You have covered unchastity with chastity, You have covered blackness with whiteness. You have softened all Your wrath, You have turned away from the wrath of Your indignation. Turn us, O God of our salvations. See what he says. You, for Your part, have turned away from wrath on account of Your clemency. Turn us, O God. You have turned away from wrath; turn us away from sins. Turn us, O God of our salvations. Why did he not say, ”of our salvation,” but, ”of our salvations”? If we sinned but once, we would need one salvation. We have sinned in many things, therefore we need many salvations. O God, You, turning again, will bring us to life. As long, therefore, as the Lord does not turn to us, we are dead. Show us, O Lord, Your mercy, and grant us Your salvation. That the Savior came down is a matter of God’s mercy: the physician would not have come, had not very many been sick. Because very many were sick, therefore the physician came: because we were in need of mercy, therefore the Savior came.

I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me. Many think, when Moses speaks and says, ”Thus says the Lord,” and Isaiah, and the rest, and when it is said, ”The word of the Lord came to Isaiah” or ”to Ezekiel the prophet,” that the speech comes from outside, and that the prophet hears through these ears of his what is spoken by the Lord. It is not so. Indeed, what does our Lord Himself say to the Pharisees and the Jews? ”He who has ears to hear, let him hear. And Isaiah says: ”The Lord

has added an ear for me. See what he says: The Lord has added an ear for me. Because I did not have that ear which is in the heart, He added it for me, that I might be able to hear the words of God. And so now, then, whatever the prophet hears, he hears in his heart. For just as we cry out in our hearts, ”Abba, Father,” and that cry is a cry of silence, and the silence is heard by the Lord: so too the Lord speaks to our heart, which cries out, ”Abba, Father. Therefore, then, the prophet now says: I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me. Something similar the prophet Habakkuk also says: ”I will stand upon my contemplation, and I will see what the Lord will answer me, and what I shall answer to Him” — and I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me.

Therefore this also that he says, I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me, he speaks in the heart, he speaks in the understanding. Do you wish to know what the cry of the heart is like? Do you wish to know that a cry before God is not one of voice, but of tears? It is said in the Lamentations of Jeremiah: ”The pupil of my eye was not silent. For He will speak peace unto His people. This is properly said of the people of the Jews, who are to believe in Christ: that is, it is said of the coming of Christ and of the faith of the Jewish people, that is, of the apostles, and of all who believed the apostles. For He will speak peace unto His people. Peace is not spoken of except when there is war.

And unto His saints, and unto those who are turned to the heart: that is, those who first followed the flesh, and afterwards are turned to the heart. That you may know that this little verse is spoken further of the Jews — that is, of those who believed in the Savior — see the examples we have mentioned. Take for me a Jew reading Leviticus, and all those sacraments that are written there, and how the leper enters into the synagogue, how a hen is taken up, and its neck is wrung; then it is told how the blood is to be sprinkled, it is told of the water, it is told also of the hyssop, it is told too how his garments are to be rent, and thus he enters into the synagogue, he who had been a leper. If we read according to the letter, what profit is it to us that we read? But if we have turned to the heart, if we have understood spiritually, we shall see that the leper cannot enter to the people of God unless his garments be rent, unless whatever had been shut up be uncovered. Then see that this leper does not enter into the synagogue except through blood and water and hyssop. Therefore you too, who up to this day have been a leper — your leprosy did not appear until you came to the priest.

But because you came to the priest, the priest unstitched your garments, and that which seemed to be covered and sound, he showed to be leprous. He set all your sins and your leprosy before your eyes, and therefore he brings you back into the synagogue of God through blood and through water. Through blood, through the passion of Christ; and through water, through baptism. Therefore, after leprosy you will not be able to be healed except through the blood of Christ and through

baptism. And when you have done this, that too is said: ”You shall sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed: You shall wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow. Up to this day you are in Egypt: as long as you do not come to the blood and to the water, you will not be able to be saved. Do you wish that the destroyer, who slew Egypt, may not slay you? Take hyssop, dip it in the blood, sprinkle your doorposts: and the destroyer, when he sees the blood on your forehead, will not be able to approach. Why have I said all this? Because it is written, Unto those who are turned to the heart. Therefore God will not be able to speak peace to His people, except to those who are turned to the heart.

Nevertheless His salvation is near to those who fear Him. I have shown the way of salvation, I grant mercy. Although you are not yet turned to the heart, still I wait, I grant room for repentance. And all this, indeed, that glory may dwell in our land. For this reason He calls you to repentance, that you, who were a leper, may have Christ as your guest. Mercy and truth have met each other: righteousness and peace have kissed. O how splendid a friendship! Mercy and truth have met each other. Are you a sinner? Hear what it says: Mercy. Are you holy? Hear what it says: And truth. Neither, if you are a sinner, should you despair; nor, if you are righteous, should you be proud. Let us speak in another way. There are two believing peoples: one from the people of the Gentiles, and another from the Jews. To the Jews it was promised that the Savior would come: but to us, who were strangers to the law of God, it was not promised. Mercy, therefore, is in the people of the Gentiles, truth in the people of the Jews: because what was promised has come, that is, what was promised to the fathers is fulfilled in the sons. Righteousness and peace have kissed. See what it says: Righteousness and peace have kissed. It is the same as what it said above, Mercy and truth. Mercy is the same as peace, but truth is the same as righteousness. For if anything pertains to peace, it pertains also to mercy: and if anything to truth, it pertains also to righteousness. See, then, what it says. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other: that is, mercy and truth have made friendship, that is, the people of the Gentiles and of the Jews are under one shepherd, Christ.

Truth has sprung up out of the earth. ”I am the way and the truth and the life. He who said, I am the truth, has sprung up out of the earth. What is this truth, which has sprung up out of the earth? ”There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up from his root. And in another place: ”For God has wrought salvation in the midst of the earth. What do you say, Manichaean, who deny that the Savior had flesh? Behold, the truth, the Savior, has sprung up out of the earth, that is, out of Mary. And righteousness has looked down from heaven. For it was righteous that the Savior should have mercy on His people. See what it says. O righteous judgments of God, and His ways past finding out! Truth has sprung up out of the earth, that is, the Savior. And again, And righteousness has looked down from heaven. Righteousness is the Savior Himself. How has

He sprung up out of the earth? How has He looked down from heaven? He has sprung up out of the earth, because He was born a man: He has looked down from heaven, because as God He is always in the heavens. That is, He was indeed born of the earth: but He who was born of the earth is always in heaven. That is, He so appeared on earth that He did not leave the heavens. For God is everywhere. He looked down:

because, as long as we were sinning, He turned His eyes away from us. What He says is this. It is righteous that the potter should have mercy on his works, that the shepherd should have mercy on his flock. We are His people, we are His creation. Therefore, then, He sprang up out of the earth, and looked down from heaven, that He might fulfill His righteousness, and have mercy on His work. And so, that you may know that ”righteousness” does not sound of cruelty, but of mercy, see what it says. For the Lord shall give loving-kindness. For this reason He looked down from heaven, that He might have mercy on His works. And our land shall yield its fruit. Truth indeed has sprung up out of the earth: this of the past. Now it is said of the future, And our land shall yield its fruit. Do not despair, because He was once born of Mary: daily He is born also in us. And our land shall yield its fruit. We too can bring forth Christ, if we will. And our land shall yield its fruit: from which is made the heavenly bread, of which He says, ”I am the heavenly bread. All these things, indeed, we have said concerning the mercy of the Lord, since He came for this purpose, to save the human race. Nevertheless we ought to know that He Himself is to judge the living and the dead, He Himself will come to judge. Righteousness shall walk before Him.

Do not be negligent: Righteousness shall walk before Him. And He shall set His steps in the way. See what it says, His steps: where there are no stones, where there are no thorns and thistles, where the way is level, where He can walk, where He cannot stumble. Let us, then, also make a way for the Lord in our heart: the way over which John labored, and cried out in the wilderness, that we should make a way for the Lord. Therefore now too this is said. And He shall set His steps in the way. Where He finds a way, He will walk. Although before we had thorns and thistles, although stones, it is said to us in Isaiah: ”And cast the stones out of the way. And He says this for the reason, that when He wishes to walk about in our way, He may not stub His foot. The stones which are in the way, and are commanded to be cast out, are our sins. Christ does not walk in our heart, if there be any sin: at once He stumbles against the stones. And He shall set His steps in the way. Let us make a way, and Jesus will set His steps in the way.

Homily 18, on Psalm 86

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). A psalm of a canticle, for the sons of Korah. The difference between a psalm and a canticle I have often stated. A psalm is spoken from the psaltery, but a canticle is uttered from the voice. A psalm has to do with the hands, that is, with works; a canticle with contemplation (theoria).

Its foundations are in the holy mountains. He did not say beforehand whose, yet he said, Its foundations are in the holy mountains. The one who speaks is the prophet: the sons are of Korah. What Korah means, I have often stated: a skull, that is, the sons of the resurrection. Its foundations: whether of God, or certainly of the Church. And what are the foundations, if not the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit? These foundations, then, are not in the valleys, but are in the mountains: and not on any mountains whatever, but on the holy mountains. Paul says: 'As a wise architect I have laid the foundation'—that is, faith in the Trinity. Then he also says in another place: 'For he was awaiting the city having foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' Its foundations are in the holy mountains. He said, In the holy mountains, because there are also other mountains that are not holy. Then it is also said in Isaiah: 'Upon the dark mountain lift up a sign.' And in another place it is said: 'Who are you, corrupt mountain?' It is also said in Jeremiah: 'Give glory to the Lord your God, before your feet stumble against the dark mountains.' You see, then, that there are also dark mountains: and it is said to us by Jeremiah that we should give glory to God before our feet stumble against the dark mountains. For if our feet strike against those mountains, we cannot give glory to the Lord. Its foundations are in the holy mountains. Whom can we call the foundations? The apostles. In them were the foundations: where the faith of the Church was first laid, there too the foundations were laid.

And because each one builds upon the foundation—one gold, another silver, another precious stones—The Lord loves the gates of Zion above all the tabernacles of Jacob. Does he love those gates which we see have collapsed? Does he love

those gates, and does he love that Zion, which has been plowed like a field? And see what he says, The Lord loves the gates of Zion above all the tabernacles of Jacob. See what he says: above all the cities of Jacob, that is of Judea, he loves this city alone. And how is it that we see the others in part still standing, while this one has utterly collapsed? Let us read the Apocalypse of John, let us also read Isaiah, where the city of Jerusalem is built, and its twelve gates are said to be constructed of precious stones, and the city itself descends from heaven, and its walls are said to be of gold, and its streets are said to be paved with emerald, and each of the gates is said to be constructed of a single precious stone. These are all the riches of the Lord, and does the Lord love these the way men do too? He forbids us from avarice, and does he himself build a city out of avarice? Therefore the Lord loves the gates of Zion, those twelve gates of Zion: it is clear that he wrote of the apostles. Above all the tabernacles of Jacob: above all the ancient saints.

This much we have said so far according to one figure. But let us speak also in another way. The Lord loves the gates of Zion. To me the gates of Zion seem to be the virtues. For just as the gates of death are the vices and sins, so the gates of Zion seem to me to be the virtues. Then he says in another place: 'You who lift me up from the gates of death.' But if the gates of death are sins, then the gates of Jerusalem are virtues. Above all the tabernacles of Jacob. See that Jacob, that is the old people, has no foundation, nor a house set upon foundations, but tabernacles which quickly pass away. Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God. Therefore that which was said, Its foundations are in the holy mountains, we can also say of God. But we can also say this. Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God. What is this city? Where were glorious things spoken? In all the prophets it was spoken of this city. Isaiah says: 'Arise, arise, O Jerusalem, put on the strength of your arm.' Again Isaiah himself: 'I am the strong city, the city that is besieged.' David too says: 'The rushing of the river gladdens the city of God.' And in another place: 'O Lord, in your city you will bring their images to nothing.' And the Savior spoke glorious things of this city: 'A city set upon a mountain cannot be hidden.'

I will be mindful of Rahab and Babylon among those who know me. Since he said, Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God, and yet we understand that very city as the Church gathered from the nations: therefore now it is said concerning the calling of the nations, I will be mindful of Rahab and Babylon among those who know me. Whoever is a sinner, let him be secure: the Lord was mindful of Rahab. I said secure, if he returns to the Lord: for otherwise security without tears has no remedy. I will be mindful of Rahab: of that harlot Rahab, who received the spies of Jesus, who was in Jericho, where Jesus had come, and he sent two spies. Jericho, this world, which is overturned in seven days, wishes to kill the spies. And while it desires to kill the spies, the harlot Rahab alone received them. And she received

them, not in a lower place, but in an upper room, on the housetop, that is, in the height of her faith, and she hid them in flax, that is, in tow of flax.

This much we have said so far according to the historical sense, and you see how from the history itself we gradually ascend to the mystical sacraments. Jesus the leader, who had led the people out of Egypt: Jesus, who is interpreted as Savior, after Moses had died and been buried in the land of Moab, in the land of Arabia, that is, after the Law was dead, desires to lead his people into the gospel, and sends two spies to Jericho: two spies, one to the circumcision, another to the nations, Peter and Paul. Jericho seeks to kill them; that harlot receives them, the Church gathered from the nations. She believes in Jesus, and those whom Jericho wished to kill, she herself saves on her housetop. And she places them on the housetop, in her lofty faith, and hides them in the flax of the reed. Though she is a harlot, yet she places them in flax. Flax comes to whiteness through much toil and diligence. You yourselves know that flax is born from the earth, and when it has been born in the earth, it is black, has no beauty, no use. First then it is taken from the earth, it is broken, then it is twisted, afterward it is washed, then it is beaten, then it is combed, and with much care and toil it scarcely comes to whiteness. Therefore this is said, that this harlot indeed received the spies in her flax, so that those spies might turn her flax into whiteness. What then?

She gives them counsel, and says: 'Wait here three days.' It was not one day, not two, but three days. See what she says, Wait three days. She does not name three nights, but three days, because she had an enlightened heart. And then she says, and after three days: and what does she say? 'Do not,' she says, 'go through the plains, but climb up into the mountains.' For the faith of the Church is not established in the valleys, but in the mountains. Jericho then is afterward overturned by Jesus, and this harlot alone is preserved unharmed. Therefore this is said. I will be mindful of Rahab: that is, of her who received my spies, and I on the day of judgment will be mindful of her.

I will be mindful of Rahab. What does Rahab mean? We have spoken according to the history: let us speak also according to the interpretation of the name and according to the anagogy. Rahab is interpreted in two ways: either it is interpreted as breadth, or certainly it is interpreted as pride. So see what he says. She who once walked in the broad and spacious way that leads to death, she who was proud and had a rush toward ruin, was afterward converted into humility. I will be mindful of Rahab and Babylon. Babylon is interpreted as confusion. See what he says. Not only will I be mindful of Rahab, but also of Babylon, whatever soul is confounded by vices and sins. And of Babylon among those who know me. See what he says. Though someone may have been Rahab, though he may have been Babylon: yet I will be mindful, whoever will have known me. Therefore if we have been Rahab and Babylon, we too ought to be secure, and to say: God said, I will be mindful of

Rahab and Babylon. But see what follows. Among those who know me. They were Rahab and Babylon, but afterward they were converted to me. I will be mindful of Rahab and Babylon among those who know me. She who once was in the breadth of sins, afterward ascended into the remembrance of God.

Thus far he has spoken as if through riddles: but now he speaks more openly of the calling of the nations. For see what he says. Behold, the foreigners and Tyre and the people of the Ethiopians, these were there. He calls them foreigners to distinguish them from Israel: for we are the foreigners. And Tyre. Tyre is interpreted as tribulation, that is, sor. And the people of the Ethiopians: black, and wrapped up in the filth of sins. And the people of the Ethiopians. This is what is said: 'Ethiopia will stretch out her hand before God.' Behold, the foreigners and Tyre and the people of the Ethiopians. What is said is this: Those who before were strangers, those who before were in tribulation, who were set in the heart of the sea (for it is said of Tyre 'Tyre set in the heart of the sea'): those, then, who first were in the sea, and were beaten by the waves, were afterward found in the Church. And the people of the Ethiopians. We were once Ethiopians, Ethiopians in vices and sins. Why? Because sins had made us black. But afterward we heard 'Wash yourselves, be clean,' and we said 'You will wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow.' We Ethiopians, then, were turned into whiteness. Behold, the foreigners and Tyre and the people of the Ethiopians, these were there. Where were they? Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God. These were there: that is, in the city of God.

Will a man say to Zion, and a man is born in her? The Seventy translators rendered it thus: Will a man say to Zion? Many, then, expected, and did not understand what μήτη Σιὼν is: and they added a ρ, and they read μήτηρ Σιὼν ἐρεῖ ἄνθρωπος (mother Zion will a man say). And they say this because there follows, And a man is born in her: they expect that it also ought to be said in this way, Mother Zion will a man say. Because a son is said to be born, therefore they err in the word "mother." Let us then speak first according to what is commonly said (for neither ought we to dismiss that interpretation), let us then say also ourselves: Mother Zion will a man say, and a man is born in her. These are they who had been born in the Church, the foreigners, Tyre, and the people of the Ethiopians: these are they who are born in the Church. They believe in the Church, and are born in the Church. For unless they have been baptized, they will not be sons of the Church. But those who have been baptized in the Church, they call the Church mother.

Let us also speak according to the Hebrew truth. Will a man say to Zion, and a man is born in her? What he says is this. Who will be able to announce to Zion, who will be able to announce to her of men, that a man will be born in her, and he himself will save her? That is, no man can announce to her that Zion will be saved in the man who will be born in her. And a man is born in her. Who is this

man? He himself, the Most High, founded her. Let the Arians answer: for they say that the Father alone is the Most High. Behold, here it is said of the Son, And he himself, the Most High, founded her. He did not say, The Son of God who was in the beginning with the Father. But what did he say? A man is born in her, and he himself, the Most High, founded her. But if he is called the Most High, how much more the Word of God?

The Lord will tell in the writing of the peoples and of the princes, of these who have been in her. He did not say, who are in her; but, who have been in her. The Lord will tell. And how will he tell? not by word, but by writing. In whose writing? in that of the peoples. That is not enough, but he also says, of the princes. And of which princes? who are in her? He did not say this; but, who have been in her. See, then, how holy Scripture is full of sacraments. We read the apostle Paul, we read Peter, and we read him saying 'Do you seek a proof of Christ who speaks in me?' And what Paul speaks, Christ speaks. 'For whoever receives you, receives me.' Therefore our Lord and Savior tells us and speaks in the writings of his princes. The Lord will tell in the writing of the peoples, in the holy Scriptures: which Scripture is read to all peoples, that is, so that all may understand. What he says is this. So the apostles wrote, so the Lord himself spoke in his gospels, not so that few might understand, but that all. Plato wrote in writing: but he did not write among the peoples, but among the few. For scarcely three men understand him. But these, that is the princes of the Church and the princes of Christ, did not write for the few, but for the whole people.

And of the princes, that is, of the apostles and of the gospels. Of these who have been in her. See what he says, Who have been, not who are: so that, apart from the apostles, whatever else is said afterward may be cut off, may have no authority thereafter. Therefore, however holy someone may be after the apostles, however eloquent he may be, he has no authority: because the Lord tells in the writing of the peoples and of the princes, of these who have been in her.

As it were the dwelling of all who rejoice is in you. The prophet speaks to the Church, and says to her: As it were the dwelling of all who rejoice is in you. Why did he not say, The dwelling of all who rejoice is in you, but said, As it were of those who rejoice? It is said in another psalm: 'When the Lord turned back the captivity of Zion, we became as those who are consoled'; and he did not say, consoled. So also in this place he says, As it were the dwelling of all who rejoice is in you. Why did he say all this? Because in the present age, however holy someone may be, however much he renounces the world, he does not have perfect victory. Then it is said in the gospel: 'Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be consoled.' But if it was said 'Blessed are they who weep, for they shall laugh': it is clear that in the present age there is no certain joy. Therefore our joy is as it were joy. The dwelling is in you. See what he says: that someone may never withdraw from the Church.

We ought to know that what we have interpreted of the Church can be understood also of our soul. For if Zion is interpreted as a watchtower, and our soul in no other way but always considers higher things: the true church, the true temple of Christ is nothing other than the human soul. The Church of Christ is nothing else but the souls of those who believe in Christ. 'You,' he says, 'are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you.' Its foundations are in the holy mountains: that is, the foundations of God are nowhere but in the holy mountains, in the doctrines of the believing soul. The Lord loves the gates of Zion. Our Zion has very many gates: which, if we open them, the bridegroom enters in to us, and sleeps with us. Then he himself says: 'Behold, I stand before the door and knock: if anyone opens to me, I will enter and dine with him.' Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God. A city is not one building, but consists of many buildings: so the Church and our Zion, unless it has many virtues, will not be the city of God. I will be mindful of Rahab and Babylon among those who know me. She who once was in the breadth of sins, afterward ascended into the remembrance of God. Will a man say to Zion, and a man is born in her? I speak to you a wondrous thing, but a true one.

Our Zion, in which at times there are foreigners, and Tyre, and the Ethiopian: that watchtower, that harlot, that Rahab, that Babylon, she who spread apart her feet to everyone passing by, according to Ezekiel: that harlot, if she wills, suddenly becomes a virgin. She becomes a virgin, and conceives the Son of God, and gives birth. 'From the fear of you, O Lord, we conceived and were in labor; we brought forth the spirit of your salvation upon the earth.' See, then, that the harlot conceives from God and gives birth, and brings forth the Savior. We brought forth the spirit of your salvation upon the earth. Therefore our soul, that Rahab, that harlot, can conceive and bring forth the Savior. And a man is born in her. If we will, Christ is born daily: through each single virtue Christ is born. For if 'Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God,' whoever does a virtuous deed generates virtue. And he himself, the Most High, founded her. He who is born in you, he himself gives the foundation to your Zion. The Lord will tell in the writing of the peoples. It is clear that what the Lord speaks in Scripture, he speaks to no one as he does to Zion. And yet, when all these things have come to pass, when Christ has been born in her, the victory is not certain and secure, but we are always in danger. As it were the dwelling of all who rejoice is in you.

He who is joyful, from that very cheerfulness is secure: but he who is secure is quickly deceived. But he who dreads ambushes can quickly escape: with the Lord granting it, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Homily 19, on Psalm 89

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). A prayer of Moses, the man of God. There are four psalms that are headed with the title ”prayer”: the sixteenth, and the one that follows it, and the eighty-ninth, and the hundred and first. In the hundred and first it says: ”A prayer of the poor man, when he is downcast, and pours out his prayer in the sight of God.” This one: A prayer of Moses, the man of God. We read the song of Moses in Exodus, at that time when the people crossed the Red Sea, and when Pharaoh and all his army had been drowned, Miriam and Moses sang. Then we read one in Deuteronomy also, since he had written that song in Deuteronomy. If therefore these psalms and these songs belong to Moses, why are they not found in his own books? So we have already explained how the hundred and first psalm is inscribed, A prayer of the poor man: and it is another who wrote about him, and that poor man who intercedes for us is the Lord, ”who, though he was rich, became poor for our sake,” and the rest. So too here is Moses, since from the very beginning of the human race he himself wrote the history: for he himself wrote how heaven and earth were made, how man too was made, about the creation of man; and this psalm speaks about the creation of man, what man is, and why he was born. He therefore who in Genesis wrote about the creation of men, is now himself also brought in by the Holy Spirit to discourse on what man is.

Lord, you have been made a refuge for us from generation to generation. He who seeks a refuge, seeks it either from excessive heat and scorching, or because a beast is pursuing him, or because enemies are pursuing him, to kill him. We too, then, are in the heat of this world; and a beast pursues us too, of which we say, ”Do not hand over to the beasts a soul that confesses to you”; and enemies pursue us too; and therefore we flee for refuge under your wings. From generation to generation: both in the past, and in the present, and in the future. In another sense, From generation to generation: both in the old people of the Jews, and in our own people of Christians.

Before the mountains were made, and the earth and the world were formed. At this place a heresy creeps in: If he was made a refuge for us before the mountains were made and the earth and the world were formed, then souls existed before the world came to be. For what does Scripture say? Lord, you have been made a refuge for us: from generation, it says, to generation: from the beginning of the world, before the beginning of the world. This is what they say. And do not think, he says, that I am the one saying it. Before the mountains were made, and the earth and the world were formed, you, he says, have been made a refuge for us. But if you were our refuge before the world was made, then souls existed before the world came to be. You divide the sentence wrongly, O heresy. Why do you slander the Holy Spirit? Speak in the way the Holy Spirit spoke. It should therefore be read thus: Lord, you have been made a refuge for us from generation to generation: and the pause is up to this point. Then another fresh beginning: Before the mountains were made, and the earth and the world were formed, from age to age you are God. You are God before the mountains were made, you are God before the earth and the world were formed, from age to age you are God, you always are, you are eternal.

Do not turn man away into humiliation. And you said: Turn back, sons of men. O Lord, that we might dare to ask this, that we might say, Do not turn man away into humiliation, you have given us confidence by saying: ”Return to me, sons, as you turn back, and I will heal your afflictions.” And you said: Turn back, sons of men. For a thousand years before your eyes are like a single day that has passed by: do not turn man away into humiliation. And a watch in the night. What did he mean to say by this, And a watch in the night? We ought also to know this according to the literal history: the night is divided into four watches. Indeed in the Gospel too it is said: ”But in the fourth watch.” One watch, then, is three hours: so the night is divided into four watches. Indeed soldiers have these four stations, when they keep guard and relieve one another. See, then, what he says. All of our eternity: that Adam our forefather, who lived nine hundred and thirty years; even that Methuselah, who lived nine hundred and sixty-five years; suppose he had lived a thousand: in comparison with your eternity, what was great is short. For what can be great that has an end? Our thousand years, before we had committed offense, was one day in your sight. Why do I say, one day? one watch of the night. Do not turn man away into humiliation. See what he says: You deigned for our salvation to come down, you poured out your blood for us: do not allow us to perish, and to die in humiliation. You yourself said: ”When I have been lifted up, I will draw all to myself.” You have been lifted up, and you have lifted us up: do not abandon us, so that we be dragged down.

In the morning let it pass like grass, in the morning let it flower and pass away: in the evening let it fall, harden, and wither. O the mysteries of the Scriptures! In the morning let it pass like grass. Our Lord and Savior also speaks in the Gospel about the hay, which springs up in one day and withers in one day. Just as grass that is

green and flowers seems in the morning to be, as it were, a flower and green: yet when the sun comes and scorches it, toward evening it wilts, as it were, and falls; so too all our life seems to be, as it were, a flower while it is green, and it withers. Ten years ago you saw a young lad: nothing more beautiful than he, he ran this way and that. If you look at him now, he seems in old age to be, as it were, dead. Though he lives in old age, yet his youth has perished. In the morning let it pass like grass, that is, our youth: for that is the morning. Let it pass like grass, in the morning let it flower and pass away. We flower in youth, we wither in old age. In the evening let it fall, harden, and wither. For we have failed in your anger, and in your wrath we have been troubled. Formerly we used to live nine hundred and thirty years, we had reached up to a thousand: behold, our life has been contracted to a brief span.

You have set our iniquities in your sight. Nothing is hidden from you: that is, neither does night hide our sins, nor do shadows envelop them: all things shine bright before you. Our age in the illumination of your countenance. It stands better in the Hebrew: ”Our faults in the illumination of your countenance. Whatever we do, whatever we think we are doing in secret, lies open in your eyes. For all our days have failed. Our lifetime has run its course: and while we are unaware, it slips away, we perish; and this very thing that we are speaking is part of death, and we do not understand. Our years will be pondered like a spider. See what he says. Just as a spider casts out its threads, as it were, and runs this way and that, and weaves all day long, and the labor indeed is great, but the result is nothing: so too the life of men runs this way and that. We seek possessions, we prepare riches, we beget sons, we labor, we are raised up to kingdoms, and we do everything: and we do not understand that we are weaving a spider’s web. The days of our years in themselves are seventy years. Where are the thousand years? We have been contracted into seventy years: but if more, eighty. But if we live longer, it is no longer life, but death. But if among the powerful, eighty years. For whom will you find to be an eighty-year-old and to be healthy?

The Greek saying also says: ”Old age is itself a disease. And what is beyond them is toil and sorrow. Whatever is more is not life, but sorrow.

This much we have said for the time being according to the literal history: but now let us speak according to the anagogical sense. And indeed every psalm admits of a figurative interpretation; and I could now run through it verse by verse, and give the spiritual understanding in each: but the hour shuts us out. Let me at least give you in a single verse, as it were, a taste of the spiritual understanding, so that whatever I here leave unspoken, you may consider to have been spoken here. The days of our years in themselves are seventy years. Seventy years are seven decades, and eighty years are eight decades. See, then, how the seventh and the eighth number is proclaimed. And just as we said, You have been made a refuge

for us from generation to generation, both in the old and in the new testament: therefore now too he sets down both the seventh and the eighth number. This he says also in Ecclesiastes: ”Give a portion to seven, and give a portion to eight. Therefore there are also fifteen Psalms of Degrees, that is, seven and eight: which fifteen together lead us to the kingdom of heaven. And indeed, after the seventh Psalm of Degrees has been completed, what does Scripture call that psalm itself? ”A psalm,” it says, ”of Solomon,” who had built the old house. And what does it say? ”Unless the Lord builds the house, in vain have they labored who built it.

What then does Solomon himself say, who is prefixed in the very title? I built the temple: but unless the eighth number builds, the house is built in vain. We read also in the Gospel according to Matthew: Blessed are the poor, blessed are the meek, blessed are those who hunger and thirst, and the rest, and there are eight beatitudes. Therefore our Lord enclosed the Gospel in the number eight. Indeed nowhere do we find eight beatitudes together except in the Gospel. In the number eight, that is, on the day of the resurrection. The days of our years in themselves are seventy years. Do you wish that I should meanwhile show you that the seventh and the eighth number contain very many mysteries? Let us read Ezekiel, and at one gate it is said: ”And let him enter,” it says, ”through the gate of the east into the temple that is being built. In Ezekiel, in the last part. ”And the high priest shall go up,” it says, ”by seven and eight steps. And could it be that at that gate there were both seven steps, and eight? But see what he says. The eastern gate, from which the light comes. Our Lord and Savior. There is indeed one gate, and no one enters through it except the high priest. And what is said there? ”This gate shall always be shut. And it is not opened except to the priest. So therefore both the new and the old testament was always shut:

it was not opened except to the Savior. For he is the one ”who holds the key, who opens and no one shuts, who shuts and no one opens. So one gate has both seven and eight steps. And in the old testament indeed there are evangelical mysteries, and in the new testament there are mysteries of the law. Hear greater mysteries. At that time when Solomon, that is, our peacemaker who says, ”My peace I give to you, my peace I leave to you”: for ”he himself is our peace,” and ”the peace that surpasses all understanding,” he himself built a temple to God. And see there what Scripture says. ”And there were,” it says, ”seventy thousand stonecutters, and eighty thousand of those who carried burdens. See the number. The stonecutters who cut the stones, who prepare, as it were, the foundations of the buildings, who lift up the stones from the earth to build in the temple of God, are placed in the seventh number, in the prophets, in the patriarchs. For they, drawing out the human race, as it were, from the earth, prepared them for the temple of the Lord. But these others, that is, the eighty thousand, are the apostolic and evangelical preaching, these who together with the Lord the Savior and Solomon himself carried the heavy sins of the nations. Up to this point the mystery seems to be finished:

hear greater mysteries. ”And those who were in charge,” it says, ”of these works and of the temple, were three thousand.

There can be none greater, even among those who preside over the works, than those who preach the Trinity. The days of our years in themselves are seventy years. There are many things that might be said, but the hour shuts us out.

Make known your right hand, and those fettered in heart in wisdom. In some manuscripts it says ”the learned,” in others it says ”the fettered.” ”Learned” means one thing, ”fettered” means another. What then does he say: Make known your right hand? Why so long do you draw back your right hand, O God? ”Why do you turn away your hand into your bosom?” it says in another psalm. What is being said is this: We are laid low in sickness, we lie in sins: send forth your right hand, and lift us up. Why so long do you keep your right hand in your bosom? Let your heart pour out your good Word: send forth your right hand, and set us free. Make known to us the mystery which was hidden from the generations. Make known your right hand. What are you stealing away by stealth, O Arius? He did not say, make your right hand: for God was never without his right hand. But what did he say? Your right hand, which always existed, and was in your bosom, make it known. Since we cannot know him remaining in his deity, let him take on manhood, and thus let us understand him. Make known your right hand thus, and those fettered in heart in wisdom: those who have the fetters of wisdom, that is, who are fettered in the heart through your wisdom. Do not let it trouble you that the passage is obscure. The prophets had wisdom: but that very wisdom, as it were, fettered them; they could not fly without Christ. See, then, what he says: Send forth your right hand, that is, your Son, and make him known to us; and let the prophets, who prophesied, as it were, the shadow, begin to preach the Lord more manifestly.

Turn back, O Lord, how long? We have sinned much, you turn away your face, our sins are not worthy to be seen by your eyes, and therefore we pray: Turn back, O Lord, how long? Behold, now so many ages have flowed by: the prophets have always proclaimed to the nations that you would come, and still you have not come. And direct the sons of men. We who are crooked, may we be set straight by you. And direct the sons of men. Well did he say, direct the sons of men. Direct them for this reason, because they are sons of men. For if they were your sons, they would have been set straight. For you yourself said: ”I said: you are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High. But you shall die like men, and shall fall like one of the princes.” And in another place: ”Sons of men, how long will you be heavy of heart?” And in another place: ”My spirit shall not remain in these men, because they are flesh.” Since they are men, therefore they are flesh. So because we are sons of men, and we have lost the state of being sons of God, and we have become crooked: therefore direct us, so that we may again be made your sons.

And let the splendor of the Lord our God be upon us. The Apostle also says to the Hebrews that the Lord and Savior is the splendor of the glory of the Father. And let the splendor of the Lord our God be upon us. This is what is said also in another place: ”The light of your countenance has been sealed upon us, O Lord.” The sign of the cross is our banner. This much we have said for the present about the psalter, and I reckon we have lingered longer than we should have. We realize that we have said much more than we ought to have said; but we cannot keep silent about the words of our Lord, we cannot leave a psalm we have begun. Whatever profits the soul is not too much; nothing is enough of what is good, if indeed it is good. Let us therefore ask our Lord and Savior that his splendor may shine forth in our hearts, that it may cast out all our darkness, that it may drive away from our hearts the dark thoughts and those of all sins, that it may illumine our darkness, that the shadows may flee, and that his splendor may dwell in our hearts. The temple of the Lord and the tabernacle and the holy of holies always had a burning lamp, always a lamp was shining in the temple of the Lord. For if the lamp is extinguished, the Lord does not dwell in darkness. Let us therefore say, we too: ”Your word, O Lord, is a lamp to our feet.”

Homily 20, on Psalm 90

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Who dwells in the help of the Most High. ”Help” is what Ezra means. Indeed, the prophet Ezra is called βοηθός (boēthos), ”helper.” This is the one who led the people back from the captivity of Babylon and brought them into the land of promise. Whoever, therefore, dwells in Ezra, whoever dwells in Jesus (for the moment according to the tropological sense), who built for himself a house without hands, as the apostle says — that house which the Lord had built even for the midwives in Egypt: he shall abide under the protection of the God of heaven. He shall say to the Lord: You are my upholder and my refuge, my God. For many enemies pursue me: therefore you are my refuge. I will hope in him, for he himself will free me from the snare of the hunters. He did not say, ”I hope”; but, ”I will hope.” For as long as we sin, we do not hope: if we cease to sin, we hope. For he himself will free me from the snare of the hunters. There are many hunters in this world, who try to hunt down our soul. Indeed even that giant Nimrod was a great hunter in the sight of the Lord: and Esau was a hunter, because he was a sinner; and nowhere in the holy Scriptures do we find any holy hunter. Fishermen we find to be holy.

For he himself will free me from the snare of the hunters. ”Our soul, like a sparrow, has been snatched from the snare of the hunters: the snare has been broken, and we have been set free.” What is this snare that has been broken? ”The Lord,” he says, ”will crush Satan under our feet speedily.” And the apostle says: ”That you may be freed from the snare of the devil.” You see, therefore, that this is a hunter, who desires to hunt our souls to their destruction. The devil has many snares, and he has diverse snares. Greed is a snare of the devil, slander is a snare of the devil, fornication is a snare of the devil. And from the harsh word. As long as we are in holiness, our soul is tranquil; but when we begin to think about sins, our soul is troubled, and is shaken as though by certain waves.

With his shoulders he will overshadow you. But this is according to that passage of Deuteronomy: The Lord protects us with his wings like his own chicks, as an

eagle does. For it is said there that he protects his chicks like an eagle. Although, therefore, we can say this, that God protects us like a father, and protects us like a hen protecting her chicks, lest they be seized by the hawk: nevertheless we can also say something else. With his shoulders he will overshadow you: he will be lifted up on the cross, he will stretch out his hands, and will protect us. And under his wings you shall hope. You shall look, he says, upon his crucified hands, and if the serpent bites you, you shall be healed. Although you walk in the desert of this world: if a scorpion strikes you, if a basilisk, if an asp, if the other venomous creatures, be secure concerning your healing: the serpent has been lifted up in the wilderness.

His truth shall surround you with a shield. Our shield is round, that is, it hedges us in on every side. Not only is it a shield, but it is also a wall. ”Lord, as with a shield of your good will you have crowned us.” Does someone crown with a shield? See what he says: Lord, as with a shield of your good will you have crowned us. What does he say? You will protect us, and make us conquer, and after the victory you will crown us. His truth shall surround you with a shield. Since he had said ”from the harsh word,” and by the harsh word we can understand also that of the heretics, and of the philosophers, and of the Jews, and this, as it were, harsh word is not true, but is false. For it is turbid precisely because it is false; it is turbid precisely because it disturbs our souls through its lie. The Lord therefore, who is truth, and says ”I am the truth,” his truth surrounds us with a shield, lest we be struck by the burning arrows of the devil. Therefore Christ, who is the truth, sets his shield against them, so that by the shield of truth he may overcome the lie. You shall not fear the terror of the night. The devil is always in darkness: ”that he may strike,” he says, ”the innocent in secret.” You see, therefore, that whoever is simple and innocent is always struck in secret. You shall not fear the terror of the night. What he says is this: Although you may be in terror, which is night, nevertheless you shall not fear, because you have the shield of truth.

Of the arrow that flies by day. To this sense there seems to be, as it were, a contradiction: Of the arrow that flies by day. The flying arrow of the devil seems to me to be the discourse of the heretics and philosophers. For these too promise the light of knowledge, and say that they have day; and they cannot deceive unless they promise light. But that light which they promise is from burning arrows. And therefore it is said, Of the arrow that flies by day. Of the business that walks about in the darkness. The arrow indeed flies as though by day, but the business is one that walks about in darkness.

Of the assault and the noonday demon. It is better said in Greek, ἀπὸ συμπτώματος (apo symptōmatos). Symptosis means either an occurrence, that is, when we do not expect it, and something new happens. Or it is called symptoma, when many fall at the same time. See therefore what he says. Although many have been led

astray, nevertheless you, who are holy, are not to be led astray. I give an example, so that the simpler ones may be able to understand what is said. If you go into a city as a monk alone, and begin to walk about, and hear a shout in the circus, and someone says to you: Come and watch, it is the circus; and you begin to say to him, It is not permitted, I cannot go: if he shows you countless thousands of men, and says to you, Two hundred thousand men are there: are all those then going to perish, and you alone will be saved? — you ought to understand that it is a symptoma of the devil; that is, you ought to know that many are falling. And the noonday demon. Many indeed say that there are also noonday demons, and this is said among the common folk. But for my part I say plainly that a demon has power over us at the time when we sin. Whether we sin in the morning, the demon enters into us: whether at evening, whether at night, at whatever hour we sin, the demon enters into us.

But if we do not sin at noon, he does not enter into us. You see, therefore, how frivolous is what is said among the common folk. What then does he say, Of the noonday demon? Because Abraham received the angels at noon, and Joseph invited his brothers to a meal at noon. For both Abraham and Joseph were holy, and therefore their banquet was in clear light and full sun, therefore they feed at noon. And I too, if I have full knowledge of the Scriptures, although it be the third hour, nevertheless I feed you at noon. Indeed even the bride in the Song of Songs says: ”Where do you feed, she says, where do you lie down at noon? You see that the bridegroom does not feed, does not recline at the third hour, but at noon. Where do you feed, where do you lie down, where do I find you, where do you take your delight, where can I find you, O my bridegroom? Do you wish to find me? At noon, in perfect knowledge, in good works, in clear light. Since therefore we have our noon, therefore the devil too transforms himself into an angel of light, and he himself pretends that he has light, that he has noon. When the heretics promise, as it were, certain mysteries, when they promise the kingdom of heaven, when continence, when fasts, when holiness, when renunciation of the world, they promise noon.

But since it is not the light of Christ, it is not noon, but the noonday demon.

A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand. The individual words of the Scriptures are individual mysteries. Those rustic words which are thought so by the men of the world are full of mysteries. ”For we have this treasure in earthen vessels”: we have the treasure of the divine meaning in the most worthless words. A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand. At whose side? At the side of him to whom it had been said, His truth shall surround you with a shield, you shall not fear the terror of the night. Who is this? He of whom it was said above, Who dwells in the help of the Most High, he shall abide under the protection of the God of heaven. From him, therefore, who

dwells in the help of the Lord, a thousand shall fall at his side, and ten thousand at his right hand. The right hand of the holy man is spoken of: the left is not spoken of, but the side. For see what is said: And ten thousand at your right hand. And how had you said it? A thousand shall fall at your side. For when the right hand is spoken of and the left is not named, in place of the left the side is named. For it could not be just that the just man should have a left hand. ”Whoever,” he says, ”strikes you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well.

He did not say, ”and the left”: for it is not a left cheek that is offered, but another right one. Therefore I say plainly that the just man has two right hands. Indeed even that Ehud, who is written of in the book of Judges, is said to have two right hands for this reason, because he was just, and he killed that very fat king. A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand. There are more who lie in wait for our right hand, there are not more who lie in wait for the left: therefore at the side a thousand shall fall, and at the right hand ten thousand. For where the greater battle is, the greater victory. Few lie in wait for the side, more lie in wait for the right hand.

For he has given his angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. This passage the devil interpreted concerning the Lord. For at the time when he tempted the Lord, ”If,” he says, ”you are the Son of God, cast yourself down. For it is written concerning you, that he has given his angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest perhaps you dash your foot against a stone. The devil said nothing more than this: For he has given his angels charge concerning you, that in their hands they may bear you up, lest perhaps you dash your foot against a stone. He left out the middle part. For here it is said, For he has given his angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. This he did not say, To guard you in all your ways: for he knew it was against himself. For the Lord could have answered him: If the Lord guards me in all my ways, then I am guarded from you too. He was silent, therefore, about what he knew was against himself, and set down what was in his favor. Truly the devil, like a devil, interprets concerning the Savior what is not concerning the Savior. For if the whole psalm is about the Savior, as you interpret it, O devil, then it is about him too what is said: I will protect him, because he has known my name.

That is, I the Father will protect my Son. Let me interpret it, devil, as you understand it. Let us see whether the sense holds. I will protect him, because he has known my name: that is, I the Father my Son. He shall cry to me, and I will hear him: that is, on the day of the cross. I am with him in tribulation, I will rescue him and glorify him: that is, I will make him rise again. With length of days I will fill him. That is, he shall live forever. And let us understand this concerning the Son of God, With length of days I will fill him. But this that follows, how does it hold with respect to the Savior, And I will show him my salvation? The salvation of God

is the Son of God. If therefore it is said about the Son, how can it hold? For the salvation of God is the Son of God. You see, therefore, that you have interpreted badly, O devil. But grant that it be interpreted as you say. You said, For he has given his angels charge concerning you, that in their hands they may bear you up, lest perhaps you dash your foot against a stone. Say also what follows. Why are you silent? Upon the asp and the basilisk you shall walk, and you shall trample under foot the lion and the dragon: Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

Homily 21, on Psalm 91

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin).

The ninety-first psalm is prefaced with this title: A psalm of a song for the sabbath day. No one can keep the sabbath day unless he has first passed through six days. For six days we labor; on the seventh day we rest. Therefore we cannot sing to the Lord except on the sabbath day. As long as we do the works of this world, that is, during the six days, we cannot sing to the Lord. And so it is said in Leviticus: ”You shall do no servile work on the sabbath day.” Whoever, then, is in the sabbath and in the Lord’s rest ought not to do servile work, that is, work that pertains to this world; but he ought to do that work which pertains to the sabbath. Do you want to know that on the sabbath the priests work in the temple of the Lord? On the sabbath no one is permitted to cut wood. Indeed, one man who was found doing so in the wilderness was stoned and killed. Likewise it is not permitted to kindle a fire, nor even to do any work at all. But you see that all these things, which no one in the world is permitted to do on the sabbath, are permitted to the priests alone: for they both cut wood, and lay on the fire, and perform other ministries, and offer up sacrifices. Why have I said all this? To show that it is written in the law that we too must cease even on the sabbath day from the works of the world, and do those things that pertain to God. So then, it is a psalm of a song for the sabbath day, when we do not work for the world, but work for God. Let us see, therefore, what we ought to sing on the sabbath, when we cease from the works of the world.

It is good to give praise to the Lord, and to sing to your name, O Most High. He did not say, it is good to sing, and afterwards to give praise; but see the order: It is good to give praise, and it is good to sing. First do penance and wipe away your sins with tears, and afterwards sing to the Lord. It is good to give praise to the Lord: not to men, but to God: confess your sins to him who is able to heal. And to sing to your name, O Most High.

To proclaim your mercy in the morning, and your truth throughout the night. Understand carefully what is said: To proclaim your mercy in the morning and your

truth throughout the night. Each little verse refers to a corresponding one. It is good to give praise to the Lord — to proclaim your mercy in the morning. If you give praise to the Lord, you proclaim in the morning the mercies of the Lord. And to sing to your name, O Most High. Refer this verse to the one that follows: And your truth throughout the night. For when we give praise to the Lord, we hope for mercy; but when we sing, we practice the virtues. To proclaim your mercy in the morning. Where are those who understand the scriptures according to the letter? Can we not proclaim the mercy of God at midday? And surely it belongs above all to Christians and monks to confess their sins in the night. And how does he now say, To proclaim your mercy in the morning? What he says is this. We cannot give praise to the Lord and obtain his mercy unless a bright light has begun to shine in our heart. Unless the darkness has gone before and the morning has come, we cannot obtain the mercy of the Lord. But then you proclaim the mercy of the Lord in the morning, when the sun of righteousness has risen in your heart. And your truth throughout the night. The truth of the Lord is not proclaimed except toward the night:

in the day it cannot be proclaimed. For the weak cannot bear things that are great, nor can they endure things that are precious. Hence it is said also in another place concerning God: ”He made darkness his hiding place” — that is, the Lord made darkness his hiding place. And so the truth of the Lord is proclaimed in the night: it is wrapped up, as it were, in a certain darkness of words. It is spoken in riddle and in parables: that those who see may not see, and those who hear may not hear. We read in Hosea, and it is said to the prophet: ”Go and take to yourself a wife, a wife of harlotry. The Jews hear it and the gentiles, and they laugh. Why do they laugh? Because the truth is placed in the night, not in the day. Do you want to know that the truth of God is in the night, and, as it were, in darkness, and is set in parables? Moses went up onto Mount Sinai: and he entered, it says, into the whirlwind and into the gloom and into the darkness, and there he spoke with the Lord. For the people of Israel could not see the mysteries of God, because it had not entered into the gloom of God.

On the ten-stringed psaltery, with a song upon the harp. I say it plainly: as often as we lift up our hands without wandering thoughts and disputings, we sing to the Lord on the ten-stringed instrument. On the ten-stringed psaltery, with a song upon the harp. Our harp is body and soul and spirit: they are composed of all the strings.

For you have delighted me, O Lord, in your making, and in the works of your hands I will exult. A Christian, whatever he sees, is always built up. Nothing tears down a monk except sin. Whatever you look upon is your own edifice. You see the sky, you see the sun, you see the stars, you see the moon: this builds you up. For you ought to think and say: If the sun and the moon and the sky and the stars serve God, why

should I not serve? You see the earth, you see the animals and all the things that are upon the earth: bring this too to bear upon your soul, and build yourself up, and say to your soul: All things run in their own season; consider indeed spring and summer, autumn and winter — do these seasons ever change? No, according to the ordinance of God all things serve. The sky serves, and the earth serves: and I, unhappy man, do not serve. Let us come to the little animals: I leave aside now the elephants, I leave aside the lions, I leave aside the various animals, I come to the little animals. Look at the bee, look at the ant: see the body, and search out the wisdom. The wisdom is greater than the size of the body. Bees and ants consider that winter is coming: and the monk and the Christian do not consider that judgment is coming.

Those creatures consider that they may be endangered by hunger, if they have not labored in the summer to have something to live on in the winter: we do not consider that without work we will be tormented in hell. Why have I said all this? Because it is now written, For you have delighted me, O Lord, in your making. Whatever I look upon delights me: for I understand the maker, and I bless God. And in the works of your hands I will exult. I see a tree, and I consider how the bark of the tree is, as it were, clothed like a tunic, how it grows green like a bud. Then I see how there is, as it were, a blossom, how the blossom falls, and the blossom itself turns into fruit. I see nature little by little, through each single day and into each single season, working for me and growing into my food. I see how God in all things labors for me, so that nothing may be lacking to me: and therefore I exult in you, O Lord.

How magnified are your works, O Lord. At this point Marcion and Manichaeus burst out. For what do they say? If God made all things, and made them for the benefit of men, what need was there to make the bedbug and the flea? I answer you briefly: so that your frailty, O man, might be shown. For you who place your thought in heaven — look, you are bitten by a bedbug and you shudder. Why are you lifted up into heaven, and why does your thought soar into heaven? Behold, you are wounded by a bedbug. How magnified are your works, O Lord. Small bodies indeed, but great design. Each has its own uses. I marvel at the Lord in the elephant just as much as in the ant; I proclaim him in the camel just as much as in the gnat. Look at the gnat, how it is like the point of some tiny body, and yet see how in that very point of a tiny body all its members are distinct. It has six feet, it has two eyes, it has a mouth and a belly, it has also a trumpet of voice, it has wings too. If you look at the members, you do not find the body; and yet God is magnified, because without a body there are all these members.

Your thoughts have been made exceedingly deep. Whatever I may think, I cannot find it out. ”Your judgments are an abyss.” ”O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God.” I too will say with Ecclesiastes: ”I said, I will become wise:

and it was made far from me, much farther than it was; and it is deep — who can find it out?" What Ecclesiastes says is this: Before I put my thought to the work, I did not see the magnificence of God. I said, I will become wise, that is, I said, I ought to seek out the reasons of the individual causes; and it was made far from me, much farther than it was, that is, the wisdom which before, not searching, I was ignorant of, afterwards I began to seek, and I could not find it out. The foolish man does not know, and the stupid man does not understand these things. Whoever is not a Christian, and in the works does not understand the creator, that man is foolish.

When sinners spring up like grass. You have seen emperors, you have seen prefects, you have seen armies, you have seen victories and triumphs. Yesterday it was, and today it is not. And all who work iniquity have appeared, that they may perish forever and ever. Yesterday it appeared like a flower, today the flower itself does not appear. Yesterday the grass was green, today it is dried up. Where is that beauty? Nothing is good except what is eternal: nothing is good except what is everlasting. Whatever has an end is not even to be counted among good things. For what does it profit me, if yesterday I was fed, and today I die of hunger? For what does it profit me, if a few days ago I was a king, and today I die in prison? Everything that is past and has an end is nothing. Each one of us has come from the world to this life. One left his mother behind, another his sons, another his wife, another his parents. Let us remember our infancy, let us remember our youth; let us remember that we once had riches, and each one according to his means had what he could. Behold, we have passed over to this life. Where are all those things? Thought about, they cause pain rather than pleasure. Nothing therefore is good except what is everlasting.

But you, O Lord, are the Most High for evermore. For behold your enemies, O Lord, for behold your enemies shall perish, and all who work iniquity shall be scattered. If they perish, how shall they be scattered? For he who has once perished cannot be scattered. He ought to have said: Behold, they shall be scattered, and they shall perish. What he says, then, is this: Your enemies, O Lord, shall perish; when all things have been made subject to you, everyone who was your enemy afterwards becomes a friend, that is, the man will not perish, but the enemy will perish. He who was an enemy will be a friend, and thus the enemy will perish. For behold your enemies shall perish, and all who work iniquity shall be scattered. Just as, when the saints are together, it is pleasing; so, if sinners are together, it is, as it were, a most wicked gathering. For the more of them there are together, the worse they are. Indeed, at the time when the tower was being built against God, they were scattered for their own benefit. Their agreement was evil: but the scattering profited even those very ones who were scattered.

And my horn shall be exalted like that of the unicorn. The horn is always set in the kingdom. ”In you we will toss up our enemies with the horn.” Indeed, no animal is offered in sacrifice to the Lord in the temple except one that has a horn. Three things are offered to the Lord in the temple: the bull is offered, the ram is offered, the he-goat is offered. Three are offered, and all are horned. For unless someone has a horn with which to toss up his enemies, he is not worthy to be offered to God. For this reason the Lord too is called a horn by those who believe in him; and on the horns of his cross he tossed up his enemies. There he confounded the devil, and all his army. Christ indeed was crucified in the body, but there in truth he was crucifying the demons. It was not a cross: but it was a triumph, it was a battle-standard. For this reason he mounted upon the cross, that he might lift us up from earth on high. I think that this cross of the Savior is the ladder which Jacob saw. On that ladder the angels were descending and ascending; on that ladder, that is, the cross, the Jews descend, and the gentiles ascend. And my horn shall be exalted like that of the unicorn. Let others have many horns: I have one horn alone. ”But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of the Lord: through whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world.”

And my old age in plentiful mercy. Our old age needs the oil of God. For just as our bodies, when they grow weary (I speak rather plainly for the sake of the simpler brothers, who cannot understand more loftily) — just as our bodies, when they grow weary, are not restored except by the anointing of oil; just as the light that is in a lamp, unless you put in oil, is extinguished: so also the light of my old age needs the oil and mercy of God in order to grow. Indeed the apostles too go up onto the Mount of Olives, so that, because they were weary and their lamps needed the oil of the Lord, they might be illumined by the oil of the Lord. Hence the righteous man also says: ”But I am like a fruitful olive tree in the house of God. And in another place it is said: ”Your sons are like young olive shoots around your table. Was there no other mountain from which the Lord might ascend to the kingdoms of heaven, except the Mount of Olives? Was there not a loftier mountain in Galilee, Tabor? What need was there for the Lord to ascend into the kingdoms of heaven from the Mount of Olives? But see what the scripture teaches you. Unless you put oil into yourself and into your lamps, you will not be able to ascend into the kingdoms of heaven. You ought to be on the Mount of Olives:

not in the valley of the Olives, but on the Mount of Olives. Let someone say: What is this valley of the Olives? The devil too has his olive trees: he has philosophers, he has heretics; they too have oil, and they too promise the light of knowledge. But those olive groves lead down into the valley: ”But let not the oil of the sinner fatten my head. Let us, then, ask the Lord that our old age and all our toil and all our darkness may be illumined by the oil of the Lord. I attend carefully in the scriptures to where I may first read of old age. Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years, and yet he is not called old. Methuselah lived nine hundred and sixty-nine

years, and he is not called old. I come all the way to the flood, and after the flood through nearly three thousand years: and I find no one who is called old. Abraham is the first to be called old, and he was certainly of much less age than Methuselah; but he is called old for this reason, that his old age had been anointed with plentiful oil. Indeed it is written there: ”And Abraham died,” it says, ”nourished in a good old age; full,” it says, ”of days. For this reason in a good old age, because he was full of days: for all the time of his life was days, and not night.

This very thing that is said of Abraham is said also of Isaac, is said also of Jacob. For those who had served the Lord together are rightly called together the old men of the Lord.

Like the cedar of Lebanon he shall be multiplied: a sweet-smelling wood, the wood with which the roofs of the temple are covered. Like the cedar of Lebanon he shall be multiplied: a wood that does not rot. Planted in the house of the Lord, in the courts of our God they shall flourish. In one place we are planted, in another we flourish: here we are planted, in the kingdom of heaven we shall flourish. ”I,” he says, ”planted, Apollos watered, but the Lord gave the increase.” Planted in the house of the Lord, that is, in the church, not in the walls, but in the doctrines: ”For the kingdom of God,” he says, ”is within you”: whoever has been planted in the house of the Lord, who has sent forth his roots here, there brings forth flowers. Planted in the house of the Lord, in the courts of our God they shall flourish. These are the eternal tabernacles. What are these courts? The various dwellings in heaven. And at the same time see what he says: Planted in the house of the Lord, in the courts of our God they shall flourish. Here is the house, there is the court. Surely, according to the order, he ought to have said first the court, and so the house. But see what he says. Here we may seem to be in the house: but when we have migrated to the kingdoms of heaven, in comparison with the angels and the other powers, we are not in the house, but we are in the court: we are at the beginning, not in perfection. For we shall not be angels, but as it were angels. Do not let it seem to you too small a thing, O man, if you shall be like an angel.

They shall still be multiplied in a plentiful old age. Happy is he who grows daily, who grows old in age, and grows old also in virtues. These things we have said for now concerning the psalm: we have spoken also a few things concerning the gospel, we have said something too concerning the apostle. Let us pray the Lord that all we have said — both what we have said and what you have heard — we may fulfill in deed, and turn the words into works: that we who here are planted in the house of the Lord may flourish in the court of Christ. To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Homily 22, on Psalm 93

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). We are always discussing the title, so that from the title the psalm too may be understood. ”A psalm of David, on the fourth day of the week.” The fourth day of the week is in the middle of the week, as if in the heart of the week — that is, in the middle of the seven days. For it is the fourth day, and the fourth day has an equal number of days on either side. For on one side it has the first, second, and third day; and on the other side it has the fifth, sixth, and seventh day. You see, therefore, that the fourth day — that is, the fourth day of the week — is made firm on either side by a double trinity. And at the same time it must be considered that the fourth number, in its power, is the tenth. How so? For if you count and make an ordered sum — one, two, three, four — the number ten is produced. You see, therefore, that the fourth number produces the tenth. And consider from this that the four Gospels are reckoned within the Decalogue, so that whatever was said in the Decalogue is fulfilled in the four Gospels, so that the old Law is not at variance with the dignity of the Gospel. So much, for the moment, we have said about the title; now let us come to the psalm.

”The Lord is the God of vengeances; the God of vengeances has acted freely. He who for so long lay hidden and did not appear among the people, afterward acted freely. He who before was unknown, afterward triumphed on the cross. ”The Lord is the God of vengeances. If the Lord is the God of vengeances (”Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, says the Lord”), why do you, O man, desire to avenge yourself? You have the Lord as your avenger. The Apostle says this too: ”If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he thirsts, give him drink: for in doing this you will heap coals of fire upon his head. This does not seem to belong to kindness, but to cruelty. For if I do him good so that God may do him evil, this does not come from kindness, but from a cruelty of mind. For what does the Apostle say? ”If your enemy is hungry, feed him. A dutiful utterance. ”If he thirsts, give him drink. Up to this point it seems to be mercy. But what he adds — ”for in doing this you will heap coals of fire upon his head” — does not seem to belong to mercy, but to cruelty. For you seem to give

bread and to give water to drink for this reason: that he may be tormented for ages. And does the Apostle say this — does the preacher of mercy teach cruelty? It must therefore not be taken so, but in another sense.

If your enemy strikes you, offer him the other cheek as well; if he does you evil, do him good: for if you do this, you will heap coals of fire upon his head. What he says is this: you will cleanse him from sin; for his cruelty will be overcome by your patience. If you aim an arrow at a stone, and the stone is hard, not only is it not driven in, but it rebounds: so your enemy, if he has struck you and has not been struck back, overcome by your patience will return to better things.

"How long, O Lord, the sinners — how long shall the sinners glory?" Human impatience does not want God to have patience. Wretched are we, who want God to be patient toward us and impatient toward our enemies. Whenever we sin, we desire him to be patient; but whenever someone offends against us, we do not want God to be patient toward that man. "How long shall the sinners glory?" It is not enough for them to sin, but they even glory in their sins. The first misfortune is to sin; the second misfortune, or rather the last, is not to do penance. These sinners, therefore, not only do not bend the neck, but freely glory after their sin. "They will utter and speak iniquity." He speaks of this properly concerning the heretics. "All who work iniquity shall speak." See the sign: he who speaks evil must necessarily do evil. "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." Wherever the conscience is wounded, there sin is easily committed in the mouth.

"They have humbled your people, O Lord." Always the people of God are humbled, the people of God are oppressed. "They have humbled your people, O Lord." The people of God are humbled, and imitate God who was humbled and meek of heart. "They have slain the widow and the stranger, and murdered the orphans: and they said, The Lord shall not see." Although this is plain according to the literal history — for always whoever needs protection is easily oppressed, and the more lowly anyone is, the more does the one who oppresses him offend God — nevertheless let us also interpret it according to the tropology. For I had said that this is said of the heretics: "They have slain the widow and the stranger." That widow — that is, the soul of the sinner, which has ceased to have God as its husband. A stranger is one who is not a resident — that is, one who does not dwell. He who had recently believed, being suddenly scandalized, perishes. "And they murdered the orphans; and they said, The Lord shall not see." Do we wonder that they are called orphans, where there is a widow? For just as the widow is the soul of the sinner, so he calls those orphans who have lost having God as their father. "And they said." What did they say? "The Lord shall not see, nor shall the God of Jacob understand." This everyone says who oppresses the saints. As they say this, see what the Holy Spirit answers.

”Understand, you who are foolish among the people, and be wise at last, you fools. He who planted the ear, shall he not hear?” He who is a potter, is he ignorant of his own vessel? He who makes another hear, shall he then himself not hear? He who gave me eyes, shall he then himself not see? He who is the author of my understanding, shall he himself not understand? This passage tells especially against those who are Anthropomorphites, who say that God has the members that we too have. For example, God is said to have eyes: ”The eyes of the Lord look upon all things”; ”the hand of God makes all things.” ”And Adam heard,” it says, ”the sound of the Lord’s feet walking in paradise.” These things they hear simply, and refer human weaknesses to the majesty of God. But I say that God is wholly eye, wholly hand, wholly foot. He is wholly eye, because he sees all things; wholly hand, because he works all things; wholly foot, because he is everywhere. So see what he says: ”He who planted the ear, shall he not hear?” He did not say, ”He who planted the ear, does he then himself not have an ear?” He did not say, ”Does he then himself not have eyes?” But what did he say? ”He who planted the ear, shall he not hear? He who formed the eyes, does he not consider?” He took away the members, he bestowed the functions.

”He who chastises the nations, shall he not reprove?” He who teaches others, does he then himself not know? ”He who teaches man knowledge.” It is understood: does he then himself not have knowledge?

”The Lord knows the thoughts of men, that they are vain.” We read in a secular poet: ”O the cares of men, O how much emptiness there is in things!” Both the Gentiles and the philosophers lift this little verse to heaven. And what do they say? Nothing could be said more prudently. Behold, our rustic Hebrew, so many ages before, spoke this. And what did he say? ”The Lord knows the thoughts of men, that they are vain.” Do you want to know that the thoughts of men are vain? A father and mother rear their son: they promise themselves happiness from him, they send him to his studies, they educate him, he comes all the way to young manhood, they arrange that he should even serve in the army. When they have thought of everything over thirty years, one little fever comes and carries off all their thoughts. I have an enemy, and the day of judgment is thirty days off; by day and by night I think of nothing else except what I shall answer him. I am on my bed, and my thought is answering my absent enemy. The enemy is not there, and my words are answering the enemy: by day and by night I am wrapped in thought. But when the day of judgment has come, all those things that I had thought perish, and whatever God has said, that I speak. For this reason the Lord too says in the Gospel: ”When you stand before the judges, do not think what you shall answer: for the Lord will give you in that hour what you shall answer.” ”The Lord knows the thoughts of men, that they are vain.” One thought alone is happy: to think about the Lord.

”Blessed is the man whom you shall instruct, O Lord.” Happy is he who has God as his teacher. ”And whom you shall teach out of your law: that you may soften for him the evil days.” See what he says. ”Blessed is the man whom you shall instruct, O Lord, and whom you shall teach out of your law” — that is, out of your Scriptures. But of what use is this, that he should be taught out of your law? ”That you may soften for him the evil days.” You see, therefore, that knowledge and practice and works drawn from the Scriptures soften for us the evil days. ”Until a pit be dug for the sinner.” When you are instructed out of the law of the Lord, one thing is divided for you into two: for it softens for you the evil days, and it digs a pit for the sinner.

”Who will rise up for me against the evildoers?” The psalms are obscure, and they are always changing the speakers; and for this reason they are obscure, and it is of exceeding difficulty to know in each verse who is speaking. ”Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? or who will stand with me against those who work iniquity?” These verses the Savior speaks. ”I am holy, I was lifted up on the cross, I died, I rose again, and I ascended a victor to the heavens. Who, do you suppose, among the saints, is there who will rise again with me?” So what he says is this: For this reason I rose again, that others too might rise with me. ”Who will rise up for me?” When he says ”Who,” he provokes the rest to rise. For just as we read in Isaiah, ”Whom shall I send to this people, and who will go for us?” — as Isaiah himself offers himself, so the Lord too provokes us, saying, ”Who will rise up for me against the evildoers?” Whoever rises again, will rise for me, is of my army. ”Against the evildoers”: against the devil and his army. ”Or who will stand with me?” See the order: he did not say first ”who will stand,” and ”who will rise”; but ”who will rise,” and ”who will stand.” For first we rise, then we stand. ”Or who will stand with me against those who work iniquity” — as a general might stand and say, ”Who is coming in my army?”

”Unless the Lord had helped me, my soul had almost dwelt in hell.” For this reason, O Lord, I rise again, because you were among the dead and rose again. My soul would have been held fast among the dead, if your soul had not risen again from the dead. ”If I said, My foot has slipped.” Considering my frailty and human weakness, I did not think my foot stood on firm footing: wherever I set my foot, I feared a fall. Again I thought of your name, and I stood with firm foot. ”According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, your consolations have gladdened my soul.” This very thing the Apostle too speaks of, namely that according to the labors and miseries which we suffer in this world, we have a reward with God in the heavens. The greatness of the tribulations is the greatness of the rewards. As many wounds as we suffer, so many crowns do we also deserve. This is what he says: The more I did penance, so many times did you console me. I shed one tear, I deserved one consolation: I shed ten tears, I deserved ten consolations. However great the weight of penance was, so great also was the number of consolations.

”He who fashions toil in the commandment. No one is crowned while sleeping, no one at ease possesses the kingdom of heaven, no one with a stuffed belly can worthily discourse about fasting. You see, then, what he says: ”He who fashions toil in the commandment. All the commandments of the Lord have toil: without toil we cannot possess the kingdom of heaven. Do you want to know that it is so? ”If you wish,” he says, ”to be perfect, go, sell all that you possess, and give to the poor, and come, follow me. He who wants, he says, to attain the kingdom of heaven, let him pray day and night, keep vigil, fast, lie on a rush mat, not on a feather cushion, not on silk. Penance does not love luxuries. ”For I ate ashes,” he says, ”like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping. ”He who fashions toil in the commandment: they will hunt the soul of the righteous. See how it seems not to be consistent. For what is the logical connection: ”He who fashions toil in the commandment: they will hunt the soul of the righteous”? But what the fleshly ear does not understand, the spiritual ear understands. What then does he say? ”He who fashions toil in the commandment”: therefore, he says, we toil in the commandments of the Lord day and night, we keep vigil, we pray, we fast, because we have many adversaries who hunt the soul of the righteous. See what he says:

they hunt the soul of the righteous, not of the unrighteous. For they do not want to deceive those who have been deceived, but the righteous. Whence it is said in Habakkuk: ”His food is choice. ”And they shall condemn innocent blood. Some are accustomed to say: That man who was killed would not have been killed, unless he were a fornicator, or had had some sin; the collapse would not have overtaken him, unless he had been a sinner; the shipwreck would not have overwhelmed him, unless he had been a sinner. See, then, what holy Scripture says: ”And they shall condemn innocent blood. As long as we are in this world, we suffer all things in common. The righteous man and the sinner are shipwrecked alike, they have equal flesh, and equal conditions of the flesh. The righteous man and the sinner perish alike: the righteous man and the sinner have a similar end, but different rewards. One is led to Gehenna, another is led to the kingdom of heaven. ”And they shall condemn innocent blood. Your conscience is enough for you, O righteous man: and even if you are condemned, let your blood be innocent, and it will cry out to the Lord.

”And the Lord has become a refuge for me.” This passage tells against the Arians. For since they contradict the Lord the Savior, because he is said to be ”made,” behold, we say, ”The Lord has become a refuge for me.” No one doubts that this is interpreted of the Father. But if it is said of the Father, ”The Lord has become a refuge for me,” it must be understood in this sense: the Lord who always was, has become a refuge for me. So too the Savior who always was, has become a Savior for me.

Homily 23, on Psalm 95

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin).

The ninety-fifth psalm is headed with this title: When the house was being built after the captivity, a song of David. The whole mystery is in the title: the whole sacrament of our life and our salvation is in the title. When the house was being built after the captivity, a song of David. The Jews understand this passage thus: When, after the Babylonian captivity, under Ezra and Zerubbabel and Jeshua the son of Josedech, the temple was built again, a song of David. David, they say, knew in the spirit, five hundred years beforehand, that the temple was to be built again. So they say. But if this is so, O Jew, as you interpret it, what does it mean, what follows: Sing to the Lord a new song? And then, Declare his glory among the nations? What is this new song? Who are these nations? You see, then, that according to the letter that kills it cannot stand at all. Therefore it must be interpreted mystically: When the house was being built after the captivity. Would that my house too might be built after captivity! Many of us have been taken captive, many have been led away into Babylon, many have borne the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar on their own necks; many have been cast into his furnace and have burned, many have lost the temple of the Lord, and in them the house of God has been overthrown. The unhappy Judas, while he was an apostle, was the house of God.

The devil came, and Judas took the morsel, and at once Satan entered into him, and his house was overthrown, and it was not restored, because he did not do penance. But if anyone does penance after sin, his house is rebuilt after captivity. Let us therefore pray, we also, to the Lord — first, indeed, that our house may not be overthrown; that the Chaldean and the Assyrian may not come and overthrow the temple of Christ within us. But if it has been overthrown, then, as in a shipwreck, by a second consolation, by means of a plank we can be saved. When the house was being built after the captivity. Daily this house of Christ is being built up in those who do penance. Indeed, he did not say, When the house had been built, lest it should seem only to have been, to be a thing of the past; but was being built, to

show that this is happening daily. Thus far we have spoken concerning our soul. But we can also put it another way: when the Church of Christ was being built up after its ruin. Let us see, then, what follows after this title.

Sing to the Lord a new song. Happy penance! Though you have fallen, yet if you do penance, you are called the new house of Christ. Sing to the Lord a new song. A new house deserves a new song. Sing to the Lord a new song. Who are to sing? Sing to the Lord, all the earth. If it is said of the temple at Jerusalem, O Jew, how is all the earth summoned to praise? Sing to the Lord, all the earth. This passage defeats both the Jew and the Novatian. Sing to the Lord, all the earth: not Jerusalem, but the whole world. Here the Jew is slain. Sing to the Lord, all the earth. The Novatian is slain. How? For the Novatian says: There are certain sins for which we ought to do penance — for instance, for lying, for perjury, for theft; but the man who has committed fornication, the man who has done murder, that man cannot do penance. Hear what it says: Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Now all the earth — the adulterer too, and the murderer — and all sins are earthly. But if all sins are earthly, whatever sin you have, do penance, and in all things you shall be saved.

Sing to the Lord, bless his name. The name of the Lord is Savior, from the fact that he was made for us. Sing to the Lord. Proclaim day from day his salvation. What does it mean to say: Proclaim day from day his salvation? The simple man understands it thus: On all days praise the Lord — that is, let day succeed to day — that is, you have praised today, praise tomorrow also. The sense indeed seems simple; but to me it seems that something else of the mystery lies hidden. Proclaim day from day his salvation. The Savior cannot be praised except in the day. For it ought to have said: Praise the Lord day and night, if it were speaking of this ordinary day. For we should have to say this, if we understand it according to the letter. If then we praise the Lord in the day, can we not again praise him in the night? See, therefore, what it says: Whenever you praise the Lord, always praise him in the light — not in the darkness of sins, but in the light of virtues. Let the sun of Christ always rise in your soul, that a new light may always be born in you. Proclaim day from day his salvation. Let us put it another way as well. There are two days, not three, not four, not five: there are two days, the Old Testament and the New. In the one Christ shines, and in the other Christ shines.

Do not praise him only in the Old Testament, lest you be Jews; do not praise him only in the New Testament, lest you be Manichaeans. Praise him day from day, that is, in the Old and in the New Testament: which two days make one light. For this reason it is also written in Leviticus: 'Every animal that divides the hoof and chews the cud is clean.' That is, if it has two hooves and chews the cud, it is clean. If therefore it has one hoof, it is not clean. The Jew has one hoof, and therefore is unclean. The Manichaean has one hoof, and therefore is unclean. And because

it has one hoof, it does not chew over its food, and what it has once sent down into the belly it brings back up again to the throat, and chews it, and makes it fine, so that what had been coarse may be sent down again fine into the belly — this, indeed, pertains to the speaking of the divine mysteries. Every animal that divides the hoof and chews the cud is clean. The Jew has one hoof: for he believes in only one testament, and does not chew the cud. For he reads only the letter, and considers nothing, seeks nothing within. But the churchman divides the hoof and chews the cud, that is, he believes in both testaments, and in both testaments he often searches; and whatever lies hidden in the letter, he brings forth in the spirit. Why have I said all this?

Because it is written: Proclaim day from day his salvation. For this reason the apostles too are sent two by two; for this reason we have not one eye but two; for this reason we have two ears, for this reason two nostrils, for this reason two lips, for this reason two hands, two feet. We have nothing single in us except what is shameful: and the members of our body bear witness to the mysteries of the two testaments.

Bring to the Lord, you families of the nations, bring to the Lord glory and honor. If it is said of the temple at Jerusalem, what does it now mean: Bring to the Lord, you families of the nations, bring to the Lord glory and honor? The multitude of the nations, the calling of the nations, is the gathering of the Church. Bring to the Lord glory and honor. When we honor the Lord in our body, the Lord is glorified in us. Bring to the Lord glory to his name. The glory of the servant is the glory of the master. 'He who receives you receives me.' Happy the servant, on whose account the master is glorified.

Take up victims, and enter into his courts. 'A holy victim, living, pleasing to God.' Take up victims. Bring victims yourselves. What victims? Be yourselves the victims. Virginity is a whole-burnt-offering to Christ: all chastity, whether in virginity or in widowhood or in continence, is a victim to Christ. I speak a new thing: the victim of chastity carries itself. Take up victims, and enter into his courts: adore the Lord in his holy court. I see many courts, I see one court. Take up victims, and enter into his courts: behold, many courts. Again, Adore the Lord in his holy court: behold, one court. See, then, that one cannot come from one court to many courts; but from many courts one comes to one court. Do you wish to know this very mystery in another passage as well? That merchant, who had many pearls, sold the many that he might buy the one. And in Micah it is said: 'Stand,' he says, 'in the ways of the Lord, and inquire,' he says, 'after the way of the Lord.' Unless we have stood in the many ways, we cannot find the one way. What are these many pearls, what are the many ways, what are these many courts — that we may find the one pearl and the one way and the one court? Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses, Joshua the son of Nun, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the twelve prophets, David, Solomon —

these were courts. These are our courts: first we enter into them; and from those courts we afterward come to the court of the Gospel, where Christ is found.

Let all the earth be moved before his face. See what it says. Heaven is not moved before the face of God; but whoever is earthly, he looks upon the Lord, and is moved, and trembles. Say among the nations that the Lord has reigned. Unless the earth has been moved and has withdrawn from its earthly works, the Lord will not reign among the nations.

For he has set right the round world, which shall not be moved. Nothing is ever set right except what was formerly straight and afterward became crooked. So therefore both we, and the whole human race, understand God by nature. For there are no nations that do not by nature understand their Creator. For though they venerate stones and wood, yet they understand that there is something greater than they themselves are, and in their very error they show that they have wisdom — that is, there is no nation that does not by nature understand God. Indeed the heathen worship idols, that is, they venerate stones and wood; and if perchance they have started a quarrel, and if some oath has come up between them, they do not say, These stones see, this wood sees: but, God sees, and God hears. See, then, what it says: For he has set right the round world, which shall not be moved. For this cause Christ came, and set right the human race, which before had been made crooked, that it might not be moved forever. For his cross is the pillar of the human race: upon that pillar his house has been built. I say the cross — not the wood, but the passion. Moreover, this cross is both in Britain, and in India, and in the whole round world. Indeed, what does he say also in the Gospel? 'Unless you take up my cross, and daily follow me.' See what it says:

Unless your soul has been so prepared for the cross, as mine was for you, you cannot be my disciples. Happy is he who carries in his breast the cross, and the resurrection, and the place of Christ's nativity, and the place of the ascension. Happy is he who has Bethlehem in his heart, in whose heart Christ is daily born. And indeed, what does Bethlehem mean? House of bread. Let us too be a house of bread, of him who came down from heaven. Daily Christ is crucified for us: we are crucified to the world, and Christ is crucified in us. Happy is he in whose heart Christ daily rises again: if daily he does penance for his sins, even the light ones. Happy is he who daily ascends from the Mount of Olives to the kingdoms of heaven, where the olives of the Lord are fruitful, where the light of Christ is born, where are the olive groves of the Lord. 'For I am like a fruitful olive tree in the house of the Lord.' Let us too, then, kindle our lamp from that olive, and at once with Christ we shall go to the kingdoms of heaven. For he has set right the world, which shall not be moved. The inhabited world (oikoumene), in which he himself dwells; for it is better said in Greek, oecumene, than in Latin. Let us pray that our oecumene too may be set right, in which the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit may dwell.

For unless our oecumene has been inhabited, it cannot be set right. There are many things that might be said. But since today is the day of the dedication feast (encaenia), and the dedication feasts are always in stormy weather, in rains, in winter. Indeed it is written in the Gospel: 'And the Lord was walking,' it says, 'at the dedication feast (encaenia) in Jerusalem, in the porch of Solomon, because it was winter and rains.' See what it says. At the dedication feast he was walking in the porch, because there was storm and rains. When someone wishes to renew himself to Christ, when the house is being built after captivity, if anyone should wish to renew his house, and to renew it to Christ; if anyone should wish to forsake the world, and to join himself to Christ: at once the storm, at once the winter, at once the rain rises up. But Christ — nay, in Christ the poor little ones, seeing the dedication feast, seeing the storm, seeing the floods, seeing the winter, leave the floods and flee under the porch of Solomon, that is, they are sheltered by the peace of Christ.

For Solomon is interpreted "peaceful," he who said, 'My peace I give to you, my peace I leave to you.' Let us too, then, walk in the porch of Solomon, let us be sheltered by his majesty, let us have his help, and let us say that word from the Song of Songs, that 'the winter is past, and the rain is gone, it has gone away' in Christ Jesus.

Homily 24, on Psalm 96

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). A Psalm of David, when his land was established. We read in the books of Kingdoms and of Chronicles that David was a warlike man, that he subjected all the surrounding nations, and reduced them under his own power. This for the moment according to the letter, so that we understand it in this way: A Psalm of David which he sang to the Lord, when, his adversaries having been conquered, he restored peace to his land, that is, to Judaea. This according to the history. But if David is interpreted as ”strong in hand,” and no one is strong in hand except him who conquered all nations, our David, to whom the demons cried out, ”Why have you come to torment us before the time, Son of David?” — then this psalm was composed by him, when his land was established. And the holy presbyter said excellently, that this land which is established is our bodies. For truly at that time ought we to sing to God, when our land has been set in order. But let us also speak of it in another way; for it does no harm, if we understand the same thing in two or three ways. For it is written in Solomon: ”You shall take these things,” he says, ”upon the tablet of your heart threefold.” It does no harm to say something different, when it is said with one spirit. When his land was established. This land, before our David conquered all, did not have peace, but everywhere there was discord. One nation worshipped Jupiter, another Mercury, another Juno, and all the nations had different idols. The standard of the cross was raised up, and all the land was established.

The Lord has reigned, let the earth exult. Let the whole earth, and all the world, which had before been subjected to demons and idols, rejoice now that the Lord reigns. The Lord has reigned. The Lord the Creator who made you, he himself has reigned. O you who before were subjected under the lord the devil, now you are subjected under the Lord the Creator. Let the many islands be glad — the holy presbyter spoke well of our souls, which are battered this way and that by various thoughts as if by various waves. But let us also call the churches islands. And indeed it is said in another place too: ”Many islands shall be converted to me.” Do you wish to know that the churches are called islands? It is said in the prophet in

the person of the Lord: ”Speak,” he says, ”to the inhabitants of this island.” Let the many islands be glad. For just as islands are set in the midst of the sea, so also the churches are set as it were in the midst of the sea of this world, and thus they are battered by persecutions as if by diverse waves. But these islands are battered daily, yet they are not overthrown. They are indeed in the sea, but they have Christ for their foundation, who cannot be moved.

Cloud and darkness are round about him. Two things are round about the Lord, cloud and darkness. I think this is the cloud of which it is said in the Gospel: ”And a bright cloud overshadowed them” — at that time when the Lord was transfigured, and the apostles fell down, and a bright cloud overshadowed them. I think these are the clouds to which the Lord commanded that they should not rain rain upon Israel. I think these are the clouds of which it is said in another place: ”Your truth reaches even to the clouds” — that truth of the Lord which says in the Gospel: ”I am the way and the truth and the life. The truth of God is Christ. The truth of the Lord reaches even to the clouds. The clouds are the apostles and the prophets; to these it was commanded that they should not rain rain upon Israel. For from the time — according to the history, as it is written in the book of Judges — that the fleece was dried up, the rain has run out over the whole world. What is said is this: Israel was dried up, and the rain ran out over the whole world. Cloud and darkness are round about him. ”The Lord comes into Egypt upon a light cloud. See what he says. The Lord comes, the Lord and Savior, into this Egypt, in which we are: into the place of darkness, where Pharaoh is, the Lord comes. He comes only upon a light cloud.

What is this light cloud? It seems to me to be holy Mary, weighed down by no human seed. This light cloud came into the world, and carries with it the Creator of the world. And what is said there in Isaiah? ”The Lord comes into Egypt upon a light cloud: and the idols of Egypt shall be shattered. The Lord comes, and the idols of Egypt were shaken and struck and destroyed. This cloud destroyed the Serapeum in Alexandria; not the emperor, a mortal man, but this cloud which came into Egypt. Cloud and darkness are round about him. We have spoken of the cloud: let us speak of the darkness. The Lord is in darkness. The Lord is either in light, or in darkness. He is in light for beginners: for to beginners he speaks more simply; but those who are perfect, to them he speaks mystically. And indeed to the apostles he did not speak as to the crowds, but he spoke inwardly. And what does he say? ”He that has ears to hear, let him hear. So this is what he means, and darkness is round about him: that is, and mysteries are round about him. Therefore it is said also in Exodus: ”And all the people,” he says, ”stood below; but Moses alone entered into Mount Sinai, into the darkness. For not all the people of God could know the mysteries which Moses alone could know. It is said of God: ”He made darkness his hiding-place.”

Justice and judgment are the setting-right of his throne. What does he mean, the setting-right of his throne? He ought to have said, the stability of his throne. When therefore it is said, the setting-right of his throne, it is shown that whatever is set right was crooked before it was set right. The judgment of God, therefore, before it comes to judge, seems as it were crooked: now the judgment seems to be unjust and crooked. For when wicked men are made rich and the holy are poor, does not the judgment of God seem to be crooked? But when he shall come to judge, so as to render to each one according to his works, at that time his throne shall be as it were set right. And indeed, do you wish to know that it is spoken of the judge? A fire shall go before him. Let him who is holy not fear this fire; let him who is a sinner fear it. This fire purges the holy, consumes sinners. A fire shall go before him. ”Who makes his angels spirits, and his ministers a burning fire.” I think these are the fires, that is, his angels. These angels, therefore, that is his fire, shall go before him. These angels — whom do they consume? Whoever is wood, hay, stubble. But he who is gold, silver, and precious stones shall indeed be cast into the fire, but shall be found the cleaner.

His lightnings have shone upon the world. The philosophers say that lightnings are generated from the collision of clouds. For unless the sound is first heard, the lightnings are not seen. This is said also of the flint-stone: that unless they are struck together, the fire in the middle does not come forth. This we have said according to the natural history, and we are still speaking to little ones. We have therefore stated the nature of things, so that from the nature of things we may bring forth something spiritual. The stone which is commonly called flint, if it is alone, cannot send forth fire: but if it is struck together with another stone, the fire in the middle is struck out. Suppose for me that Jeremiah, Isaiah, Elijah are a cloud: and that Paul too, and Peter, and the rest of the apostles are a cloud. These clouds, therefore, when they have been struck together among themselves, send forth the fire in the middle, and it gives light to the world. His lightnings have shone upon the world; the earth saw and was shaken. The lightnings of the apostles shone in the whole world, and the earth was shaken. They spoke, and the whole world heard the thunder of their voice. They had two things together: both a mighty voice, and the splendor of lightnings. These lightnings enlightened those who believed, and burned up those who did not believe.

The mountains flowed away like wax. To me these mountains seem to be the powers of the demons. Or certainly the mountains are proud men, whoever they be. This fire does not consume the humble, but whoever are mountainous. And indeed, whenever a lightning-bolt is sent forth, it strikes with difficulty those who are in the valley, but always those who are on the mountain. The heavens have announced his justice. These are the heavens of which it is said also in the eighteenth psalm, ”The heavens declare the glory of God.” The heavens announce his justice: the earth does not announce it. Whoever is heaven does not fear the just God: whoever is of

the heavens does not fear to announce his justice: whoever is holy and is heaven, he does not fear the just God. But the sinner seeks a merciful God.

Homily 25, on Psalm 97

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin).

Sing to the Lord a new song. The new song is the Son of God crucified, which had never before been heard. Let a new thing have a new song. Sing to the Lord a new song. He indeed is a man who suffered — but you, sing to the Lord. He suffered indeed as a man, but he saved as God. Sing to the Lord a new song. A new song deserves a new name. Therefore it is said elsewhere too: 'And a new name,' he says, 'shall be given to you.' A new name deserves a new song. And in the Apocalypse it is said: 'To him that overcometh,' he says, 'I will give a pebble, and I will write upon it a new name.' The new name is that of the Christians. Sing to the Lord. Why? For what has he done? Why does he deserve a new song? Because he has done marvelous things. He worked signs among the Jews: he healed the paralyzed, he cleansed the lepers, he raised the dead. This other prophets also did. He turned a few loaves into many and fed a countless multitude. This Elisha also did. What then did he do that is new, so that he deserves a new song? Do you want to know what new thing he did? God died as though a man, that men might live; the Son of God was crucified, that he might lift us up to heaven. Because he has done marvelous things.

Do you want to know that he has done marvelous things? The widow's son lay in the upper room: Elisha came and drew himself together, and placed mouth to mouth, and hands to hands, and feet to feet. For if he had stretched himself out, the widow's son would not have come back to life: therefore he drew himself together, that he might give life. Since he was in the form of God, therefore he took the form of a man, therefore he drew himself together, that he might make us higher.

His own right hand has saved for him. What he says is this: He saved men — not another's work, but his own; that is, what he had made for himself, he himself saved for himself. He had made man for salvation, who by his own fault had perished: this One died, that he might save man for himself by his own right hand. Here 'right hand' is put for power, and 'arm' for strength. And his holy arm. Although

both ’arm’ and ’right hand’ may be said to be Christ — ’The right hand of the Lord has done valiantly.’ ’And the arm of the Lord, to whom has it been revealed?’ — nevertheless, since here it is said of Christ, the right hand and the arm of the Lord is his power.

The Lord has made known his salvation. He did not say ’he showed,’ but ’he made known.’ What he says is this: what before they had known of God, and by their own fault had forgotten. Therefore God, coming by his grace, made manifest to them this thing which they had lost. So this is what he says: Him whom Adam had known, whom Seth had known, whom Enoch had known, who called upon the Lord and hoped in him, and whom Noah had known, and whom afterward the human race had forgotten — he came again into the world, that men who afterward had forgotten might again come to know him. The Lord has made known his salvation. In the Hebrew it reads: The Lord has made known his Jesus. For wherever ’salvation’ (salutare) is said, in the Hebrew ’Jesus’ is put. In the sight of the nations he has revealed his righteousness. By no means in Judea alone, but in the sight of the nations. For it was just that the Savior should save his creature. He has revealed his righteousness — which had been obscured by the unbelief of men.

He has remembered his mercy. ’He has shut up all things under sin, that he might have mercy on all.’ And his truth to the house of Israel. He remembers mercy: he fulfills truth. He has remembered his mercy: that is, toward the people of the nations. And his truth to the house of Israel: fulfilling by this work what he had promised to the patriarchs.

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Not Israel and Judah alone saw it, but all the ends; and at the same time, according to the mystical senses, the ends of the earth. As long as we are in the midst of the earth, we cannot see God. When therefore we as it were leave the earth and are on the summit, then we deserve to see God. Do you want to know how the ends of the earth see God? We read in Ezekiel: ’And those wheels,’ he says, ’which are turned, were called gelgel,’ which means ’revelation, revelation.’ For GEL means ’revelation,’ GELGEL ’revelation, revelation.’ Those wheels then hear ’revelation, revelation’: because the wheel touches the earth as it were only at some small point, and the whole of it hastens toward heaven. Therefore it is said also in another place: ’Holy stones are rolled upon the earth.’ And what is said in Ezekiel? ’Wherever,’ he says, ’the spirit went, thither the wheels also followed.’ Let us too follow the Holy Spirit, and let us be called wheels. And what is said there? ’And they went not,’ he says, ’backward, but always went forward.’ And at the same time consider what he says. ’They did not turn back,’ he says, ’but always went forward.’ For they forgot the things that were past, and reached out toward the things before them. ’And they were full,’ he says, ’of eyes.’ For all of those wheels were full of the light of God. It is not

the time now to discuss the wheels and the cherubim and the living creatures in Ezekiel.

Rejoice in God, all the earth. Not Judea alone, but all the earth — rejoice in the Lord. Send forth the standards of the victorious army. Sing and exult and make melody. Sing — in thought; but make melody — that is, with all your members. Let the hand make melody in almsgiving, let the foot make melody by going about in good work.

Make melody to the Lord on the harp. Let all your strings have voice. There cannot be a harp if one string is missing. What does it profit you if you are chaste, and yet greedy? What does it profit you if you are both chaste and generous in almsgiving, and yet envious? What does it profit you if you have six strings whole and one broken? If one string is lacking, the perfect sound of the harp cannot exist. On beaten trumpets and with the sound of the horned trumpet. We read in the book of Numbers that there are two kinds of trumpets: one kind of trumpet beaten out of silver, and another kind of trumpets made of horn. So here both are named: On beaten trumpets and with the sound of the horned trumpet. What is said is this. The trumpet beaten out of silver is the word of God. 'The words of the Lord are chaste words: silver tried by fire, purified sevenfold.' Again, in 'the sound of the horned trumpet,' here the man of God is brought in reigning. In the scriptures 'horn' is properly said for kingship and for power, as it is written there: 'He has raised up a horn of salvation for us.' And in another place it is written: 'In you we will toss our enemies on the horn.' So see here what he says. Have two trumpets, both the silver and the horned: the silver, that you may have the word; the horned, that you may have power.

Do you want to know that 'horn' is always put in a good sense? We read in Leviticus: 'Let no animal be offered except whatever is horned.' Three kinds of animals are offered: the ox, which has horns, and the ram, which has horns, and the he-goat, which has horns. Do you suppose it is said without reason, that no animal be offered except what is horned? So we too, as long as we have a horn, deserve to be a victim of God. But if our horn has been struck off, we are as it were feeble, and we cannot come among the priests of God.

Let the sea be moved, and the fullness thereof. Let the sea be moved, and let the bitter waters be changed into sweet. In fact, Marah too was changed and made into a sweet taste. Nothing else made that bitter water sweet except the wood of the cross, which had been cast into it. It seems to me that the bitter sea is the law of Moses. This is what is called Marah, that is, 'bitter.' This bitter water of the old law received the wood of the cross, and was made sweet.

The rivers shall clap their hands together. Let us ask the Jews, who understand according to the letter. Do rivers have hands? Do rivers have voices? Do rivers

have feet? Do rivers have a belly? Someone may say: It is not written about a belly, about feet. But I say to you: from one member we understand the rest as well; for we cannot understand hands without feet, without a belly, without the other members. The rivers shall clap their hands together. The rivers, which have drunk from the fountain of Jesus. 'They have forsaken me,' he says, 'the fountain of living water.' The rivers themselves run from the fountain of Christ. He is the fountain, we are the rivers — if indeed we deserve to be rivers. Christ is the fountain, and the saints are the rivers; but those who are lower are little streams. Others, however, are torrents. Who are the torrents? Those who have waters for an hour, and when temptation comes are dried up. The rivers shall clap their hands together. It is not one river, there are many rivers: as many as the saints are, so many also are the rivers. But these rivers have no dissension among themselves: since they are the rivers of Christ, therefore they have concord among themselves. The rivers shall clap their hands together. They clap with the hand: the works of the saints are the praise of God. Christ is praised not by voice, but by work; he does not hear the voice, but the works.

The rivers shall clap their hands together. Therefore he himself says in the Gospel: 'He who thirsts, let him come and drink; and rivers,' he says, 'shall flow from his belly.' The mountains shall exult in the sight of the Lord. What likeness is there between rivers and mountains? But since he speaks of the perfect saints, he did not say, 'the little streams shall clap their hands together,' but, 'The rivers shall clap their hands together.' See the order. Let the sea be moved, and the whole world: the rivers clap their hands together, his saints: the mountains no less, who have attained to the highest righteousness. Let us say it also in another way. Let the sea be moved, which before had been unmoved — let it be moved at the coming of Christ. Let the sea be moved: we have already said, this is the law of Moses. The rivers clap their hands together: this is the prophets. The mountains shall exult before the sight of the Lord: this is the apostles. Because he comes to judge the earth. By no means did he come only lowly in the flesh, but he comes glorious in his majesty. Because he comes to judge the earth. He did not say 'to destroy,' but 'to judge.' He comes to judge, that he may separate the tares from the wheat: he comes, that he may separate the bad little fish from the good.

He shall judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in equity. Righteousness is set down, and equity. If righteousness is set down, and afterward equity, it is properly called εὐθύτης (euthytēs), 'straightness,' which makes the crooked straight. So he comes to judge in his righteousness, that what is crooked may in him be made straight. To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Homily 26, on Psalm 98

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin).

The Lord has reigned, let the peoples be angry. Three psalms have the same beginning: the ninety-second, the ninety-sixth, and the ninety-eighth. But although they have the same beginning in the opening verse, at the end they are different. For how does it read in the ninety-second? 'The Lord has reigned, he has clothed himself in beauty.' But in the ninety-sixth: 'The Lord has reigned, let the earth rejoice'; and in the ninety-eighth: 'The Lord has reigned, let the peoples be angry.' The sequence seems as it were to be contrary to itself. For it ought first to have said 'The Lord has reigned, let the peoples be angry,' and afterwards to say 'The Lord has reigned, let the earth rejoice,' and last of all 'The Lord has reigned, he has clothed himself in beauty.' But the different order gives us some hint toward understanding. 'The Lord has reigned, he has clothed himself in beauty.' The Lord has reigned, and he has clothed himself with the patriarchs and the prophets and the believing people. He has clothed himself in beauty: the patriarchs and the prophets were as it were the garment of Christ. That is the loincloth which is written of in Jeremiah: that is the loincloth which Jeremiah had about his loins. Do you wish to know that the saints are, as it were, a loincloth, the garment of God?

Afterwards God himself speaks to Jeremiah: 'Just as you,' he says, 'placed that loincloth about your loins, so I too have joined my people to myself.' As, then, a garment is about a man, so the people is about God. But because this loincloth, because this beauty with which the Lord had been clothed, was exposed across the Euphrates in a cleft of the rock, and there rotted away, and was led off into captivity by the Assyrians—what does the Lord do? He is not naked, he cannot be without a loincloth, he cannot be without a garment: the former people having been lost, he makes himself a garment out of the people of the Gentiles. And what is said? The Lord has reigned, let the earth rejoice. Let the earth rejoice, the whole earth, that is, the entire people of believers. Then, do you wish to know that the second loincloth is spoken of concerning the people of the Gentiles? The Lord,

he says, has reigned, let the earth rejoice: let the many islands be glad. Not one island, Judaea, but many islands, that is, the whole world. Let someone say to me: Give me an example from the Scriptures where Judaea alone is called one island. Everything we say we ought to affirm from the holy Scriptures. 'For in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word stand.' The word of the one speaking does not have as much authority as the Lord's command.

We read in the prophet Ezekiel: 'And you,' he says, 'son of man, speak to the inhabitants of this island'—that is, of Judaea. Since, therefore, one island has been forsaken, now it is said: Let the many islands be glad. Therefore concerning the loincloth it is said of the former people: The Lord has reigned, he has clothed himself in beauty. Of the second people, gathered from the Gentiles: The Lord has reigned, let the earth rejoice, let the many islands be glad. Now in the third it is said: The Lord has reigned, let the peoples be angry. Whether they be of the Jews, or of the Gentiles, whoever do not believe, let them be angry. 'Why have the nations raged, and the peoples devised vain things?'

The Lord has reigned, let the peoples be angry. The Lord suffered, the Lord was crucified, the Lord died, the Lord rose again, the Lord ascended victorious to heaven. The Lord has reigned, let the peoples be angry. Who are these peoples? Let us give an example from the Gospel. 'A certain man,' he says, 'a householder, went to receive for himself a kingdom in a far country.' What is farther than heaven from earth? He left the earth, he went to the heavens, to receive for himself a kingdom. 'And his citizens,' he says, 'who hated him, sent an embassy, saying: We will not have this man to reign over us.' But he received the kingdom, and came to those wicked citizens. He came to those who did not want to have him as king. And now the Holy Spirit says to the wicked citizens: Whether you will or will not, the Lord has reigned, let the peoples be angry. O the mercy of the Holy Spirit: he did not say, let them perish, but, let them be angry. He wished to signify the fault, not the punishments. They are angry, and the Lord entreats. And what does he say? 'Come to me, all you who are burdened.' I have received the kingdom from the Father—rather, the man whom I took up. I give as God, I receive as man.

Who sits upon the cherubim, let the earth be moved. As long as the earth is unmoved, it cannot be healed. He is not speaking of the earthquake by which we see lands shaken, and the whole race of mortals afraid; but he speaks of our earth, which, as long as it is unmoved, cannot be healed: but when it is moved and trembles, then it will recover health. 'Upon whom,' he says, 'shall I rest, except upon the humble and the quiet, and him who trembles at my words?' Since the earth of the one trembling is moved, therefore he who sits upon the cherubim begins to sit upon the earth of the trembling one. Happy is he who is the throne of God, happy is he in whom God ever sits. There are different postures: for either we sit, or we stand, or we walk, or we lie down. Unhappy is he for whom God lies down: for

he lies down with the one lying down. Just as he weeps with the one weeping and laughs with the one laughing, so he lies down with the one lying down. Just as he thirsts with the one thirsting, and hungers with the one hungering, and is naked with the one naked, so too he lies down with the one lying down. He, then, who is wounded and lies down—he too is in a manner said to lie down with him. But he who walks—he also walks with him.

He who walks seems indeed to be better than he who lies down; yet he has not yet come to the happiness of him who stands. Finally, when Adam hid himself from the face of God, God was walking to him after midday. Let someone say: If Adam had offended, and had been cast out of paradise, then whoever has God walking to him is in perfect unhappiness. And I say: If Adam had been utterly slain, and no place of repentance had been given to him, God would have lain down for him. But now, because a place of repentance is given to him, therefore God walks to him. Moses hears from God: 'But you, stand here with me.' And Stephen the martyr, when he was fighting, saw Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father. But God is presented as sitting in two ways. If he sits in us, we are happy; but if, while we walk, he sits in others, we are unhappy. As it says, 'The books were opened, and thrones were placed,' in Daniel. And thrones were placed. There he is set as it were a judge. Although, therefore, unhappy is he who is judged, yet happy is he for whom he sits. So, then, here too God is said to sit upon the cherubim. Cherubim is interpreted 'multitude of knowledge': whoever has a multitude of knowledge, he is the throne of God. Multitude of knowledge is not knowledge alone, but also works: for that is true knowledge which is confirmed by works.

Otherwise, in vain does someone promise knowledge by word, when he destroys it by his deed.

And the king's honor loves judgment. Whoever is a sinner fears the judgment of God: for he does not want to know a judge, but a merciful one. But whoever is holy, and hears God, and glorifies him in his body, this man does not fear the judge, but loves him. For example, if some most severe judge should come, and is said to be cruel and as it were drinking blood—if anyone is a murderer, he fears such a judge as this. But he who has done no evil, and hates the things that are evil, not only does not fear the judge, but even loves him. For what does he say? It is well done, that such a judge should come: there were so many robberies, so many vices are practiced, there are so many murderers: it is well done, that such a judge should come. For whoever is holy does not fear the judge, but loves him. At that time is fulfilled, And the king's honor loves judgment.

You have prepared uprightnesses. What he says is this: You made all men upright, but by their own fault they have been corrupted. You created man upright. And see what he said, uprightnesses: not one, but many. For everything that you made is upright.

And adore the footstool of his feet, for it is holy. What is this footstool of the feet of Jesus, which is holy? We read in another place: 'Heaven is my throne, but the earth is the footstool of my feet.' And now it is said, Adore the footstool of his feet. If the earth is the footstool of the feet of Jesus, and it is said, Adore the footstool of his feet: is the earth therefore to be adored? How is it that we read in the Apostle that, except for the Creator, we ought not to adore the creature? To adore is said in Scripture in two ways: for there is said an adoration as toward God, and there is said to adore as it were to honor. When we say to adore toward God, adoration is properly set toward God. But when it is said of a man—for example, Sarah adored Abraham, and Elijah adored Ahab, that most impious king—it is not said that Elijah so adored Ahab as God, but here adoration is set as a greeting. Now, therefore, let us see this that he says, And adore the footstool of his feet, in which sense he says it. Do we adore the footstool of the feet of God as God, or do we adore and greet it as a man?

We read in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, we read also in another prophet: 'How the Lord,' he says, 'has sanctified the footstool of his feet.' And there the footstool of his feet is called Jerusalem, or the temple: this, then, according to the history. We read also in another place, And adore the footstool of his feet. If the feet do not stand except on the footstool, then this which is said 'And adore where his feet have stood' is said also of the footstool. Therefore according to the letter we can say, for example, where he was born, where he was crucified, where he rose again. This we say for beginners. But otherwise the footstool of the feet of Jesus is the soul of the believer. Happy is he in whose breast the feet of Jesus are daily placed. Would that his feet were placed in my breast too, would that his footprints might ever cling in my heart, would that I too might say with the bride: 'I will hold him, and I will not let him go.' The bridegroom is quickly offended, he ever loves cleanness: wherever he sees filth, he quickly withdraws. And adore the footstool of his feet, for it is holy. Not every footstool of his feet, but whatever is holy: as many as persevere in holiness. For example, Adore the footstool of his feet: adore Peter and Paul and the rest of the apostles—that is, honor them. For it is holy. Adore those who persevere in holiness;

but those who were a footstool and are not holy, do not adore them. For example, Judas the traitor was a footstool of God: but since he is not holy, do not adore him. I have read in a certain man's book: 'The assumption,' he says, 'of the human body—that is, the man whom God deigned to take up from Mary—this,' he says, 'he calls the footstool of his feet.' Although indeed the man was taken up, and in comparison with God every creature is the footstool of his feet, yet this very footstool has been joined to God and to him who sits upon it. See what a thing I dare to say. I adore the footstool that once was, just as I adore the throne. 'For even if we had known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him so no longer.' He had, perhaps, a footstool before his death, before his resurrection, when he ate, when he drank,

when he suffered our affections. But after he rose again and ascended victorious to the heavens, I do not understand one who sits and another that is the footstool, but the whole in Christ is a throne. You ask and say: Why, or on what account? How it is, I do not know, and yet I believe that it is so. Do you wonder if I am ignorant of the mystery of the divinity, when I do not know myself?

Do you ask me how both the divinity and the incarnation are one, when I do not know how I live? To have understood God is to have believed; to know God is to honor him. It suffices me to know what is written, it suffices me to know what I believe: more than that I neither will nor desire. For if I should wish to know more, I begin to lose even this which I believe. We are called faithful, not rational. Finally, it is said even by the Lord: 'Do you believe that I can do this?' And it is said to the woman: 'Your faith has made you whole'—not reason, not inquiry, not why or on what account it was done. She believed that it might be done, and it was done because she believed.

Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among those who call upon his name. Many err, and think that blessed Samuel was a priest. He was not a priest, he was a Levite. Finally, even his garment was not made as for a priest, but as for a Levite. For it is written: 'And his mother made for him,' it says, 'an ephod bad garment.' Ephod means garment, but bad means linen. Now, none had the linen garment except the Levites. But the priests of God had it of five kinds, that is, of gold, of hyacinth, of fine linen, of purple, of scarlet. Whoever, then, were of the priestly line had these garments. But the Levites had the ephod bad, that is, the linen garment. This very thing, then, is now said. Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among those who call upon his name. They are priests, this one is a Levite. Yet with God it is not rank that is sought, but works. Finally, what Moses did, Samuel also did. Just as Moses withstood God, that he should not strike the people, when he said to him: 'Let me alone, that I may strike this people.' See the power of Moses. What does God say to him? Let me alone: you do me violence, your prayers as it were hold me fast, your prayers restrain my hand. I send the arrow, I send the darts: and your prayers protect the people. Let me alone, that I may strike this people.

And at the same time consider the mercy of God. When he says, Let me alone, he shows that if Moses does not let him alone, God does not strike. If, then, you do not let me alone, I will not strike: let me alone, and I will strike. In another manner, therefore, what does he say? Do not let me alone, and I will not strike. Let us see whether Samuel too did this very thing. We read in the books of Kingdoms that he stayed the wrath of God coming upon the people, since even in the time of the harvest he made rain and thunders and lightnings. And what, he says, is written there? 'And there came,' it says there, 'stones of hail, and they struck the Allophyli.' See how wise the fire, how wise the hail. Where Samuel was, the lightnings do not

dare to come: for they see the prophet of God, they see the Levite. The hands of Samuel threatened the lightnings. He was praying, and the lightnings could not come. But why have I said all this? Because Moses and Aaron and Samuel, under different names, performed the same virtues. And let us bless the Lord: to whom be glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Homily 27, on Psalm 100

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Misericordiam et iudicium cantabo tibi Domine—Mercy and judgment I will sing to you, O Lord. Let sinners hear of mercy, those who despair of their salvation, those who are doing penance; let those who scorn hear of judgment, who say: ”The Lord is merciful, let us sin, he pardons us.” Psallam et intellegam in via inmaculata—I will sing psalms and understand in the unspotted way. That a person should understand what he is singing, and that his mind should contemplate the psalm itself, so that his thoughts do not wander outside, and he seem indeed to sing psalms with his body, while his mind is without fruit. In the unspotted way: that as I walk in this world I may act justly, and have no spot. When will you come to me? But when I have received understanding, and have acted justly, then with confidence I say to the Lord: ”When will you come to me?” And ”you will come” is to be understood of his second coming.

Perambulabam in innocentia cordis mei in medio domus meae—I walked about in the innocence of my heart in the midst of my house. Nothing so pleases God as simplicity and innocence. And so among the other winged creatures the Holy Spirit was well pleased in none but the dove, on account of its simplicity, and among the four-footed beasts in the sheep, on account of its meekness. Non proponebam ante oculos meos rem iniustam—I set no unjust thing before my eyes. I put nothing before the Lord, nor did I consent to iniquity; but I was wholly turned to God. Facientes praevaricationes odivi—I have hated those who commit transgressions. Whether it was my father, or my mother, or brother, or sister, or friend: nevertheless, if he had turned aside from the fear of the Lord, I held him in hatred, and I did not approach him at all. I did not set kinship or friendship before devotion to God.

Non adhaesit mihi cor pravum—A depraved heart did not cling to me. There was in me nothing difficult or anything perverse, but fairness and justice. As the malignant one turned aside from me, I did not know him: that is, if he was a friend to

me or a neighbor, whether a bishop or a presbyter, or one established in any rank whatever: nevertheless, if he perverted his ways, I so fled from him that I made no mention of him at all. Detrahentem secreto proximo suo, hunc persequebar—Him who secretly disparaged his neighbor, this one I persecuted. So far ought we not to consent to the disparager, that we should even, as far as it lies in us, pursue such a person, providing for what is useful in both cases: that we neither listen willingly, nor permit him to sin. For so great is the distance between the fornicator and the disparager: that he who fornicates kills only himself, but he who disparages plunges to ruin both himself and the one who listens.

Superbo oculo et insatiabili corde, cum hoc non edebam—With the proud of eye and the insatiable of heart, with such a one I did not eat. If anyone was proud or greedy, with such a one I did not eat at all. Oculi mei super fideles terrae, ut sederent mecum—My eyes were upon the faithful of the earth, that they might sit with me. He did not say the rich, or emperors, or bishops, or presbyters, or deacons, but the faithful: with these I sat. A bishop, a holy man, can also say this: that I did not ordain as presbyter the man who was obsequious to me, or my kinsman, but the one whom I knew to be faithful. And again the same man can say: that I held all my clerics and laity to be faithful. This little verse can also be spoken in the person of the Lord. Ambulans in via inmaculata, hic mihi ministrabat—He who walked in the unspotted way, this one ministered to me. For I did not ordain those who were my kinsmen, but the just and the faithful.

Qui loquitur iniqua, non direxit in conspectu oculorum meorum—He who speaks unjust things has not prospered in the sight of my eyes. For I so turned aside from him who disparaged his neighbor, that I neither believed such a one nor listened to him. In matutinis interficiebam omnes peccatores terrae—In the mornings I slew all the sinners of the earth. Well did he say, the sinners of the earth: for sinners are earthly. This is what he means, that the promptings of the devil, which he was suggesting to me, I cast out of my heart, and did not take up. For when evil thoughts are cast out, the demons are slain. The Jews, hearing this verse, and following the letter that kills, and desiring to shed blood, if anyone has transgressed against the law, put him to death. Since indeed they are not content with the slaying of the prophets: but they even crucified the Lord himself. Ut disperderem de civitate Domini omnes qui operantur iniquitatem—That I might destroy out of the city of the Lord all who work iniquity. Would that we too may destroy out of the city of the Lord those who work iniquity. The city of the Lord is the church of the saints, the congregation of the just. Disperderem—that I might destroy: that is, I will reprove and rebuke him who sins, that he may do penance, and destroy iniquity out of his heart. For he did not say, that he may be cast out.

Homily 28, on Psalm 101

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Prayer of the poor man, when he is in anguish, and pours out his supplication before the Lord. He speaks of a poor man, not of this world, but of the one about whom it is written: ’Blessed are the poor in spirit.’ When he is in anguish: when he calls to mind his sins, both past and present. Pours out: with his whole heart, not with his lips. But who is able to pour out his prayer before the Lord? Who is able not to be stung by his own conscience? Turn not away your face from me. If anyone prays with a pure heart, and is not accused by his own conscience, he can say this. For the sinner does not dare to say, turn not away your face from me: but rather he says: ’Turn away your face from my sins.’

For my days have failed away like smoke. For example, I was a little child, and while I know it not, I came into the age of youth, and again into full age, and while I know it not, I have grown old: and my days have failed away like smoke. But some people think themselves to be everlasting, and they persevere in their sin. And my bones are withered like a dry twig for kindling. By ’bones’ he means strength itself. If therefore what is strong in me has withered and been made weak: how much more the flesh, which is weak by nature? I am smitten like grass, and my heart is withered. Just as it is also written elsewhere: ’Man, his days are like grass.’ For such is the life of men: it is green, and quickly it withers. Because I have forgotten to eat my bread. He did not say, I had no desire to eat, or I despised eating. To such a degree did the memory of my sins come upon me, and such penance did I do, that I even forget to eat, having my longing set on God, and considering him alone.

By reason of the voice of my groaning my bone has cleaved to my flesh. Let those who do penance learn how they ought to do penance. For I so dried myself up, that I was without flesh, and my skin clung to my bones. He said ’flesh’ for ’skin.’ I have become like the pelican of the wilderness. There are said to be two kinds of these birds. One lives in the waters, and its food is fish; and one lives in the

wilderness, and its food is venomous creatures, that is, serpents and crocodiles and lizards. Now these birds are called in Latin ’onocrotali.’ To that one therefore have I become like, which lives in the wilderness, which eats venomous creatures: that is, my food was to me as it were poison. I have become like the night-raven in its dwelling-place. We know that the raven is black, and has nothing white in it. He wished to say, by way of hyperbole, that I have become like the night-raven. If therefore it is black in the day, how much more in the night? So therefore have I become, considering myself because of my sins.

For I have eaten ashes like bread. I dipped my bread in ashes, and so ate it. If therefore the prophet says this, what should we do? And I mingled my drink with weeping. Nothing was sweet to me, neither bread, nor drink: but I longed only for the heavenly bread, that is, Christ. Because of the face of your wrath and indignation. And all these things I did, considering your coming and the judgment to come. Because lifting me up you have dashed me down. Let those say this who were once holy, and fell: for having been exalted in their virtues, afterward they fell. Since indeed the saints say: because lifting me up you held me. My days have declined like a shadow. If my days, how much more my nights? that is, if the light, how much more the darkness? And I have withered like grass. For as grass, so man passes away, and is dried up.

You, rising up, will have mercy on Sion. From this little verse it is manifest that this psalm is spoken in the person of Sion, and not in the person of the prophet. Now Sion is she who is set upon a watchtower, and looks out upon the things which come from afar. This Sion therefore, who is set on high and on a lofty place, has fallen. Therefore ’let him who stands take heed lest he fall.’ Because it is the time to have mercy on her, because the time has come. Either it is the time of mercy on account of penance, or it signifies according to the coming of the Savior. Let him therefore be confident who does penance, since the time of salvation has come: for the Lord is merciful. For its stones have pleased your servants. The stones are the saints: but the earth, that is, sinners, stand in need of the Lord’s mercy.

Homily 29, on Psalm 102

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. It is said also in another place: ”Know that the Lord himself is God.” And now it is said, And all that is within me, bless his holy name. If we have said, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and the Lord is Lord, what name of the Lord does he seek here? If he is called Lord, the Lord, why does he say, And all that is within me, bless his holy name? The coming of the Son is the name of the Father. Before the coming of Christ, God was known, but the Father was unknown. Indeed, he himself says in the Gospel: ”Father, I have revealed your name to men.” We cannot linger over each individual little verse, since the psalm is long; but we ought to fit brief little remarks to the individual verses, expounding the sense rather than weaving together the words.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his rewards. The Lord has bestowed many rewards upon us, he has bestowed great benefits upon us: for he made the heaven, the earth, all the elements for us. The sun itself and the moon and the stars and all the elements run and run back again for our sake. O wretched creatures that we are: the elements serve us, and we do not serve the Lord. It is a great thing, therefore, that God made for our sake all the things we see. For a house is always made for the sake of the one who dwells in it. If we are the dwellers of the world, and the world is the house of men, and the house has been made for the sake of the dweller: it is a great thing, therefore, that he made for our sake all the things we see, that he made us to be born, to live, to move, to understand our Creator, that he set us apart from the beasts, that they look downward, bent toward the earth, while he made us stand upright to gaze upon heaven. And these things indeed are great: but greater is the fact that he was born for our sake. ”Who, though he was in the form of God, did not think it robbery to be equal to God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, made obedient even unto death, and death on a cross.” Since we were mortal because of our sin, he himself deigned to die for us mortals, so that he might make us alive.

Who heals all your infirmities. Our soul has many infirmities. As many sins, so many infirmities. Indeed, there was also that woman in the Gospel, who for eighteen years had a spirit of infirmity, and could not lift her head upright... See what he says. When someone has a spirit of infirmity, he is bent over, he looks downward, he gazes at the earth, he cannot see heaven. Who redeems your life from destruction. "You were bought," he says, "with a price: do not become the servants of men." What is a greater price than for the Creator to pour out his own blood for the creature? Who crowns you in mercy and compassions. Who crowns you. When he has redeemed, then he crowns. And he crowns, not because of your merits, but because of his own mercy. "O Lord, you have crowned us as with a shield of your good will." See what he says, O Lord, you have crowned us as with a shield of your good will. Does anyone crown with a shield? Surely he who crowns, crowns with flowers, crowns with gold, crowns with the other kinds of crowns. Does anyone crown with a shield? But the Lord's shield is a crown: for it protects and defends, and thus it crowns. And here, therefore, what is there signified by a shield, here is signified by mercy; and the shield, while it protects, is mercy.

Homily 30, on Psalm 103

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). This psalm contains the created world itself praising and blessing the Lord its creator through the prophet; just as he also says in the eighteenth psalm: ”The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims the works of his hands.” Bless the Lord, O my soul. The prophet rouses himself to bless God. But to bless the Lord means this: whoever praises the Lord blesses himself. O Lord my God, you are exceedingly magnified. You who are the God of all are in a special way my God: because I am not a slave of sin, because I have deserved to be called your servant. You are exceedingly magnified. When I look upon the sky, the earth, the birds, the four-footed beasts, the serpents, and your whole creation, I marvel, and I magnify the creator.

You have put on confession and beauty. ”Confession” is understood in two ways. Either it refers to the glory of God: that is, you have put on glory, just as in the Gospel the Savior himself says, ”I confess to you, Father,” that is, I glorify you. Or it means that we confess our sins to the Lord: for in the very act of confessing our sins to God, we glorify him. And you have put on beauty. Notice the order: first someone confesses, and thus he receives loveliness and beauty, and afterward light. For this is what follows: Clothed with light as with a garment. Now this is said in a special way of the Lord, that all things belonging to him are in the light, just as in Ezekiel the Cherubim are written to be ”full of eyes.” For example: I look at the sky and the earth, and I understand the creator. I see the trees in their season putting forth leaves, sending out blossoms, bearing fruit, and I understand the creator. I see the ant, and every tiny creature, and I understand the creator. Therefore the whole creation of God has eyes, and is full of understanding.

Stretching out the heaven like a skin. This means that from the beginning God stretched out the heaven, just as when someone opens a scroll and again rolls it back up, as is written elsewhere: ”And the heaven shall be rolled up like a scroll.” You who cover its upper parts with waters. Just as it is written in Genesis, that

there are waters above the firmament, and likewise beneath. You who walk upon the wings of the winds. He signifies that God is present everywhere. You who make your angels spirits. What he passed over in Genesis, he indicated in this verse. For although God created all things, he made no mention anywhere of the angels. And he said, You who make your angels spirits, for this reason: because the angels do not have a body, but are wholly light. And your ministers a burning fire. He signifies their purity, and that they are not subject to sins. In another sense: for example, someone is holy, and a good angel, an angel of light, is sent to him. But if he is a sinner, an angel of wrath is sent to him, to set him on fire and torment him.

You who founded the earth upon its own stability. And truly it is marvelous how great a mass of earth hangs by the power of God. It shall not be moved for ever and ever. For it stands unmoved, by the providence of God. The deep, like a garment, is his clothing. As is written elsewhere: ”And he made darkness his hiding-place,” and again: ”The judgments of the Lord are a great deep.” He signifies the unspeakable governance of God, and that we cannot comprehend the wisdom of God. For just as we cannot gaze with these eyes into the deep, so neither can we gaze into the greatness nor into the wisdom of God. But according to the Hebrew we ought to understand ”his clothing” in this way, that ”of the earth” is to be supplied; so that the sense is that this very deep surrounds the whole earth — the thing they call the ocean. For around the whole earth there are waters, and the earth is like an island.

The waters shall stand above the mountains. Not, as some suppose, that the waters stand above the mountains because of winter and the rains; but the mountains were covered by the waters, and the earth did not appear. But according to the figurative interpretation, the waters are to be taken for doctrine, and the mountains for the saints. At your rebuke they shall flee. And truly at God’s command the water withdrew, and the earth appeared, as is also written in Genesis: ”And God gathered the waters into one gathering.” At the voice of your thunder they shall be afraid. For the thunder is the voice of the Lord. For he gave the command, and the waters were separated. The mountains ascend, and the plains descend. He signifies the rush of the waters, because after the manner of mountains the waters rise up on high, and again are brought low.

You have set a boundary which they shall not pass. For it is marvelous to hear the roaring of the sea, and its rush, and the waves lifted up as high as heaven, and coming as if to cover the whole earth; and yet at the shore they lay down their rush, and return to themselves, and do not overstep God’s command — while men do not keep God’s command. Neither shall they turn back to cover the earth, as happened under Noah, the flood. You who send forth springs in the valleys. Perhaps someone says: If all things were made for the service of man, what use is it that waters run in the desert? This too was done for our salvation and by God’s providence, so

that the four-footed beasts might have nourishment for our service. In another sense: because God made all things by his dispensation, and all things are his, and he feeds even the brute animals. The waters shall pass through the midst of the mountains. Since the things that were on the mountains needed to grow green from the rains of the Lord, therefore God sent the waters. But according to the figurative interpretation, it signifies the holy works of the just.

Over them the birds of heaven shall dwell. Remember the parable of the mustard seed, and the birds that dwell in it. From the midst of the rocks they shall give voice. Each thing in its own tongue praises the Lord. In the Hebrew it has ”of the trees.” From the fruit of your works the earth shall be filled. In another sense: from all your benefits the earth shall be filled. In another sense: from your works, that is, your apostles, many have been filled. Bringing forth hay for the cattle. Attend carefully, since the cattle eat hay. And grass for the service of men. Since he created all things for his own glory. That he may bring forth bread out of the earth. He speaks of the Lord, who deigned to become man, as it is written: ”I am the living bread, who came down from heaven.” And wine gladdens the heart of man. This is the wine which the Lord promised to drink after the resurrection (anastasis).

That he may make the face cheerful with oil. The face of God makes the just cheerful; but of sinners ”let it not fatten the head.” And bread strengthens the heart of man. The bread which came down from heaven. The trees of the field shall be filled. Since the Lord waters even the trees, so that they may give us fruit. There the sparrows shall build their nests. By ”sparrows,” let us understand all birds — the whole from a part. The house of the heron is their leader. The heron is a bird of very great size: and it is said to conquer even the eagle, and to have the eagle itself as its food. And it is not like the other birds, which have fixed nests, and go to their own places at evening; but this one sleeps wherever the darkness overtakes it. But according to the figurative interpretation, the monk has no cell, but wherever he finds himself, there he stays; and his battle is with the devil who reigns in this world, just as the heron too conquers the eagle, the king of the birds, as it is written: ”Though you be exalted like the eagle, from there I will drag you down, says the Lord.” For the eagle is the devil, according to Ezekiel. The high mountains for the stags. This animal kills serpents and eats them. Therefore it fittingly dwells in the mountains, this one that slays the intelligible serpent — the one who was wiser in paradise than all the beasts, who deceived Eve. The rock is a refuge for the hedgehogs. He who is timid has the rock as his refuge: and the rock is Christ.

He made the moon for seasons. They say that when the moon waxes, all fruits also grow, and when it wanes, the fruits again diminish. Therefore he said fittingly, He made the moon for seasons. Or let us understand the moon in another way as

the Church: for as the Church advances, we advance with it; and when it suffers persecution and is diminished, we too are diminished with it and suffer persecution. The sun knew its setting. If the sun sets, do we suppose ourselves to be everlasting? In this, moreover, it is a thing to marvel at, how so great a light and so great a brightness, which covers the whole world with its light, sets in a moment. But let us pray that the sun of righteousness may not set upon us. You have set darkness, and it became night: in it all the beasts of the forest shall pass through. And according to the letter it has its own order: for night was made for this reason, that men might rest from their works, and that the beasts might go out to their feeding. But according to the figurative interpretation, when the sun of righteousness has set upon us, all things are dark to us, and then the beasts pass through against us, and the roaring lion, wishing to seize and devour us.

The young lions roaring, that they may seize, and seek from God their food. He said fittingly, from God: since indeed he desires to deceive the saints — for example, Judas, David, Solomon, Peter — as it is written: ”His food is choice.” The sun arose, and they were gathered together. Let not the one who has fallen be saddened, but let him do penance: the sun of righteousness rises upon him, and all the beasts and his sins flee from him, and he becomes such as he was before. For the sun of righteousness has arisen again. Man shall go forth to his work, and to his labor until the evening. But after the sun of righteousness has arisen, we go forth again to our labor until the evening, that is, until the consummation. Therefore we ought to work righteousness at every time. How magnified are your works, O Lord. The prophet comes into an ecstasy of mind. Not finding how he might praise the Lord, he said: How magnified are your works, O Lord. Your works surpass human understanding. You have made all things in wisdom. In our Lord Jesus Christ (for he himself is the wisdom of God), according to the apostle who says that in him all things were created. The earth is filled with your possession. And truly all the works of the Lord are full of wisdom. For when we see the ant know when winter is coming, and store up food for itself; and again the gnat, so tiny, having eyes, a belly, and all its members, just as we have; and the flea, and the rest: and then we see the elephant, so great a beast, having eyes, nostrils, feet, a belly, just as we have in those same places: and likewise the bee, how it makes honey and wax: are these things not worthy of wonder and full of wisdom?

This great and spacious sea with its arms. Is this not a matter of wondrous wisdom, how in the sea there are creeping things beyond number, and fish both greater and smaller: and how they are in the deep, and there draw their life, where, if a man should fall in, he dies, while they themselves, if they come onto the land, die? There the ships shall pass through. Which of us is a strong ship, able to flee from this world, and not be submerged, nor strike upon a rock — but let him have understanding to steer him, that he may be able to be saved? This dragon which you formed to mock him. The Jews say: God made a great dragon, which is called

Leviathan, and it is in the sea; and when, they say, the ocean recedes, the dragon turns. But let us say: This is the dragon who was cast out of paradise, who deceived Eve, and was given into this world to mock us. For how many monks and clerics has he cast down! All things wait upon you, that you may give them food in due season. Because all things live by God's nod.

You will take away their spirit, and they shall fail. He signifies the consummation of the world, when at the command of the Lord all things are destroyed, as it is written: "Earth you are, and into the earth you shall go." You will send forth your spirit, and they shall be created. On the day of consummation. If the Spirit creates, therefore he is God: for he creates in the same way as the Father also does. Let the glory of the Lord be for ever. If the glory of the Lord is for ever, then we too, who glorify, shall be everlasting. The Lord shall rejoice in his works. For it is the Lord's joy, when we, his creation, bless him on the day of resurrection. Who looks upon the earth, and makes it tremble. For our earth shall tremble on the day of judgment. And it signifies the earthly sinners. Who touches the mountains, and they smoke. If the mountains smoke, how much more the earth? The saints smoke, since we shall all be saved through fire. For it would not have smoke, unless there were fire.

I will sing to the Lord in my life; I will make music to my God as long as I am. Just as he also said elsewhere: "Let me be, that I may be refreshed before I depart, and be no more." Let me be for a little while, that I may do penance for my sins: since in hell there is no one who can confess his sins. May my speech be pleasing to him. May it be pleasing to him, so that one may worthily be able to praise and bless God. He spoke in the optative mood, not the imperative. But I will delight in the Lord. Blessed are those who say this after the judgment. Let sinners fail from the earth. He did not say that the sinners should perish, but that sin itself should, so that it may not appear. And with sin not appearing, of course there are then no more sinners, but all shall be found to be just. And the wicked, so that they shall be no more. So that they may be no longer wicked, but just.

Homily 31, on Psalm 104

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Confess to the Lord and call upon his name. Confess and say: because we are sinners, but you are merciful, and you have mercy on us. And call upon his name. So that we may not fashion idols in our hearts, but we will call upon our Lord, and he himself will be our redemption. Proclaim his works among the nations. Let the Jews blush, who say that only within Israel were his wonders and his works accomplished. Sing to him and make music to him. He who understands the holy Scriptures, and meditates continually on the law of the Lord, and whose mind contemplates heavenly things, this man sings to God. But he who has within himself all the virtues — that is, is a worker of good work — this man, composing as it were a lyre out of the virtues, makes music to the Lord. Tell of all his wonders. In the one hundred and sixth psalm he says: ’Those who go down to the sea in ships, doing their work in many waters: they themselves have seen the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.’ If we cross over in this bodily ship of ours unharmed, and nowhere does the storm overwhelm us, nor do we strike against a rock and shatter our ship, we are able to tell of the wonders of God. And truly it is a great miracle to pass through this world without stain.

Be praised in his holy name. This is a prophecy concerning the people of the gentiles: that is, that we should be and be called Christians from the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let the heart of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Let the monks be glad, for the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. If of those who seek, how much more of those who find him? For those who find him are unshaken. Seek the Lord and be strengthened. Before we sought the Lord, we were weak; but now, seeking him, we are firm and strong. But if we also find him, how much more perfect shall we be? Seek his face always. To the Hebrews indeed it was written, that three times in the year they should appear before the Lord. And what righteousness was this? And what great thing did anyone do, to appear three times in the year in the sight of God? There he was speaking to little children; but here the prophet tells those who believe in God to seek him always, just as it is also written in the gospel, that we should pray without ceasing.

Remember his wonders which he did. In Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the desert. The seed of Abraham, his servants: the sons of Jacob, his chosen ones. If someone is seed, he is not yet also a son, according to what is written in the gospel: 'If you were the sons of Abraham, you would do the works of your father.' Therefore, that in which they glory, they are not; and if they are seed, they are servants set under fear, not having the perfect love which casts out fear. We are the sons of Jacob, of him who supplanted his brother, and took away his birthright. 'But many are called, and few are chosen.' And they passed from nation to nation. Many think that he speaks of the captivity of the Jews. It is not so. For he speaks of Abraham. He went out from the land of the Chaldeans, and came into Mesopotamia, and from Mesopotamia into the land of promise, and again into Egypt. And from a kingdom to another people. We pass through many kingdoms, in order to reach the land of promise.

He did not permit man to harm them. Pharaoh, that he should harm Abraham in the person of Sarah, nor Abimelech Isaac in the person of Rebecca. And he rebuked kings for their sake. He says the same thing, Pharaoh and Abimelech. Touch not my anointed ones, and do no malice among my prophets. He speaks of the patriarchs themselves. Let the Jews therefore blush, who say that unless someone is anointed with royal ointment, he cannot be called anointed (christ). For they say this, that our Lord is not the Christ, because he is not anointed with royal ointment. Behold, before the law the patriarchs, not anointed with royal ointment, are called anointed ones (christs). But they are anointed ones (christs) who are anointed with the Holy Spirit. Therefore our Lord too is rightly called Christ. Which they deny, going against the Scriptures. And he called famine upon the land. Very often it happens that those things which are thought to be adverse, these are brought about by the providence of God for our benefit. For unless the brothers of Joseph had been jealous of him, and had sold him, how would he have gone down into Egypt? If the famine had not come about, how would the patriarchs have gone down into Egypt, and been recognized by their brother? How would Pharaoh have been struck with ten plagues? How would they have gone out of Egypt? How would waters have come out of the rock in the wilderness? How would the mysteries which were done in the desert as a figure have come to be? For we understand them spiritually. If Judas had not betrayed the Lord, how would we have been saved? If the Jews had not crucified him, and had not been unbelieving, how would we have believed? Joseph therefore went into Egypt, to prepare lodging and food for his brothers.

He sent a man before them. He speaks of Joseph himself. Joseph was sold as a slave. A well-born and holy man is sold. They humbled his feet in fetters. Because he refused to consent to the Egyptian mistress. They humbled his feet in fetters: but they could not humble his righteousness. For when he was sixteen years old, he was loved passionately by the mistress, and though set in such an age, which is more given over to pleasure, he refused to consent to iniquity, but rather feared

the peril of his soul. The iron passed through his soul. By the iron he means sin itself, which slays the soul. In another sense: because he was in peril, accused by the mistress of such a crime. For the mistress burned for him, as it is written: 'All the adulterers, their hearts are like an oven.' Until his word should come. He speaks of the word of the Lord himself, who set him free.

The utterance of the Lord inflamed him. For unless he had been inflamed by the Holy Spirit, he could not have conquered lust. For the Spirit of the Lord inflamed him, and extinguished the fire of lust. The king sent, and loosed him. According to the letter, Pharaoh sent, and loosed him. In another sense: if anyone is tempted by lust, unless the Lord appears and looses him, he cannot escape sin. And Jacob was a sojourner in the land of Ham. For the just man never dwells in the land, but is a sojourner of the earth. And he increased his people exceedingly. For they went down into Egypt in seventy-five souls, and six hundred thousand went out of Egypt.

Homily 32, on Psalm 105

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Alleluia, alleluia. We ought to hold to this rule, wherever two alleluias are set at the head of a psalm: let us understand that the one belongs to the end of the previous psalm, and the other to the psalm that follows. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. O you who sin grievously, and despair of your own salvation, and think that because of the greatness of your sins you cannot obtain pardon: I command you — that is, the prophet does — give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. Great are your sins: but great is the Lord, who has mercy on you. Give thanks, therefore, to the Lord. Do penance; do not despair of your salvation: the Lord is kind. Give thanks to the Lord, you who have great sins. Do not trust in your own strength, but in the mercy of the Lord. For his mercy endures forever. See what he says — forever. ’But in hell, who shall give thanks to the Lord?’ For there is no one who can do penance in hell. While you are in this world, I urge you to do penance. Give thanks, therefore, to the Lord, because it is only in this world that he is merciful. Here he can have mercy on the penitent: for there he is a judge, he is not merciful. Here he is merciful, there he is a judge. Here he stretches out his hand to the one who falls: there he sits as judge. And I have said all this against those who say that there is penance even in hell.

Who shall tell the mighty acts of the Lord? No one is worthy to proclaim the mighty acts of the Father, except the Son. No one can tell the might of the Father, except him who is himself also mighty: the mighty acts of the Mighty One he alone who is in the bosom of the Father, he who is himself mighty, can proclaim and tell. Shall he make all his praises heard? Before our Lord in the Gospel proclaimed the praises of the Father, they had not been heard in the world. Everything that is written in the old Law, if it be understood spiritually, this can be understood of the Father.

Blessed are they who keep judgment, and do justice at all times. David speaks rightly. He too had done judgment, he had done justice: but because he did not do it at all times, therefore he fell. For what does he say? Blessed are they who keep

judgment, and do justice at all times. But blessed are they who do it at all times. For what does it profit a man to be in continence for twenty years, and afterwards to fall? — according to what is written in the prophet: 'The justice of the just man shall not profit him on whatever day he goes astray: it shall not free him, nor save him. And the sin of the sinner shall not harm him on whatever day he turns and does penance.' Neither ought the just man to be secure, nor ought the sinner to despair of his salvation: for in both of them there is both fear and hope. He who does justice. Justice is our Lord: for our Lord and Savior is called the justice of the Lord. Blessed therefore is he who does justice, that is, who makes Christ. How then do we make Christ, that is, justice? If we act justly, justice is conceived in us, and justice is brought forth from us, and we are the mother of justice. Happy and blessed is he who at all times is both father and mother of justice.

Remember us, O Lord, in the good pleasure of your people. What blessed David says is this: I know, O Lord, the old Law; the perfect blessedness is not in the old Law, but in the Gospel; I know that the former people offended you, and that a new people is being created, which will serve you: I know that your Son will come, and will save the whole human race, and those who are chosen will believe in him: therefore, then, I ask, since I was born earlier under the old Law, that you would reckon to me a reward together with the new people. This seems to be our opinion. Let us read the very verses, and we shall find the meaning to be that which we have said. Visit us with your salvation. That is, in your Son, when he shall come. That we may see in the goodness of your chosen ones. That is, give us a portion with the apostles: for we indeed went before them in time, but they go before us in spiritual things. That is, that we may see your goodness, which you are about to work with your chosen ones. That we may rejoice in the joy of your nation. We are the Lord's nation, if indeed we are his nation. 'For a people, he says, that shall be born, which the Lord has made.' That we may be praised with your inheritance. That is, that we too who were made under the old Law may have a portion together with the Gospel. For Abraham our father saw your day, and was glad. Let us too, then, see, and rejoice with your inheritance.

We have sinned with our fathers. As sons we have followed our fathers: we have done what our fathers also did. 'For he has shut up all under sin, that he might have mercy on all.' We have acted unjustly, we have committed iniquity. Note carefully what he says: We have sinned with our fathers, we have acted unjustly, we have committed iniquity. Did he say, we have acted impiously? It is one thing to be a sinner and unjust, another to be impious. The sinner is frequently overcome by the weakness of the body: but the impious man denies God. Therefore, then, because I am not impious, but a sinner, therefore I dare to pray for my sins. Our fathers in Egypt did not understand your wonders. They saw, and they did not see: they saw with the eyes of the flesh, and with spiritual eyes they did not see. He did not say, they did not see: but, they did not understand. For just as those men saw

the wonders, and did not understand: so also in the Gospel, if anyone indeed sees and hears carnally, but does not understand spiritually, he does not see. Blessed therefore are we who have not seen and yet have believed, more than those who saw and did not believe. They saw the Red Sea, they saw Pharaoh drowned, and understood only this, which they saw. But we, who have not seen him, understand better.

In Pharaoh we understand the devil, in his army we understand the demons, in the sea we understand baptism. They understand Marah to be bitter waters, and they pass through Marah: but we daily see the baptism of heretics to be bitter waters. They hang up the bronze serpent in the desert. Let the anchorites hear, let those who dwell in the wilderness hear. But we, what have we done? We too have hung up the true and ancient serpent in the wilderness. Although the apostle does not interpret this of the Lord in the way we suppose. But what does he say? On the cross of the Lord the devil was hung up and fastened. The Lord indeed was crucified, but the devil died. This one fulfilled the mystery, and appeared as victor: but the other did not appear, but was spiritually slain, just as the apostle also signifies.

Homily 33, on Psalm 106

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures for ever. Therefore confess to him your sins, because he is good and forgives sins. But if he were not good, he would not say to you, ”Give thanks”; and, ”Give thanks to him, for his mercy endures for ever.” This is mercy: for the rest, above there is justice. ”For his mercy endures for ever.” As long as you are in this age, give thanks.

Let them say so who have been redeemed by the Lord, whom he redeemed from the hand of the enemy. He is speaking properly about the calling of the Gentiles: for this psalm holds this mystery. ”Who have been redeemed” — in the Lord’s passion. ”Let them say so who have been redeemed”: for he himself is the savior and the redeemer and the price. ”Let them say so who have been redeemed”: he himself redeemed, he himself gives the price, his own blood. But why did he give as the price his own blood? That he might redeem us from the hand of the enemy. For we were held captive in the hand of the devil: and for this reason he came and redeemed us, that he might set us free from the hand of the devil. ”Whom he redeemed from the hand of the enemy. ”That you may destroy the enemy and the defender. ”Whom he redeemed from the hand of the enemy. ”An enemy man oversowed the tares. And the enemy is the devil. ”Whom he redeemed from the hand of the enemy. He is an enemy, and yet he is the possessor. Therefore he holds us in his hand: not because he loves, but because he hates. ”Whom he redeemed from the hand of the enemy. Great is the majesty and great the power of the Lord’s blood, which loosed the hand of the devil.

For just as there are certain animals which grip something enclosed within themselves (this both the doctors and the natural philosophers say), so that unless it be broken, it is not parted from them, nor does it let go what it holds shut inside; but if oil be applied, at once it is dissolved, and what had been gripped tight is scattered and divided into parts: so too the blood of Christ loosed the most hardened hand of the devil. He was unwilling to let us go: the Lord poured out his blood like the

oil of mercy, and through it he set us free. ”From the regions he gathered them. See how great is the hand of the devil. ”Whom he redeemed from the hand of the enemy. But these whom he redeemed from the hand of the enemy — they were being held in all regions in the hand of the enemy. ”From the regions he gathered them”: throughout the whole world the hand of the devil possessed us.

”From the rising of the sun and from its setting, from the north and the sea. He seems indeed to have named four climes: the east, the west, the south, and the north — that is, the four climes of the world. But the psalm does not contain it so. For here it has: ”from the rising of the sun and from its setting” — behold, two climes; ”from the north,” that is, from the region of the septentrion — behold, three climes. ”And the sea. The sea, surely, is in the west. So then see that he named the west twice, and the south not even once. Why then did he name three climes, and refuse to mention one? We read in Habakkuk: ”God will come from the south, and the Holy One from the shady mountain. ”God will come from the south. It is said of the Savior: because God was born in the south. For by the situation of Jerusalem, Bethlehem is set to the south: therefore it is said, ”God will come from the south. But if ”God will come from the south,” how is it now said, ”From the rising of the sun and from its setting, from the north”? The south wind, the auster and the notus, is passed over in silence. ”From the rising of the sun and from its setting. ”Amen, amen, I say to you, that many will come from the east and the west, and will recline in the bosom of Abraham:

but the sons of this generation will be far off. ”From the rising of the sun and from its setting” — the foreigners, surely. ”And from the north”: ”The north wind is the most hardened wind, but by name it is called the right hand”; ”From the north,” he says, ”evils will blaze forth over the earth. The sea is read of in Numbers and in Exodus and in all holy Scripture; and wherever you hear ”the sea,” according to the climes it is always understood as the west. For by the situation of Jerusalem this great sea, as it is called, is in the west. See therefore the mystery of the Scriptures: in this place the west is named twice, and the notus not even once. Why is this said? Because in this psalm the people of the Jews is not written as to be called, but only that of the Gentiles. Finally, what does he say?

”They wandered in the wilderness, in a waterless place: they did not find the way of the city of habitation, hungering and thirsting. And that you may know that it is written properly about the calling of the Gentiles and about the driving-out of the Jews, in what follows of this very psalm it is written: ”He turned rivers into desert” — namely, of the Jews. ”They wandered in the wilderness, in a waterless place. Do you wish to know that we too were before in a waterless place? ”They wandered in the wilderness, in a waterless place. We have said what the waters were, we have said what the rivers were. ”They did not find the way of the city of habitation, hungering and thirsting. Let us set forth how the people of the Gentiles was in a

desert where there were no waters, that is, in a waterless place, and how ”they did not find the way of the city of habitation, hungering and thirsting. Of those of whom it is said ”they did not find,” it is plain that they sought. ”They did not find the way of the city of habitation. Therefore they sought a way, a way by which they might come to the city: hungering they sought, and thirsting. ”Their soul failed within them. ”They failed, searching with searching. They failed, they sought, and did not find, and in their hunger and thirst ”they did not find the way of the city of habitation, hungering and thirsting.

There were many who kept promising that way which would lead to the city. Socrates promised, Plato promised, Aristotle promised. The woman with the issue of blood, who flowed with blood, sought many physicians, and by none could be healed. ”They did not find the way of the city of habitation. Their teaching produced hunger for the truth rather than fullness. The woman with the issue of blood spent all her substance on physicians: hungering and thirsting her soul failed within her. But because she had lost all her substance — that is, the Church gathered from the Gentiles, because her soul failed within her — she cried out to the Lord when she was in tribulation. The touch of the Lord’s hem was the cry of one believing.

”And they cried out to the Lord when they were in tribulation.” ”To the Lord,” he says, ”when I was in tribulation I cried out, and he heard me.” Then are we heard by the Lord, when not a mere voice but tribulation cries out to the Lord. ”And he led them into the right way.” Because ”they did not find the way of the city of habitation,” therefore ”he led them into the right way.” So he shows that before they did indeed find ways, but crooked ones and not right. ”And he led them into the right way.” The Way led them into a way. The Lord himself and Savior led them into the right way. The Way led them into the right way: he made them walk in himself, being himself both the leader and the way. ”And he led them into the right way”: that by this way, that is, by the Lord the Savior, they might go into the city of habitation, into his Church, which had been founded upon himself, both the rock and the way and the leader. And at the same time it is to be considered that in this psalm it is said a third time: ”Let them confess to the Lord his mercies, and his wonders to the sons of men. Because he satisfied the empty soul,” and so on. Afterward it is written: ”Let them confess to the Lord his mercies, and his wonders to the sons of men: because he shattered the gates of bronze.” And afterward this same thing is said: let the prudent reader find it. Though some say it is even written a fourth time: so that what is offered to the Trinity may be gathered into one in the Gospels.

The psalm is long, and we cannot linger over each little verse. But only this much has been signified, that it speaks of the calling of the Gentiles and of the rejection of the Jews. Let us therefore entreat the Lord, that, since the former branches were

broken off, and we from the wild olive have been grafted into the root of the good olive, we may bear good fruits, lest we too likewise be cut off. For our husbandman seeks fruits. For if he cut off the former branches for this reason, because they bore no fruit: we too, if we do not bear fruits, shall suffer the like. But fruits are not only in the body, but also in the soul. And when the body indeed serves the Lord, the soul also serves, and the body also serves God. ”In a land untrodden and waterless, so did I appear to you in the sanctuary. ”How manifoldly to you,” he says, ”does my flesh. See what he says: ”How manifoldly to you does my flesh. How manifoldly? Let us not read πῶς ἁπλῶς (how simply), but ποσαπλῶς (in how many ways), that is, manifoldly. In many kinds does my flesh serve you: in fastings, in sleepings-on-the-ground (chameuniai), in tribulation, in distress, in hunger, in thirst, in cold. ”How manifoldly to you does my flesh. What then serves the Lord manifoldly? ”In a land untrodden and waterless. See what he says: untrodden, deserted, and waterless.

See that this flesh cannot serve the Lord manifoldly except in a deserted land, in a deserted and waterless one, when the flesh is dry, when we are made as it were a wineskin in the frost, when all the moisture is dried up and burned away, when our flesh seeks not lust, but food. Our flesh, when it is parched, and is waterless, and has no moistures, seeks not wantonness, but seeks food. But when our land, which before had been dry, is watered with the water and rains of delights, it must needs bring forth and sprout, and he who is holy bears good fruits; but he who is a sinner, at once his land generates thorns. Why I say all this, the prudent hearer understands: because fastings profit much the Christian soul.

They humble the body: and when the body is humbled, the soul too is humbled, and when the body is humbled the soul none the less suffers its own burnings. But if to the burning of the soul there be joined also the burning of the body, who can bear a double burning? The burning of the soul frequent prayer extinguishes, and faith toward the Lord. For the rest, the burning of the flesh we have in our own power: when we wish, we quench the spark of that burning. Although we extinguish it, yet it still remains in the soul. This I have said, because the spark of concupiscences always remains in the soul. Just as if there be a spark in ashes, and it have no fuel, there is indeed a spark, but it makes no flame: so the spark of our thought, if it have not the wantonness of the flesh, is smothered. We all have this spark. Let someone say it, or not say it: whoever denies it, lies. God the creator of all is one: he who created me, also created you: he who created the emperor, he himself created the soldier: he who created the most noble senator, he himself created also the lowly slave. The condition is diverse, the nature is one. As we enter naked, so also we go out naked. On earth we have diverse garments, we live differently day by day: but for the rest, both for those entering and for those departing the condition is one.

Why do I say all this? To show that the nature of the body of all men is one: just as the face indeed is diverse, and yet the likeness itself is the same. For example,

that one may have more, another less: yet the face of man is one. For I do not have the face of a man, and you that of a lion or of some wild beast. Each one therefore, according to the quality of his own spark, which he knows himself to have, so also let him gather ashes. When we eat, when we take richer foods, that spark of ours, which lay hidden in the ashes, receives fuel. But let us entreat the Lord, that that spark may always be in a deserted land, untrodden and waterless, that it may not have the fuel of vices. And let us bless the Lord.

Homily 34, on Psalm 107

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). A song of a psalm of David. A ”song” always refers to the mind, but a ”psalm” refers to bodily things. To put it more plainly, a song refers to contemplation (theoria), whereas a psalm refers to practice (praxis), that is, to action. Since, then, it is written in the title, ”A song of a psalm,” rightly and consistently he says in the second verse, ”I will sing and I will make melody in my glory.”

”My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready.” I am ready not only in deed, but also in heart and mind. ”My heart is ready,” in the mind; ”my heart is ready,” in deed, that is, in practice. Since I am ready not only in heart and mind but also in deed, therefore in the second place I say, ”I will sing and I will make melody in my glory.” ”I will sing”: that is, in my heart. ”And I will make melody.” Just as a psaltery is composed of many strings, and if one string is broken the psaltery is ruined, so too in our actions, if we transgress a single commandment, our psaltery is broken. Therefore he said, ”I will sing and I will make melody in my glory.” In other manuscripts it reads ”in your glory”; but it is better to read according to the Hebrew ”in my glory.” What he says is this: ”I will sing and I will make melody in my glory.” This, O Lord, that I make melody to you, that I sing to you — I am doing no favor to you, but to myself. For in another psalm he says: ”For you have no need of my goods.” What, therefore, I do, I do for myself. For the fact that I serve you is my glory. We fast: do we thereby bestow anything on God? We do this for our own sins. We lie in sackcloth: what do we thereby furnish to the Lord? This alone do we furnish to him, that we may save our own souls; for this is what he himself desires. Just as a good and merciful physician, if he has healed someone, rejoices himself, and so does the one who has been healed, so too our Lord.

”Arise, O psaltery and harp.” O psaltery, O harp, you were made and created to make melody to God: arise and make melody, why do you lie idle? O monk, you who stand upright in body, why does your soul lie idle, and you do not make melody to the Lord? ”Cursed is the man who does the work of God negligently.” If you are

a psaltery, if you are a harp, why are you deaf, and do not glorify God? ”I will arise at daybreak.” God cannot be blessed and praised in the darkness, but he is blessed in the light. I say a wondrous thing: even if we rise in the night, we bless God in the light. For a Christian it is never night: for a Christian the sun of righteousness always rises. And these things indeed we say according to the Jews. But according to the higher sense, it is the Lord who sings these things. ”My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready.” I am ready here, I am ready in the future: I save both on earth and I save in heaven; that is, I save both the angels and men. ”Arise, O psaltery and harp.” The Lord speaks to his own body: O psaltery and harp, you who descended into hell and lay there, arise and praise the Lord. And you see what he says. It is not he himself, who moves the harp and psaltery, that praises; but the harp and psaltery themselves, they themselves bless the Father. For he is God, and is blessed and praised by others; but his body, and the man whom he took upon himself, this itself praises the Lord. And so that you may know that the prophet speaks in the person of the Lord, and that I do not say this of myself, see what follows.

”I will confess to you among the peoples, O Lord.” Understand ”the peoples” as the Jews. ”And I will make melody to you among the nations.” He speaks of us. For by ”the Jews” he means those who first believed from among the Jews. And notice the order: first he praises God among the peoples, and afterward he praises God among the nations. For first they believed from among the Jews, and afterward they believed from among the Gentiles.

”For your mercy is great above the heavens.” There is no creature that does not stand in need of God’s mercy. All of us stand in need of God’s mercy. Gabriel, Michael, the Seraphim, the Cherubim, the Powers, the Dominions, are indeed holy, but they stand in need of the mercy of their creator. I do not disparage the angels, but I proclaim the creator; since the angels themselves gladly have their creator proclaimed. And we can say it another way: ”For your mercy raises up from the earth to the heavens. And your truth reaches even to the clouds.” Where are the Jews, where are those like the Jews, who understand only according to the letter? How is the truth of God ”even to the clouds”? The Son of God says, ”I am the way and the life and the truth”: and he descended to the earth, and dwelt among men. And how is your truth ”even to the clouds”? The sense is plain, that he speaks of the apostles and of the saints, that they should not rain their rain upon the Jews, but upon the Gentiles, as it is written: ”I will command my clouds not to rain rain upon Israel.” In these clouds, then, is the truth of God. But if the truth of God is in these clouds, how does Montanus say, and how do the Cataphrygians say, that what was not revealed to the apostles has been revealed to us?

”Be exalted above the heavens, O God.” God is not exalted except above the heavens, he is not exalted above the earth. When we are earthly, we do not exalt God;

but if from earthly we have been made heavenly, then we exalt God. And our Lord, when he was on earth, did not exalt us. Someone may say: You speak rashly, since he himself says in the Gospel: ”When I have been lifted up, I will draw all things to myself.” See what he says: When I have been lifted up into the heavens, then I will draw all things to myself. This sense is indeed pious, but I understand something else. When I have been lifted up, when I have been crucified, then I will draw all to myself. ”That your beloved may be delivered.” O wondrous understanding! for this reason the Lord is crucified and lifted up, that his beloved may be delivered. ”That your beloved may be delivered,” he says, ”be exalted above the heavens, O God.” What we asked for has come to pass: he has been exalted, and we have been delivered.

”God has spoken in his holy one”: whether in the temple, or in each one of the saints, or in a prophet. He is heard in Moses, he is heard in an apostle; and more truly I say, he has spoken in his Son. What, then, has God spoken? These things that follow. ”I will be exalted, and I will divide Shechem.” For this reason, he says, I am crucified, that I may divide Shechem. ”Shechem” is interpreted in our language as ”shoulders.” And ”shoulders” are interpreted as ”works.” The sense, then, is this: for this reason I am crucified, that I may divide my works among my saints; for this reason I am crucified, that I may lay my sweet yoke and my light burden upon the necks of men. You have done, O Lord, what you promised: you have been exalted, and you have divided Shechem. ”And I will measure out the valley of tabernacles.” Truly our Lord and Savior entered down into this valley of tears, into the place of our lowliness, that is, into this world. However holy a man may be in this world, he does not yet know as he ought to know. ”For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.”

”Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine.” Our Lord and Savior rejoices, possessing greater riches. ”Gilead” is interpreted ”migration”: he rejoices, therefore, when the people migrated from among the Gentiles and came to him. ”Manasseh” is interpreted ”from forgetfulness.” See, then, what he says. That son who received the substance and consumed it, and had forgotten me, now has remembered me; and he is called Manasseh, that is, ”from forgetfulness,” because he has not forgotten, but has returned to his father. And ”Ephraim” is interpreted ”fruitful.” ”Ephraim,” he says, ”is the receiving of my head.” He has here put ”receiving” for ”crown”: for that which is placed upon the head is a crown, and in the Scriptures the crown is called by various names. In another place it has: ”His truth will surround you with a shield.” And in another psalm: ”Who crowns you in mercy and compassions.” For just as there he put ”shield” for ”crown,” so too here he has put ”receiving” for ”crown.” See, then, what he says. You have become Gilead, you have become Manasseh, that is, you have migrated to the Lord, and after forgetfulness you have returned to your father: be Ephraim, be fruitful, have good works, and afterward you will be the crown of the Lord.

”Judah is my king. See in how great glory he is who does penance: for ”Judah” is interpreted ”confession. ”Moab is the pot of my hope. A great mystery is recognized in few words. I beg you, pay careful attention: since it profits both me who speak, and you who hear. ”Moab” is interpreted ”from the father. ”AB” means ”father,” ”MO” means ”from. Who is this one ”from the father”? He who lost his father, who abandoned his father, who did not return to his own father, and is not worthy to be called Manasseh. Who is this Moab? An enemy of the Lord, of whose lineage, even to the fourth generation, and the tenth, and even forever, he shall not enter into the church of the Lord. Who is this Moab? He who is born of an unclean coupling in a dark cave. For from Lot and from his daughters two were born, Moab and Ammon, and Moab is the elder son. See, then, how a mystery is hidden in the letter. In darkness, in a cave: not in the sun, not in the light. ”Moab,” then, is interpreted ”the devil,” who has forgotten his father. In fine, Absalom too, who persecuted his own father, is interpreted ”the devil. How, then, is this Moab ”the pot of the Lord’s hope”? ”Pot” (lebes) is interpreted ”cooking-pot” (olla). How is a cooking-pot the hope of the Lord? Is it, then, credible that Moab, who is interpreted ”the devil,” should be the pot of the Lord’s hope?

How is he the hope of the Lord? The Apostle says: ”Whom I have handed over to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme. The devil is, as it were, the Lord’s torturer-examiner. Those who do not walk rightly toward God are handed over to the devil. Why? That they may perish forever? And where then is the clemency of God? where is the merciful father? where is he who makes his sun rise over the just and sinners, and rains upon sinners and the just? What he says is this: I hand over, he says, sinners to the devil, that, being tormented by him, they may be converted to me. It is said also in Jeremiah: ”What do you see, Jeremiah? ”A boiling pot,” he says. See, then, that into this pot flesh is cast. This is written in Ezekiel. ”And I cast,” he says, ”flesh into the pot”: that it may become soft, and the hard may be converted to the Lord, and from a heart of stone may become a heart of flesh, so that where before it could not be written upon because of hardness, afterward it may be written upon because of softness. ”I will kindle,” he says, ”this pot, and I will boil down the flesh and the bones, until they lose all moisture and filth. And see what is said afterward. ”And let them learn,” he says, ”that I am the Lord. Great mercy, great sacrament.

The flesh is cast into the pot, that it may be boiled down and may learn that he is the Lord. There are many things that might be said about Moab and the pot, but for now it would be too long.

”Into Idumea I will stretch out my shoe.” ”Idumea” is interpreted ”earthly and bloody.” The merciful God wills to possess not only heavenly things, but also earthly ones. ”The foreigners have been made friends to me.” He speaks of us, who have believed from among the Gentiles. ”Who will lead me into the fortified city?” No

one, O Lord, for you are the one who says: ”I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the nations there was no man with me.” ”For all have turned aside, together they have become useless: there is none that does good, there is not even one.” Who, then, will lead me into the fortified city? No one, O Lord: since even Peter, who had promised to die for you, afterward denied you. What is this fortified city? Hell, where they are shut in, from which it is not permitted to go out. And truly from this city no other victor came out except the Lord. And truly this city is fortified. Moses could not come out of this city. And Jacob likewise entered into this city, and did not return. Do you wish to know that he did not return? In fine, he says to his sons: ”Mourning I will descend to the netherworld.” But he descended to the netherworld, because paradise had not yet been opened by the thief. This city is fortified against going out, but it is open for entering in. ”Who will lead me even into Idumea?” Where is the place of punishments and of blood. For ”Idumea” is interpreted ”bloody.” The place of the slaying of souls, where many souls are slain. For no one descended a victor into hell, except you alone, O Lord.

”You who have cast us off.” Was it not you, O God, who have cast us off? He did not say, ”Who cast us off,” but ”Who once cast us off.” ”And will you not go out, O God, in our powers?” These things are to be read interrogatively: ”And will you not go out, O God, in our powers?” You who suffered for us, why do you not help us, but allow us to be trampled by the most cruel devil? ”And will you not go out, O God, in our powers?” See what he says. He did not say, ”you did not go out,” but ”will you not go out, O God, in our powers.” This he means to say: When we labor, then God helps us. ”For it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who has mercy.” See what he says: Is it not of him who lies idle, nor of him who sleeps, but of God who has mercy? But see what he says: It is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who has mercy. If, then, we do not will and run, God will profit us nothing. It is ours to will and to run, and afterward God has mercy. For a sleeping athlete loses the victory.

”Give us help from tribulation.” He did not say, ”Give us help from delights,” but ”from tribulation.” ”To the Lord, when I was in tribulation, I cried out, and he heard me.” He did not say, ”when I was in delights I cried out,” or ”sleeping I cried out.” Do you wish to be heard by the Lord? Be in tribulation: cry out, and you will be heard. If, then, anyone is not in tribulation, he cannot call upon the help of the Lord. ”For vain is the salvation of man.” ”Cursed is the man who has his hope in man.” There is no need to interpret this: this saying is plain to all. Someone hoped in an emperor, hoped in a prince, in a father, or a mother: in the course of some affair the spirit of the one in whom he hoped was suddenly taken away, and his salvation vanished. He did not say, ”vain is the salvation of that man in whom he hopes,” but ”the salvation of him who hopes in man.”

”In God we will do valiantly.” Let us have hope in nothing except in God alone. Let us not say: If this should happen to me, or that, whence shall I have the means to live? I answer you: what is greater, if persecution should come, whence do you have the means to live? For a Christian there is always persecution, always nakedness is set before him. No one, then, ought to make arrangements about this life, let no one fear, let no one say: If I grow old, whence shall I have the means to live? if I become sick, whence do I live? You have Christ, and do you fear? If he feeds the birds of the sky, do you doubt that he can feed you? The devil feeds his own men, and shall Christ not feed his own servants? The devil makes the judges of this world and the rich, and can Christ not make it so that you do not beg? The devil gives gold and gems, and can Christ not give bread? Let us cast all anxiety out of our hearts, and let us say: ”In God we will do valiantly.” He himself will be our valor, he himself our bread, he himself will be our ruler. ”And he himself will bring our enemies to nothing.” He himself crowns us, he himself fights alongside us: or rather, he himself conquers in us. For what do we say? ”In God we will do valiantly.” For when we are strong, he himself will bring our enemies to nothing. He did not say ”he will fight,” or ”he will slay,” but ”he will bring to nothing.” He will bring them to nothing for this reason, that, if he should wish, he may make them strong, and glorify them. Let us, therefore, bless God: to whom be glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Homily 35, on Psalm 108

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). To the end, a psalm of David. When it says ”to the end,” let us understand that it is spoken not of the present, but of the future. And if it is spoken of the future, then the prophecy is about Christ.

O God, do not keep silent about my praise. That is: Judas betrayed me, the Jews persecuted me and crucified me, and they thought that they would destroy me utterly, to the end. But you, O God, do not keep silent about my praise. All the churches, day by day, praise the Lord, and the prayer of the Lord has been fulfilled, when he said: O God, do not keep silent about my praise. See of what dignity the priests are. The priests speak: and in the priests God does not keep silent about the praise of his Son. For the mouth of the sinner and the mouth of the deceitful man has been opened against me. Let us see how the mouth of Judas the betrayer was opened against the Lord. He comes to the Lord in order to betray him, and he says: Rabbi — that is, master. Behold, the mouth of the sinner and the mouth of the deceitful man. I in my clemency wish to save him, and I offer him a kiss, and I wish to overcome his malice; yet he persists in doing evil, so as to betray me. In a particular sense it is understood of Judas; but in a general sense of the Jews. In that time in which they were saying, ”Crucify, crucify such a man,” the mouth of the sinner was opened against the Lord. And that you may see that he speaks of all the Jews, you will recognize it from what follows. For what does he say?

They have spoken against me with a deceitful tongue. I was being crucified for them, and they were mocking me. My wounds were their medicine, and I seemed to them a thing of derision. And they have surrounded me with words of hatred. Not that they might believe, but that they might war against me. And they have warred against me without cause. ”Without cause” is understood in two ways. That is, without reason: for I had not sinned, and I did not deserve that they should make war upon me. And what worthy cause was there that they should war against me? Because I had healed their sick? because I had raised their dead? because I had

done other signs? See therefore that they warred against him without cause. And it is understood in another way as well: They wished to extinguish and blot out my name, and yet they were not able. When someone persecutes another, and gains nothing, and does not fulfill his desire, he persecutes without cause.

Instead of loving me, they disparaged me: but I kept praying. In return for the benefits which I had conferred upon them, they were doing me insults. But what was I doing? I kept praying. These are the weapons of the Lord: and these are our weapons too, prayer. So then, whenever anyone persecutes us, and hates us, let us say: Instead of loving me, they disparaged me. But what was I doing? I kept praying. That I might overcome them? Far from it: for whom did the Lord pray that he might overcome? But what did he say — but I kept praying? What was I saying? ”Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do.” And they set against me evils in return for goods. And set upon the cross, I kept praying for those who were crucifying me, while they were saying: ”Aha, you who destroy the temple, and in three days build it up. Let him save himself. Let the Father who loves you come now and set you free.” I rose again from the dead for their sakes, and they say: ”His disciples came by night, and stole him away.” And hatred in return for my love. Consider, O Christian, consider, O monk: if the Lord received his persecutor and betrayer with a kiss, and prays for those who were crucifying him, what ought we to do for our brothers?

Set a sinner over him. Since I prayed for them upon the cross, and they saw my wounds — I gave them room for repentance and they do not repent, and they refuse to have me as king — let them have the devil as king. They will not have Jesus as king: let them have Barabbas as king, Barabbas, which is interpreted ”son of the father,” that is, of the devil. This Barabbas, who was he? A seditious man and a robber. And truly they have Barabbas as king even to the present day, a seditious man and a robber, who slays the Jews themselves. Barabbas the robber, who delights in blood, before the Lord was crucified, before the Jews crucified him, was shut up in prison. They denied the Lord, and Barabbas was released. For from that time Barabbas began to have power over them; and that demon, who had been cast out of the man, and out of that generation, and was walking about in the desert, and could find no place, brought with him seven other demons worse than himself, and entered into the synagogue, and the last state of that man became worse than the first. In short, the synagogue of the Jews, before it crucified the Lord, was indeed a sinner, but it had only one demon. It crucified the Lord, and eight demons entered into it at once. So then was fulfilled what he said: Set a sinner over him.

And let the devil stand at his right hand. Because he stood at their right hand, therefore the synagogue had a withered right hand, as it is written in the Gospel. But let us pray that the Lord may stand at our right hand, and the devil at our

left. It is written in Zechariah: ”And he showed me Jesus the great priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan stood at his right hand, to fight with him.” If, then, the devil stands at the right hand of the Lord, how does he now say of Judas, And let the devil stand at his right hand? But see what he says. The devil stood at the right hand of Jesus to oppose him: that is, he wished to be an adversary to his right hand. But here he does not say that he wishes to fight, but that he had already conquered Judas. There the devil desires to fight against the right hand; but here he has gained mastery over the right hand of Judas. But this too must be considered. At that time he stood at the Lord’s right hand to oppose him, when Jesus had filthy garments. For so it is written there as well: ”And Jesus had filthy garments.” As long as the Lord Jesus has filthy garments, so long does the devil stand at his right hand: as long as he bears our sins, in our sins the devil opposes him. But when it is said in Zechariah, ”Take away his filthy garments and clothe him with the changes of raiment,” immediately Jesus says to the devil, ”The Lord rebuke you, Satan, may he rebuke you who has chosen Jerusalem.” All this we have said for this reason, because it is written, And let the devil stand at his right hand.

When he is judged, let him come forth condemned. Let him come not into judgment, but into condemnation. For where there is judgment, there is doubt: but where there is condemnation, the sentence is already plain. And let his prayer be turned into sin. The repentance of Judas was made a worse sin. How was the repentance of Judas made a worse sin? He went and perished by hanging; and he who became the betrayer of the Lord, this same man came to be his own slayer. In view of the clemency of the Lord I say this, that by this he offended the Lord more, because he hanged himself, than because he betrayed the Lord. His prayer ought to have turned into repentance, and it was turned into sin. You see a heretic praying, you see a Jew, you see a Manichaean: though they fast, though they pray, yet their prayer is turned into sin.

Let his days be few. His days were made few, but his nights increased: for he was cut off in the middle of his days. The sun withdrew from him, and behold, darkness was multiplied for him. And let another receive his episcopate. This too is interpreted more plainly in the Acts of the Apostles. But it was not only spoken of Judas in that time, it is spoken even to this day. If Judas lost his apostleship, let priests and bishops guard themselves, lest they too lose their own priesthood. If an apostle fell, a monk can fall more easily. The power does not perish, though the man falls and perishes. Nevertheless the Lord gives out his denarii at interest: if that man does not double them, his money is taken away and given to him who has. The Lord’s money cannot be idle.

Let his children become orphans, and his wife a widow. See that the things which are spoken are mysteries. Whom do you suppose to be the children of Judas? The Jews. And they are called Jews, not from that holy Judah, but from this betrayer.

From that holy one, we are the spiritual Jews; but from this betrayer, those are the carnal Jews. In short, there are two apostles who are called by the name of Judas. There is the eleventh apostle, who is called Judas of James. And there is the twelfth and the last, who is called Judas Iscariot. From that Judas of James, then, we are called Jews; but from this Iscariot, those are called Jews. That Judas our father is called ”of James,” that is, Judah the son of the supplanter: for we have supplanted the people of the Jews, and have received their birthright. But those are called ”Iscariot,” which is uncertain whether it signifies his father or his village. But however you interpret it, it is interpreted ”wages” and ”price. Therefore this Judas, who was going to betray the Lord and to receive a price, received his name from the price. Though he returned the price to the priests of the Jews, yet they condemn him, since they refuse to receive the price of blood. See the disagreement of the Pharisees and the misfortune of Judas. If you bought the blood of Jesus rightly, why did you not take back your money?

But if you refuse to take it because it is the price of blood, you show that you yourselves have shed the blood unjustly and wickedly. But see what they do. That very money, he says, they do not put into the corban, but they buy a field with it, and they call it Aceldama, which is interpreted ”the price of blood. Why do they buy it? For the burial of strangers. Blessed are we, for whom a field is bought from the price of the Lord’s blood.

And his wife a widow. The synagogue, who first was made the wife of God, of whom he said, ”And I gave her a writing of divorce, and again I took her back, and I said to her, Turn to me”: that synagogue, then, received her divorce from the Savior, and was made the wife of Judas the betrayer. In short, what did she do? She received no dowry, but gave a dowry to her husband. And again that most wretched Judas, who betrayed the Lord, will not receive an evil dowry; but he returns to the harlot, his wife, the evil dowry which he received from her. And what does he say? You displeased your former husband, he repudiated you and cast you out, and gave you a writing of divorce: I refuse to have you as wife. You gave me a price, and you deceived me: and you who killed your Lord, you have killed me too. For I cannot find in Scripture that Judas had either a wife or children.

Let his children be carried away wandering, and let them beg. Consider carefully: for indeed the things that follow are difficult. From that time in which the Lord was crucified, from then on the Jews are ever moved about, they do not stand in their own place. In short, it is said of Cain also: ”And Cain, he says, went out from the face of God, and dwelt in the land of Nod.” Now Nod is interpreted ”commotion.” Because Cain had gone out from the face of God, rightly he did not stand still, but dwelt in the land of Nod, that is, in commotion. So then these too, since they crucified their God and Lord, are carried away wandering. For they are not in their own places, but are scattered throughout the whole world. Here he speaks of a

begging for spiritual riches. For they do not have prophets, they do not have the law, they do not have priesthood, they do not have sacrifice, but they have truly been made beggars.

Let the moneylender search out all his substance. You gave him money, O Lord, you gave to him as also to the others. But what did he do? He did not bind it up in a napkin, nor bury it in the earth, nor was he negligent: but when he had the Lord's talent and money, he took a price from the enemies of the Lord, and sold his own Lord. Therefore I say to you, O Lord, exact from him the interest of your money. And let strangers plunder his labors. The Lord manifestly proved to be a moneylender, and what happened? Let strangers plunder his labors. Whether we understand it generally of all the Jews, because they were laid waste by the Romans: or truly in a particular sense, that Judas was plundered by the demons, and the people itself. Let there be no helper for him, nor let there be any who will pity his orphans. In that time the people of the Jews had no helper. Answer me, O Jews. You were in Babylon: there you had prophets, Daniel, Ezekiel: and indeed you were idolaters. For seventy years you were in captivity, and afterward you came back into your own land. Behold, now it is four hundred years: why has no prophet been sent to you? In that time you worshiped idols, and God had pity on you. But now you do not worship idols: why has the Lord forsaken you? Behold, it is four hundred years. But then you forsook the Lord, and worshiped idols: whereas now you have crucified and slain the Lord. And therefore there will be no helper for them.

In one generation let his name be blotted out. O prophecy, O mystery of prophecy! In one generation let his name be blotted out. After the passion of the Lord, forty-two years passed, and that people was blotted out. Indeed the full age comes in the fortieth year. So then, after the passion of the Lord, in the forty-second year Jerusalem was blotted out. See therefore that in one generation his name was blotted out. But in this too is the clemency of the Lord. They crucified him, and he gave them forty-two years for repentance. I say it plainly: he slew them after forty-two years for this reason, because of those who crucified the Lord, none of them remained. Judas is cursed, so that in Judas the Jews may be cursed. Let the iniquity of his fathers come into remembrance in the sight of the Lord. They sinned in the desert, he forgave them: now he reckons against them what they sinned then, since they have crucified the Lord. Or let us interpret it otherwise. He reckons against them the cruelty of their murders, and forgives them nothing. And let the sin of his mother not be blotted out. Who is the mother of Judas? Jerusalem, who rejoices in blood, who slew the prophets and her own Lord himself.

Because he did not remember to show mercy. See how great the clemency of the Lord is. He sees him coming with the officers, he sees him coming with clubs, and he offers him a kiss. That man comes to betray, and the Lord gives a kiss; so that

he who did not fear his master might at least be overcome by clemency. And he persecuted a man needy and a beggar. ”Who, though he was rich, for our sake became poor.” The Lord calls himself needy and a beggar: and who glories in his riches? You have consolation, O poor: for the Lord is poor with you. And to put to death one pricked at heart. What is it that he said, ”one pricked at heart, to put to death”? What he also said in the Gospel: ”My soul is sorrowful even unto death.” And again when he said: ”Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me.” Otherwise: this grieved me, and I was made sorrowful for those persecuting me, because they refused to repent. I was hanging on the cross, and washing away their filth with my blood: and they themselves refused to repent. These were my tears, this my compunction, that those who persecuted me I could not save.

Deliver me, for I am needy and poor. The Lord calls himself poor, that he might console the poor. With men he was made poor, that no one of the poor might despair of salvation. And my heart is troubled within me. See what he says: And my heart is troubled within me. This is the same thing which he says elsewhere: ”I was troubled, and did not speak.” That I am troubled, belongs to a man: but to overcome the trouble and the anger, this belongs to great virtue. Therefore the apostle also says: ”Be angry, and do not sin.” Are you angry? You are a man. Does the anger not remain in you? You are a Christian. I am shaken off like locusts. I indeed had come to protect my people, and I said: ”Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you, how often did I wish to gather your children as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.” I had come like a hen to protect them: but they received me with a most hostile mind. I had come as a mother: and they slew me as if I were their murderer. I am shaken off. What is this? They persecuted me, they cast me out. They persecuted me from Nazareth, I came to Capernaum: they persecuted me from Capernaum, I came to Bethsaida, and from there they persecuted me. I came to Jerusalem, I was unwilling to withdraw from my people; and from there they persecuted me, and so they treated me like locusts. And what did I do? Was I angry, did I defend myself, did I curse them, and abandon them? Not one of these things did I do. But what did I do? I prayed for them.

My knees are weakened from fasting. Take consolation, O monk, in fasting: since the Lord too did this. I say that when a monk fasts, he becomes stronger through fasting; and when his knees are weakened by fasting, then he is most of all strengthened. And my flesh is changed on account of oil. I seem to be saying a difficult thing, and I interpret it according to the letter, that I may edify my hearers: for even the letter edifies me. It is good to fast, it is good to flee from delicacies. Before I come to the spiritual understanding, I linger in the letter. He who says that he does not eat oil, is far from the rest of the delicacies. All this I have said, because he said, And my flesh is changed on account of oil. This I have interpreted otherwise. But what he says is this. Oil is an image of brightness; oil is, as it were, the food of

light. So then the Jews too received oil from me, they received life, they received light. Let no one suppose that he says ”oil” for mercy: in the Hebrew it signifies intelligible oil. It is changed not into joy, but into sadness; not that I might be found more beautiful, but that I might appear more disfigured. Therefore he says: ”We saw him, and he had no beauty.” Why? because his flesh was changed on account of oil. He had not the delights of the body, but of the spirit. And we too, then, when we fast, when our faces are pale, when we appear disfigured, let us recognize that we then appear more beautiful to Christ. Such soldiers Christ loves, who give themselves to fasting. Our provision and our food is fasting. Why? because in fasting is victory, and in victory is triumph. In short, the apostle too glories not in fullness, but in weakness. ”For when I am weak, then I am stronger.”

And I have become a reproach to them. For they called me a Samaritan, and said: ”By Beelzebub, the prince of demons, he casts out demons.” ”Is not this the son of Joseph the carpenter? are not his brothers and sisters all with us?” And again: ”You who destroy the temple, and build it in three days.” And again: ”Let us see whether Elijah comes to save him.” He was calling out ”Eli, Eli,” which is ”My God, my God”; and they thought it was Elijah. See the untutored Jews. Did the Son of God ask for the help of Elijah? They saw me, and they shook their heads. Why did they shake their heads? because they had already moved their feet as well.

Save me according to your mercy. He says also in the Gospel: ”I have power to lay down my soul and to take it up again.” And again: ”No one takes it from me.” And how does he ask for mercy? He himself asks for mercy, and he himself bestows it; he himself as man asks, and as God bestows. And let them know that this is your hand, and you, O Lord, have made it. What is it that he says, And let them know that this is your hand, and you, O Lord, have made it? Let the Jews understand that they did not prevail against me by their own strength: but my will and your will was done, that I should suffer. And I willed to suffer; therefore I say, according to what I am as man: ”My God, I willed to do your will.” And your will was also mine, that I should suffer. It was not, then, their treacheries and strength that brought it about: but I and you willed that I should suffer. For you struck your shepherd, and the sheep were scattered. This is written in Zechariah: ”I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.” That I should suffer, was my will and yours. What you willed, I too willed. The scandal had to come, but woe to him through whom it comes.

They will curse, and you will bless. To this day this happens: they curse in the synagogue, and the Lord blesses in the church. Those who rise up against me, let them be confounded: but your servant will rejoice. They rise up against me: but I, your servant, will rejoice. But why ”your servant”? because ”He who, though he was in the form of God, did not count it robbery to be equal with God: but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant.”

Let those who disparage me be clothed with shame. It profits us greatly to understand what we say. The clemency of God appears in this, in his saying ”let them be clothed. He does not say, let them perish; he does not say, let them be blotted out forever: but what does he say? let them be confounded, that is, let them understand their error, and be confounded, and stand in repentance. He who is clothed with shame is near to salvation: for if anyone is truly confounded, he begins to repent. Consider, O monks, if you ever have anything against your brother, you ought always to pray to God for him. The Lord is crucified, and he prays for those crucifying him. But you, if you hear an evil word, do not hold on to anger. ”Let not the sun set upon your wrath. And let them be covered with their confusion as with a double cloak (diplois). The diplois is a kind of cloak: indeed, in the Hebrew it is called ME’IL. It is called diplois for this reason, because the cloak is double. Therefore I say to you, O Lord: my enemies are the Jews, they have persecuted me, they have crucified me, they have done me every evil, they have blasphemed me: be gracious to them, since I, who have suffered, pray for them. And what do I ask? Let them blush and be confounded, and so be saved. They are naked, they have lost my tunic.

Give them confusion, give them disgrace, and let them have a double cloak: that is, let them not have a single confusion, but a double one, that they may repent the more. He does not speak against the Jews, but he speaks for them. For he is the Creator both of them and of us: he has not rooted them out altogether. Do you wish to know? Peter was of them, Paul was of them, and all the apostles were of them. We have been grafted into their root; we are the branches, they the root. We ought not to curse the roots, but we ought to pray for our roots. We who have been grafted into the root, let us beseech the Lord, that just as the branches are saved, so also the root may be saved. Perhaps someone may say: You pray for the Jews, for blasphemers? I pray to the Lord for them: for if he himself has pity on his persecutors, how much more will he have pity on me?

I will confess to the Lord exceedingly with my mouth. This is said after the resurrection, and it is sung of the future church. And in the midst of many I will praise him. For not in Judea alone, but in the whole world, in the church I will praise you. Because he stood at the right hand of the poor man. The devil stood at the right hand of Judas: but for me the Lord stood at my right hand. That he might save my soul from those who persecute it. My soul, he says, he will save. And elsewhere he says: ”My soul is sorrowful even unto death.” He who is sorrowful, had a faculty of feeling. For a soul without feeling has no perception, a soul without feeling has neither perception nor pain: for where there is pain and sadness, there is feeling. If then he had sadness, if he had pain, then he had also feeling: for feeling is pain.

If, then, they should wish to say to us: We do not say that he had feeling, for this reason, lest he seem to have sin; let us answer them: Did he have a body like us, or

did he not have one? If they say, he had one, let us answer them: Then he had also the sufferings of our body. Everyone understands what I say. But if they deny that he had the passions or lusts of the body, then we say to them, that he did not have a body either. And let us say to them: Just as he had a true body like ours, and yet did not have the sin of the body; so also he had a true soul, and did not have the sin of the soul. Let us therefore confess that he had a true body and a true soul. For if the Lord did not take upon himself all the things that are man's, he did not save man. But if he took a body, and did not take a soul: then he saved the body, but he did not save the soul. Yet we wish rather that our soul be saved than our body. The Lord therefore took upon himself both body and soul, that he might save both, that he might save the whole man, just as he also created him.

If, then, they say that the Lord did not take on feeling for this reason, that he might not sin, and they suppose this, that whoever has had human feeling cannot conquer it, let them tell us: Did John the Baptist have feeling, or did he not? In that time, in which he was in the desert, did he sin? Assuredly they say that he did not sin. Indeed, our Lord too says: "Amen I say to you, there has not been among those born of women a greater than John the Baptist. Did Peter have feeling, or did he not, and the rest of the holy apostles? If, then, the apostles conquered human feeling, did the Lord fear to take on feeling, lest he be conquered by it? And while they wish to glorify the Lord, they disparage him. How do they disparage him? by making the Lord seem to fear what the apostles did not fear. Let us therefore give thanks to almighty God, and say: In your feeling you had no sin. And: "The prince of this world came, and found nothing in you. So then grant to us, that just as in your own feeling you conquered the devil, so also in our feeling conquer the devil; that, just as you created us perfect, so also perfect you may save us. For you are the Creator, you are the master, you are the Lord, you are also the one who suffered for us: who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

Homily 36, on Psalm 109

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin).

The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand. A Psalm of David. It is David who speaks, a prophet, a holy man, a king. So what does the king say? What does the king and prophet say? The Lord said to my Lord. The Savior expounded this passage in the Gospel, saying: ”If Christ is the son of David,” he says, ”how does David in the Spirit call him Lord? You see, then, what he is saying. If he is David’s son, how do you say it — how does David in the Spirit call him Lord? Someone may say: So then he is not the son of David? He was saying this about the Pharisees, who confessed Christ to be merely the son of David. To the Jew and to Photinus I say this very thing: If he is the son of David, how does David call his own son Lord? But the one who confesses him to be Lord and God, and the Son of God — for instance the Manichaean, who denies that he is the son of David — before that man I prove that he is the son of David. To us, then, the one who is the Son of God, he himself is also the son of David: not one son here and another son there; I do not make two persons out of God and man; but the very one who is the Son of God, he himself is also the son of David. The Lord said to my Lord:

Sit at my right hand. In the Hebrew the first name of ”Lord” is written with those letters with which it is written only of God. But the second name of ”Lord” is written with those letters with which men are accustomed to call one ”lord”: just as one is called ”lord” by a servant, and kings are called ”lords. See, then, what he says. The Lord said to my Lord: to this Lord, who is commanded to sit. God does not sit; it is the assumption of a body that sits. To this one, then, it is commanded that he sit — the one who is man, who was assumed. This we say against the Arians, and against those who say: Greater is the Father, who bids him sit, than the one who is bidden. All the Gospels ring out concerning the person of the man, and now no proof is needed: because everything whatsoever that seems lowly is referred to the man, is referred to the flesh. Now let us speak about the psalm.

The Lord shall send forth the rod of your power out of Sion. ”The rod.” In the Hebrew it has not so much ”rod” as ”scepter,” that is, the emblem of royal power. The Lord shall send forth the rod of your power out of Sion. ”For out of Sion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem.” Rule in the midst of your enemies. He did not say, Kill your enemies. But what? Rule in the midst of your enemies. Make your enemies, who had been strangers, begin to be yours. Rule in the midst of your enemies. Your enemies, of whom it is written in the sixty-seventh psalm: ”The tongue of your dogs from the enemies, from him.” These are the enemies, who were in another’s power. Now, then, the psalmist prays for this: rule over your enemies, deign to be the Lord of your enemies.

With you is the beginning in the day of your power, in the splendors of the saints. The little verse is obscure. Let us see the day of the Lord’s power, so that when we have known the day, then we may know what the ”beginning” is, and how this beginning is with him and has been with him; how this very beginning is in the day of his power, in the splendors of the saints. This beginning, then, which is with the Lord in the day of his power, is with the Lord for this reason: that the saints may shine. With you is the beginning in the day of your power. ”In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God. The Father is a beginning, but the Son too is a beginning. For a beginning does not have a beginning: for if it should have another beginning, then it itself ceases to be a beginning. Whatever, therefore, we grant to the Father, this we grant also to the Son. For if the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, and all things of the Father are the Son’s, and all things of the Son are the Father’s, then the beginning of the Father is the beginning of the Son. Therefore what he says is this:

At that time when you were suffering and were saying ”Father, into your hands I commend my spirit,” and you were speaking as it were out of the affection of a man, you were not making request as though weak. For with you was the beginning, with you was the divinity: but you besought help for this reason, that having received help you might give it to your saints, and they might shine. As for this that is said, ”having received you might give” — let it be a stumbling-block to no one: he speaks according to the man. For if he assumed the body of a man, it is necessary that he also take on the words of a man. Christ is man, and truly man: we say this according to the assumption of flesh. If, then, he is man according to the body, you see the body, and you are not scandalized: and do you marvel if he speaks with the words of a man? But if the lowliness of the body scandalizes you, and the cross, and the injuries, and the blows, and the scourges, and every outrage of the cross — if this scandalizes you, return to the beginning, and you are not scandalized. For the Father says to the Son: From the womb before the morning star I begot you.

Do you marvel if our Lord and Savior, who truly assumed a man, speaks according to the man, when God the Father himself, who did not assume a man, speaks as it were as a man, ”From the womb before the morning star I begot you”? I have no womb: but I cannot otherwise show myself to be a Father, unless I have spoken with the words of a man. From the womb before the morning star I begot you. ”From the womb,” from my substance. ”From the womb. Hear, Eunomius, hear, Arius: if the Lord is a creature, if he is a thing made, does a craftsman ever beget his work? does a craftsman ever call his work a son? A carpenter-craftsman made a bench: did he beget it from his womb? does he say to it, ”From my womb I begot you, O bench”? By no means does he say this. But what does he say? ”I made you with my hand. But when a ”womb” is spoken of, a son is signified, and a son not adopted. For adopted ones too are called sons. ”For as many as received him, he gave them power to become sons of God. There he gave power: but here he begot from the womb, from his own nature, from his own inward parts, from his own substance. ”From the womb,” that is, from the marrow of his divinity. The whole of whatever the Father is in divinity, he gave to the Son whom he begot.

From the womb before the morning star I begot you. ”Before the morning star. This figure is called in Greek synecdoche (συνεκδοχή), which the grammarians call ”the whole from a part” (ἀπὸ μέρους τὸ πᾶν). So when it says ”before the morning star,” it names one creature, and it indicates all creatures. When it says ”before the morning star,” let us understand it thus, as though it had said, before the moon, before the sun, before every creature. From the womb before the morning star I begot you. ”Before the morning star. Before that morning star which is seen in the world, the true light was begotten. Hence he says in another passage of the psalm: ”In your light we shall see light. The speech is to the Father: O Father, in the light of the Son we shall see the light, the Holy Spirit. From the womb before the morning star I begot you.

The Lord has sworn, and he will not repent. ”The Lord has sworn.” In what he says, ”he has sworn,” it is not to the one who was begotten before the morning star, but he swore to the one who after the morning star was born of the Virgin. You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedech. It is superfluous for us to wish to interpret this little verse, since the holy Apostle argued about it most fully to the Hebrews. For this Melchizedech himself is without father, without mother, without lineage. And there he interprets most diligently why ”without father, without mother, without lineage”; and it has been said by all churchmen that he is called ”without father” according to the flesh, and ”without mother” according to God. Let us therefore interpret only this: You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedech. Let us say only this, why he said ”according to the order.” ”According to the order”: by no means will you be a priest according to the Jewish victims, but you will be a priest according to the order of Melchizedech. For just as Melchizedech, king of Salem, offered bread and wine, so you too will offer

your body and blood, the true bread and the true wine. This Melchizedech gave to us these mysteries which we have. He it is who said, ”Whoever shall eat my flesh and drink my blood”: according to the order of Melchizedech he handed down to us his sacrament.

The Lord at your right hand. I see a new thing. It is said at the beginning: The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand; and now it is said to him: The Lord at your right hand. If he himself sits at the right hand of the Father, how in turn does the Father sit at the right hand of the Son? For when it is said, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, it is said most plainly that the Son sits at the right hand of the Father. But when it is said, The Lord at your right hand, this is said, that the Father sits at the right hand of the Son. All this is said for this reason, that the Son may be equal to the Father. There are many things that might be said. But to sinners the devil stands at the right hand. Yet that discussion is another matter. Whoever is a sinner, the devil stands at his right hand. But someone says: How is it that in Zechariah it is said to stand also to Jesus the son of Josedech? ”And the devil was standing at his right hand. How is it written in Zechariah that the devil stands at the right hand of the Savior? You see that there is a question here. But at that time when the devil was standing at the right hand of the Savior, ”Jesus,” it says, ”had filthy garments.

He was bearing our sins, he was wrapped in our vices: therefore the devil was standing at his right hand. He shall shatter kings in the day of his wrath. ”All these things have been handed over to me. ”In a moment of time,” it says, ”he showed him all the kingdoms of the earth. The devil shows the kingdoms of the world. And what does he say? ”All these things have been handed over to me: if, falling down, you will adore before me, all will be yours. In the day, then, of war, in the day of contest, he shall shatter kings. ”Of his wrath.”

He shall judge among the nations. See the differences: kings are shattered, nations are judged. He shall fill up the ruins. Our Lord ascended upon the cross, and many ruins came about. ”This one is set for the ruin and resurrection of many, and for a sign that shall be contradicted.” He shall fill up the ruins: of those who do not believe, who did not believe the scouts, the apostles. For Moses too sent scouts into the world; and because the people did not believe the scouts, therefore they fell in the desert. Even to this day the bodies of those who do not believe fall in the desert of this world. He shall crush the heads in the land of many. He shall fill up the ruins of those who do not believe; he shall crush the heads of those who are doubtful, of those who do not have perfect faith. He shall crush the heads in the land of many, not of all: for if he had said ”of all,” none of us would have hope. ”Of many” is said, so that others may be left.

He shall drink from the torrent in the way. Who shall drink from the torrent in the way? This one, to whom it was said, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand:

this one who heard, You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedech: this one who shattered kings in the day of his wrath, who judges the nations, shall fill up the ruins, shall crush the heads in the land of many: what else will this one do? He shall drink from the torrent in the way. Let us first look at the way, so that afterward we may look at the torrent in the way. The way of this world is meant, through which he walked. Indeed it is written in the Gospel: ”Be agreeing with your adversary, while you are in the way” — that is, while you walk in this world, and you go along the way to him who is the true Way. Hence it is said also in the one hundred and eighteenth psalm: ”Blessed are the unspotted in the way. Blessed are those who in the way of this world are unspotted, and in this world. Therefore the priest according to the order of Melchizedech, since he came into the way of the world, and walked in our way, he too drank from the torrent that was in the world. A torrent does not have natural waters, it does not have waters that always flow:

but it has waters from storms, from rains, from whirlwinds, from tempests. A torrent is never in the mountains, but always in the valleys, in steep places. It takes in foreign waters, and gives birth to them, and swelling it rushes on. He shall drink from the torrent in the way. A torrent never has clean water, but always turbid water. This is said because the waters of this world are always turbid, always full of storm. Do you wish to know how he drank from the turbid torrent? He himself said: ”My soul is sorrowful even unto death. And the Gospel says: ”And he began,” it says, ”to be sorrowful and troubled. Our Lord too, then, drank from the torrent of this world the turbid waters, the sorrowful waters, the waters that have no gladness. He took the cup, and filled it from the torrent of the world; and because the waters were turbid, he says: ”Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. He drank, then, from the torrent of this world: but he did not drink as though in his own home, but in the way, hastening to go elsewhere. He shall drink from the torrent in the way. For this reason he drank from the torrent, because he was in the way. He shall drink from the torrent. If the Lord drank from the torrent of this world, how much more the saints? Do you wish to know that the saints always drink from the torrent? He says also in another place:

”Our soul has passed through the torrent. He shall drink from the torrent in the way. We have spoken about the torrent; let us speak also about the testimony, ”Our soul has passed through the torrent. Do you wish to know of yet another torrent? Elijah the holy prophet, when Jezebel was persecuting him, when he received food, and passing on for forty days went into the wilderness: ”He was,” it says, ”in the desert, and drank from the torrent of Chobar. But hearing of the torrent of this world, do not despair: frequently this torrent fails. It seems indeed to be swelling, it seems to have many waters: but it quickly fails, if you endure. As for Elijah, he did indeed drink water in the desert, at that time when he was in sorrow, when he was in distress... He had left Judea: see how great his fear had been: he had

left Judea, and had gone on to Mount Sinai. For Jezebel was persecuting him, and therefore he had drunk from the torrent of Chobar. But because he persevered to the end, therefore the water of the torrent failed. And it was said to him by the Lord, when the water of the torrent had failed: ”Go,” it says, ”to the widow in Sarepta of the Sidonians,” and the rest. Behold, Elijah too drank from the torrent. But the Lord and Savior himself also drank the cup from the torrent of Cedron. For thus the Scripture reports, when they came and seized him.

”They came,” it says, ”and seized him at the torrent,” and the rest. You see how lowly is the place of the torrent, how rugged. ”Cedron” in the Hebrew tongue is interpreted ”darkness. You see, then, that the torrents of this world are in darkness. The Lord, therefore, is handed over: he is not handed over up above on the Mount of Olives, he is not handed over in the temple: but he is handed over at the torrent, and the torrent of darkness, that is, Cedron. For all who hate the light love the darkness. He shall drink from the torrent in the way. Because, therefore, the Lord drank from the torrent and tasted death, therefore the Father exalted him, and gave him a name which is above every name. Next it is now said, He shall drink from the torrent in the way; and because he drank from the torrent in the way, therefore he lifted up his head. And what does he say? ”When I have been lifted up, I will draw all things to myself. He is lifted up, and he lifted us up. His head has been exalted: as for the rest, the heads of the dragon have been crushed, and shattered in the sea. Therefore he lifted up his head. He did not say, ”Therefore his head has been exalted,” that is, exalted by another: but the one who had humbled himself, he himself exalted. For he himself says in the Gospel:

”I have power to lay down my soul, and I have power to take it up again. Therefore he lifted up his head. He exalted himself, who is the head of all. Or else, when it says ”he lifted up his head,” he did not exalt himself. Therefore he lifted up his head: for he was always on high. But when it says ”he lifted up his head,” he exalted our head, we who were lying down below on the earth; he exalted our head, we who, bent over, could not look up to heaven, but to the earth. Do you wish to know that he himself lifted up the head? That woman too, whom the devil had bound, he himself set free, and lifted up her head, she who was always bent over: and she adored him. To whom is glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Homily 37, on Psalm 110

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Confess to you, O Lord, with my whole heart. If David were not simple and had no guile, he would not have said: I will confess to you, O Lord, with my whole heart. Not with the lips only, but with the whole heart. In the council of the upright, and in the great congregation, are the works of the Lord. He says ”of the upright,” meaning those who before were sinners, but now are righteous. For is it not a thing to marvel at, when we see that the elephant and the camel, and likewise the fly and the gnat, have the same power of movement, the same breath of life, and the same members? He has given food to those who fear him. In famine he fed Elijah; in the desert he rained down manna for the people of the Jews: and that was fulfilled which is said, He has given food to those who fear him. This is according to the letter. But he gave as food the bread that came down from heaven: and if we are worthy of it, we are fed upon it. For how many martyrs were consumed by hunger, and are now with the Lord?

Holy and terrible is his name. Holy to the holy, terrible to sinners. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Those who do not fear the Lord have no wisdom in them: or those who have no wisdom have no fear. His praise endures unto the age of the age. Since in the title ”alleluia” was written beforehand, rightly does the psalm end in praise: for indeed ”alleluia” is interpreted, Praise the Lord.

Homily 38, on Psalm 111

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Blessed is the man who fears the Lord. I have often said that everything interpreted in the person of the righteous man refers to Christ. For if the saints are a type and figure of the Savior, who alone is truly holy — for example, Isaac is a type of the Lord the Savior, and Joseph, David, Solomon, and the rest of the saints — then this blessed man too, who is now being described, does indeed refer to a righteous man, and is truly spoken of a righteous man; but this righteous man is a type of the truly Righteous One. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord. For now we have divided up the psalm: let us now speak about the righteous man. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord. The one hundred and eleventh psalm is an alphabetical one. And indeed the one hundred and tenth is itself also arranged under the alphabet. The first little verse is written from ALEPH, Blessed is the man who fears the Lord. The second from BETH, In his commandments he shall greatly delight. The third GIMEL, His seed shall be mighty upon the earth, and so on all the way to the twenty-second letter, thau. Let us therefore, aided by your prayers, expound the individual verses.

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord. It is the beginning of the psalm: it does not yet say, Blessed is the man who loves the Lord. For to fear belongs to men who are beginning, but to love belongs to the perfect: since ’perfect love casts out fear.’ Therefore he speaks of the beginning, that is, of a holy man who is just starting out. Let us then look at the order of the psalm. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord. He who fears the Lord, what does he do? Does he hear the words of God? Is he learned in the law? This is not what he says. What does he say? In his commandments he shall greatly delight. He who fears the Lord, who is blessed, gladly performs His commandments. In his commandments he shall greatly delight. See what he says. He did not say, he performs his commandments; for many act out of fear, and have no reward. For he who fears hell, and for that reason does not commit fornication, does not have as great a reward as the one who acts out of love for God. In his commandments he shall will, that is, he wills, he desires to perform His commandments. Just as someone, if he is in the heat, thirsts: so

does he desire the commandments of the Lord. In the commandments of the Lord he shall greatly will. An intensification (auxesis): he does not merely perform His commandments, but wills them: and he wills them not in passing, but exceedingly.

The third verse is: His seed shall be mighty upon the earth. Because I have performed the commandments of God with my will, I am worthy to become a father of saints. Let us say it briefly, lest the discourse be drawn out too long. The generation of the upright shall be blessed. May the Lord grant that you also who hear me may be a generation of the upright. Glory and riches are in his house. Glory and riches. Do we suppose that the glory and riches of the world are meant? Is it for this that a man does the will of God and His commandments, in order to obtain the riches of this world? And surely he does not perform the commandments of God unless he has despised the riches of the world. Glory and riches are in his house. The glory of believers, as the apostle says: 'Are you not my glory?' And riches. The riches of which the same apostle speaks, 'that you have been made rich in all knowledge.' And his righteousness endures unto the age of the age. He did not say, righteousness endures unto the age, and has an end: but, it endures unto the age of the age.

Unto the upright of heart a light has risen in the darkness. We were once in darkness, we were sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death: but a light has arisen for us, according to Isaiah. Merciful and compassionate and righteous. See the two things he says, Merciful and righteous. If you are a sinner, do not despair of pardon: He is merciful. But if you are proud, and put your confidence in the clemency of God, do not be negligent: He is also righteous. Merciful and compassionate and righteous. See what the prudence of the psalmist has done: righteousness is single, mercy is double. Merciful and compassionate and righteous.

Delightful is the man who shows mercy and lends. Because the Lord is merciful and compassionate, let the righteous man too imitate his Lord: let him also be merciful. Delightful is the man who shows mercy and lends. Does someone suppose that he is speaking about gold and about silver and about money? The righteous have so far been without anything to lend to others that they themselves received their food from others. So then, if I have nothing to give, am I no longer righteous? If I do not give alms, shall I not be counted in the number of the righteous? How many of the saints gave alms, yet fell from their holiness. The perfect gave no alms: they had nothing from which to give. Not to give alms is the crime of one who possesses: but as for the one who has nothing from which to give alms, he is free. However much he was willing to give, that much he gave, because he gave by his intention. Nevertheless the saints too have something from which to give alms. Peter also says: 'Silver and gold I have; but what I have, this I give to you, in the name of the Lord Jesus rise up and walk.' Which is greater, to give money, or to make a crippled man whole? Delightful is the man who shows mercy and lends. What are

these alms? What is this that the righteous man lends? The second verse shows it. He shall order his words in judgment.

He did not say, he shall order his gold and his silver or his money in judgment: but, he shall order his words in judgment. This is mercy, if a holy man teaches others who are not holy. He shall order his words in judgment. We have understood, then, what are the riches that are lent. But this that he says, he shall order his words in judgment, is that which is said in the Gospel, that we should not cast our pearls before swine: that is, that he may know what to bestow on each one, that each may know what he is able to receive, and what he is not able. Whence the holy man says: 'In my heart I have hidden your sayings, that I may not sin against you.' I did not give them to whomever I pleased: I did not send your holy thing to dogs, nor did I give pearls to swine. Great, therefore, is the danger for teachers, in being able to pour out the words of the Lord.

There are many things that might be said about the psalm. But since we are shut out by the hour, let us bless the almighty Lord: and let him who has such riches bestow them on those who have them not, while he who has them not let him gladly receive. And may the Lord grant to me also, that I too may have these riches: that I may both give to those who have them not, and heap up riches for those who have them: so that I may have this blessedness both in speaking and in hearing. 'For blessed is he who speaks into the ears of one who hears.' For what does it profit me to speak, if another does not take up my words? For what does it profit me to send wine, if what is sent is immediately poured out? You see that in the Gospel that water is put into the water-jar, and is turned into wine, and is kept so that it may not perish. Let us therefore diligently hear the words of God: to whom be glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Homily 39, on Psalm 114

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). I have loved, because the Lord will hear the voice of my prayer. He did not say, I shall love: but, I have loved. He did not promise that he would do it, but he testifies that he has done it. I have loved. Why have I loved? Because the Lord will hear the voice of my prayer. ”I have loved” belongs to time that is past; but in ”will hear” it belongs to the future. For he did not say, I have loved because the Lord has heard me; but, I have loved because the Lord will hear me. Because he has inclined his ear to me. Since we are small and lowly, and cannot stretch ourselves up and lift ourselves high, for that reason the Lord inclines his ear and deigns to hear us. And so, since we are human beings and cannot become gods, God became man and inclined himself, according to that which is written: ”He inclined the heavens, and came down.”

And in my days I will call upon him. Here the question is asked: how is it that he calls upon him in the days, and does not call upon him in the nights? And how does he say in another place, ”At midnight I rose to give praise to you,” since the saints are more accustomed to pray in the nights? And in another psalm it is said: ”In the nights lift up your hands to the holy places, and bless the Lord.” How then does he say, And in my days I will call upon him? He did not say, I called; but, I will call, in the future. For while we are in this world, we call upon him in the night; in the world to come we call upon the Lord in the day. Therefore he said, in my days: for to sinners it is night, but to me it is day.

The sorrows of death surrounded me. It seems to me that the sorrows of death are foul thoughts. When the soul is thinking, and desires to sin, when it is in travail with sins, it is near to death. The perils of hell found me. O how unhappy and wretched and pitiable we are, because sin is always seeking us! But if sins are always seeking us, let us make haste that they may not find us. Now this is the difference between the sorrows of death and the perils of hell: the sorrows of death are evil thoughts, the perils of hell are evil deeds. That I may put it thus:

one thing is in contemplation, another in action, that is, in practice. For there is the sorrow and the travail, but here is the peril that is near to death.

I found tribulation and sorrow. He says a strange thing. He does not say, I found rest: he does not say, I found abundance. Now if he had said, tribulation found me, sorrow found me, there would be no question. But now what does he say? I found tribulation and sorrow. As one seeking, so he found: for nothing is found except what is sought. The holy man does not seek rest, but tribulation: for he knows that ”tribulation works patience, and patience trial, and trial hope, and hope does not confound.” Something of the same kind is said also in Jeremiah: ”Tribulation,” he says, ”and misery I called upon.” ”Because,” he says, ”at your bitter word I shall laugh”: that is, in this world I want nothing else but tribulation, that in the world to come I may have rest and happiness. And therefore, he says, I now endure bitterness, that afterward I may enjoy sweeter things. And the people of the Lord, going out from Egypt, came to Marah, which is interpreted ”bitter,” and from Marah to Sinai, which is interpreted ”temptation.” And again Jeremiah: ”I sat alone, because I was filled with bitterness.”

O Lord, deliver my soul. Neither the Greek nor the Latin can express the peculiar force of the Hebrew. For ”O” the Hebrew has ANNA. Now anna is interpreted ”I beg” and ”I entreat.” And what he says is this: I entreat you, Lord, deliver my soul. For it is not the feeling of one wondering, but of one entreating: for he is set in enormous peril. The Lord is merciful and just, and our God has mercy. Prick up your ears, sinner: the Lord is merciful. But do not be careless: for there follows, and just. If you are a great sinner, listen, the Lord is merciful: if you are careless, listen, he is also just. But it seems to be as it were equal, the Lord is merciful and just: for instance, he is merciful in ten parts, and just in ten parts, and I speak thus for the sake of the simpler folk. Let someone say: If my sins are weighed, I cannot have as many good things as I have evil ones: but now it is said that he is merciful and just, merciful toward sinners, just toward the good: my sins begin to weigh me down, and he conquers in his mercy. Therefore he put ”just” once, and ”merciful” a second time. Merciful. He could also have spoken of the past. And our God, he says, has mercy: that he may always show him to be merciful.

The Lord keeps the little ones. If anyone is great, and exalts himself, and is proud, this man the Lord does not keep; if anyone thinks himself great, on this man the Lord has no mercy: but if anyone humbles himself, on this man the Lord has mercy, and the Lord keeps him. Since he says: ”Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me.” And again: I was humbled, and he saved me. We understand ”I was humbled, and he saved me” in two ways: either I sinned, and he saved me; or, when I was proud, he humbled me and saved me.

Turn, my soul, into your rest. When it is said, Turn into your rest, then he had a rest before, which he lost. For no one turns, except him who goes back to where he

was before. For God created us good, and left us to our own free will, and placed us all with Adam in paradise. But because by our own free will we fell from that blessedness, and came into the valley of tears; for that reason the just man exhorts his soul, to turn back there whence it came down. Turn, my soul, into your rest. For this place is a place of tribulation, it is the land of warriors. This place is a place of tears, where it is not permitted to walk in safety. For wherever anyone may be, there is peril: if in the desert, there are scorpions: if in the cities, the eye of the harlot is the destruction of a man: if on the sea, there are robbers and pirates. All these things I speak mystically. For it is not now a peril that a holy man should be killed by robbers: since indeed the martyrs conquered by their own blood. Turn, my soul, into your rest: because the Lord has done good to you. For the fact, he says, that you turn, O soul, into paradise, is not because you are worthy, but it belongs to the mercy of the Lord. That you went out of paradise was brought about by your own fault: but that you return, was of the mercy of the Lord. Let us too say to our soul: Turn into your rest. Our rest is Christ our God. If ever we are in straits, and a thought begins to lead us captive into sin, let us say: Turn, our soul, into your rest.

Because he has rescued my soul from death. He has not yet returned into paradise, and already he says that he has returned into safety. He said, Turn, my soul, into your rest; and as though secure he says, Because he has rescued my soul from death. When did he rescue my soul from death? My God suffered for me, my God was crucified for me, and I say: ”O death, where is your victory? O hell, where is your sting?” My eyes from tears. I wept, that I might laugh: I mourned, that I might rejoice forever. He who does not weep in the present, will weep in the world to come. For ”blessed are those who mourn, for they themselves shall be comforted.” But on the contrary we say: ”Woe to you who laugh, for you shall mourn.” My feet from falling. Because my feet did not stand upon the rock, therefore ”my feet were almost moved, my steps were almost overthrown.” My feet have been freed from falling. Why? Because my soul has been turned into its rest.

I will please in the sight of the Lord in the land of the living. I seem, he says, to men to be just, though I have no good works: I seem to men to be holy, though I have no good words. Now this is what David says, this is what the saints say, this is what the apostles speak: for a sinner does not say this. What does the just man say? Though I have no good words and works, yet I seem holy, and am praised by men: but I know my own conscience, I know with what sort of thoughts my heart is tossed, I know how great the lusts are that come upon me, and ”I see another law fighting against my mind and leading me captive in the law of sin. Therefore I say: ”Wretched man that I am, who will free me from the body of this death? And therefore I say: ”From my hidden faults cleanse me, and from those of others spare your servant. From those of others. It is not mine, that which I bring to birth: I do not want to think evil things, and I think them: I do not want to think evil, and as

though unwilling and captive I am dragged into an evil thought. But since it is not in my power either to think or not to think the things that are evil, therefore I say: These things indeed that come into my heart are another's:

but since a kind of necessity is imposed upon me, therefore I say, From my hidden faults cleanse me. The sins indeed are another's: but because I take them up, therefore I say, In the sins of others spare me your servant. Now why have I said this? Because the prophet said, I will please the Lord. He did not say, I please; but, I will please: for here, in what I do, I cannot be perfectly just. Therefore the apostle also says: "In part we know and in part we prophesy," and "now we see through a mirror in an enigma. Therefore we have now used a long discourse: because in the present world no one can be perfectly just, neither David, nor the apostles, nor any of the saints. "For no one is clean from sin, not even if his life be of one day. Since indeed the apostles and the saints did not dare to say, we are holy; nor did they dare to say, I please, but I will please. He who has promised for the future confesses concerning the past that he has not done it. I will please the Lord. Where will I please? In the land of the living. For this is the land of the dead: the land of the living is another. Since David too was in this land, and truly in the land of promise;

when he says, I will please in the land of the living, he confesses that this land is not of the living, but of the dead. Do you wish to know what that land of the living is? The Lord says in the Gospel, "The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," and they were dead. And what follows? "God," he says, "is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Therefore the just man too, what does he say? I will please the Lord in the land of the living: in the land of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. That is, when I am truly in the bosom of Abraham, then I will please the Lord.

Homily 40, on Psalm 115

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). I believed, therefore have I spoken. In the Hebrew the one hundred and fourteenth psalm and the one hundred and fifteenth are one psalm. So then, what did he say? I believed, therefore have I spoken. What did you believe? What did you speak? The earlier psalm ended thus: ”I shall please before the Lord in the land of the living.” So the prophet says: I believed, therefore have I spoken. What did I believe? That I shall please before the Lord in the land of the living. This I believed, and I spoke. But what did I speak? But I was humbled exceedingly. O the great understanding of the divine utterance! I believed, he says, that I shall please the Lord, that I shall be an angel, that I shall be in the heavens: and yet I was not proud, I was not lifted up, but I was humbled exceedingly. That I shall be in the land of the living, that belongs to the Lord’s mercy. But I have come to know my own self, that I am earth and ashes: therefore I say, But I was humbled exceedingly. And what is earth and ashes?

But I said in my ecstasy: Every man is a liar. In the Hebrew it stands otherwise: ”I said in my ecstasy: Every man is a lie,” which is said ZECAM. I shall please the Lord in the land of the living: but I know my own self, that according to the condition of the body I am nothing: for there is no truth in our substance, but it is a shadow and as it were a lie. I speak of the bodily substance, not of the soul. And what he says is this. I shall please the Lord in the land of the living: but when I ponder human life, and consider its various errors, I do not find truth in this world. Since indeed ”we know in part, and we prophesy in part. Therefore I say: Everything that we see, everything that we understand, is a lie. In what way, then, is it a lie? He called it here a lie, as it were a shadow, as it were an image; just as it is said also in another place: ”Yet man passes away in an image. By the same understanding it is now also said, Every man is a lie: that is, every man is a shadow. But this we say according to the Hebrew truth. But let us speak also according to the Seventy translators. For someone may say: What is it to me, what does the Hebrew have? I follow the Church. I said in my ecstasy: Every man is a liar.

Does David speak the truth, or does he lie? If it is true, Every man is a liar, and this that he says, Every man is a liar, is true, then he too lies: for he too is a man. But if he too lies, then this that he said, Every man is a liar, is not true. However you turn it, it comes out to the contrary. And since he too is a man, then he too lies: or if he lies that every man is a liar, then he lies in another manner. You see, then, that these are the syllogisms of the philosophers. Indeed, according to this proposition the syllogism of Aristotle is woven. In fact you say — speak to another — : If you lie, and you speak the truth that you lie: then you lie. See how the proposition turns to the contrary. For what does he say? O you who speak with me, if you lie, and you speak the truth about this very thing, that you lie: then you lie, and in the same utterance it comes about that he both speaks the truth and lies. Therefore it has been read in the Apostle: ”See that no one deceive you through philosophy and the vain deceit of men, according to the elements of the world. For the philosophers found out by their deceit and their own art how in the same utterance a person may both speak the truth and lie.

But let us say that David spoke the truth, that every man is a liar. As long as we are men, we lie: but when we have become gods, we cease to lie. ”For where there are jealousies and contentions among you, are you not men, and do you not walk according to man? ”I said: you are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High. But you shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. If, then, anyone is holy, he is made a god; and when he has become a god, he ceases to be a man, and now he does not lie. For what does the Apostle also say? ”But let every man be a liar, but God be truthful.”

Let us interpret it also in another way. I believed, therefore have I spoken. When a master teaches a disciple, unless he himself has first believed what he teaches, he cannot teach another. So he says that first he believed, and thus teaches another. But I was humbled exceedingly. But when I had obtained the grace of God, I was not lifted up into pride, knowledge did not puff me up: but what did I do? I was humbled exceedingly. Yet I who taught by word, was able to teach also by humility. I said in my ecstasy, Every man is a liar. I was teaching, he says, my disciple: and considering the heavenly contemplation, and pondering more divine things, I understood that everything that man knows is lies. For what truth can there be in this world, when our life upon the earth is a shadow? If, then, he who teaches a disciple confesses that every man is a liar: how much more ought the disciple not to exalt himself, and to reckon himself to be something?

What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that he has rendered to me? Since I have said, I shall please the Lord in the land of the living, and this very thing I believed, therefore have I spoken, and I was humbled exceedingly, and I said, Every man is a lie, every man is a shadow, every man is an image: for such great benefits, that I shall please the Lord in the land of the living, what have I worthy to

render? I am earth, I am ashes: he promised me that I shall please him in the land of the living: he made me a master: I believed, therefore have I spoken. What have I worthy, that I may render to him for such great benefits? Whatever I shall give him is his own, and I give it back to him rather than bestow it. I have nothing else that I may render to him, unless I pour out my blood for him, unless I stand forth a martyr for him. This is the only worthy recompense, to render blood for blood, so that we who have been freed by the Savior may gladly pour out our blood for the Savior.

I will take the cup of salvation, and I will call upon the name of the Lord. In the Hebrew it stands thus: ”I will take the cup of Jesus.” This very thing the angel also interprets: ”And you shall call his name Jesus, for he himself will save his people.” I will take, then, the cup of Jesus. What is this cup of Jesus? ”Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me,” and ”Are you able,” he says, ”to drink my cup?” And immediately there follows: ”My cup indeed you shall drink.” But why did I say this? So that we may understand the cup to be the sufferings of martyrdom. A great thing is martyrdom. How is it a great thing? Because he renders to the Lord what he received from the Lord. Christ suffered for him, and he suffers for his name. Since we have said that the martyr has nothing else to render to the Lord, the Lord too reckons it to him as an equal, since he sees that his servant has nothing else to render to him. For what is comparable? God suffered for men, the Lord for the servant, the just for the sinner: what equality is there? But since the servant has nothing else to render to the Lord, God, as one merciful, accepts martyrdom as an equal. It is as if some rich man had fed a certain poor man, and it should come about that the same rich man came with his household, and came by chance into the house of the poor man, and the poor man had nothing to set before him and his household and his horses, but only said to him, Enter into the house of your client, and showed his goodwill, since the poor man has nothing else to give and to do more: like that widow who contributed two mites.

I will take the cup of salvation, or of Jesus. And this very martyrdom, he says, is not of my own strength, but of the grace of God: therefore I cannot drink it, unless I have called upon the name of the Lord. Jesus conquers in his martyr; he himself is crowned in his martyr. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. Let the Jews now answer, how they say that every human body is unclean. Indeed in the Law, among the Jews, if anyone should die, whether a prophet, or a saint of whatever kind, if anyone should touch him, even if a priest, he is unclean until evening. This is written according to the letter in the Law. Let us say to them: If the body of a dead man is unclean, how is it now said, Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints? If the body of a dying saint is precious, how is it unclean? Therefore this is said here of the evangelist, this is proclaimed of the martyr.

O Lord, for I am your servant. And I have already said in the one hundred and fourteenth psalm, where it has ”O Lord, deliver my soul,” that in the Hebrew it has ANNA, which is translated I ask or I beseech. And here in the Hebrew it stands thus: ”I ask, O Lord, for I am your servant.” I am your servant. It seems to be a thing of humility, what is said. It is a thing of great dignity and merit, to be the servant of the Lord, and not the servant of sin. Because I do not have, he says, men as masters, because I do not have sin as master: for sin does not reign in my mortal body: therefore I am your servant. A great merit. Indeed it is said of Moses: ”But not so my servant Moses.” And Abraham and Isaac and Jacob are called servants of the Lord. Therefore the Apostle also begins thus: ”Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ.”

You have broken my bonds: to you I will sacrifice a victim of praise. Truly it is of great happiness so to go to the Lord that one has no defiled conscience. Whoever, being holy, dies his own death, although he be holy who has performed works of mercy, wrought signs, cast out demons, does not go to the Lord secure: his conscience shudders when he sees the Lord. But the martyr, even if he has sinned after baptism, yet washed by a second baptism, the baptism of martyrdom, goes secure to the Lord. You have broken my bonds. ”For each one is bound fast by the chains of his own sins”: but in my martyrdom you have broken the bonds of my sins, and out of the bonds you have plaited for me a crown of victory. ”For where sin abounded, grace superabounded.” To you I will sacrifice a victim of praise. After martyrdom, where does he sacrifice? In the land of the living. I will sacrifice, he says, to you a sacrifice. What kind of sacrifice? Surely not a goat, or a calf? Those were Jewish things, and they have passed away. I will sacrifice to you a victim of praise. This is the praise of the martyrs. For just as the martyrs praise the Lord purely in the land of the living, so too the monks, who day and night sing psalms to the Lord, ought to have the same purity as the martyrs: since indeed they too are martyrs. For what the angels do in the heavens, this the monks do on earth.

I will pay my vows to the Lord in the sight of all his people. What are the prayers of the martyrs? What are the prayers of the saints? ”I will hold you,” he says, ”and I will not let you go.” I will adore, he says, the Lord, whom, reading in the Gospel, I found crucified, and in the heavens I see reigning with the angels. In the sight of all his people. Read Daniel.

Homily 41, on Psalm 119

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Let us come to the psalm that was read after the hundred and eighteenth psalm. The hundred and eighteenth psalm, as we have often said, is a lettered one — that is, it is an alphabetic psalm: for it begins from aleph all the way to the last Hebrew letter, which in Hebrew is called THAU, and each set of verses begins with a single letter. There are twenty-two Hebrew letters, and eight verses begin with each single letter. For example, eight verses begin with the letter called ALEPH. Then again, when those are finished, another eight verses begin with the second letter, called BETH. And in the third place, when those are finished, another eight verses begin with the letter called GIMEL. So then the hundred and eighteenth psalm is an alphabetic psalm. If we want to read a letter, we cannot read it unless we first know our letters: so in the same way we cannot recognize Scripture unless we first know the alphabet. So then the hundred and eighteenth psalm is an alphabetic one, a moral one, and it instructs our life. And because there is not now time to speak about the whole psalm, let us speak now about the first of the psalms of ascents, which begins thus: In my tribulation I cried to the Lord, and he heard me.

Now they are called psalms of ascents, as we have often said, because by certain steps we climb up to greater things. There is not now time to discuss all the steps, and to say how through the individual psalms the steps are made, and how we come to the heights. Meanwhile let us now speak about the first of the ascents, leaving aside the mystery of why there are fifteen steps: for to say the same things often is a weariness to the hearers. Hence the apostle too [is read] to have spent fifteen days with Peter in Jerusalem, so that he might join together both Testaments, both the number seven and the number eight. There are many things that might be said. In my tribulation I cried to the Lord, and he heard me. Whoever is still on the lowest step, let him look up to the highest, the fifteenth step. Whoever is on the fifteenth is already close to the temple. And this is that temple whose ruin we now see; for it offended its Lord. And what did the Lord say? ’Arise, let us go from here.’ And what does he say in another place? ’Your house shall be left to you

desolate.' The Lord went out, the temple fell down. This temple, then, had fifteen steps round about it. We see some signs of it: count them, and you will see that it is as we say. So then the Levites and the priests, each one according to his order, stood on the steps.

For example, the one who was high priest stood on the first step, that is, on the fifteenth step above. On the second step stood the priests, and among the priests themselves there was a difference of rank. On the third step in turn stood the lesser ones. On the fourth in turn stood the Levites. And among the Levites there was much difference: whoever was last, he was on the very lowest step. Consider that this earthly temple is a figure of the heavenly temple. 'For star differs from star in brightness: so also is the resurrection of the dead.' Happy the one who deserves to be on the fifteenth step in the heavenly Jerusalem and in the temple. Yet because that is a great thing, and I think it belongs to the apostles and the holy martyrs, let us pray that we may deserve to be at least on the last step of the temple of the Lord. They stand indeed on different steps, but they sing one psalm in praise of the Lord. The places are different, but the praise of the Lord is one. This which we have said about the heavenly Jerusalem, I think, is meanwhile practiced daily by us who are established in this present age. One of us is on the first step: let him not despair of the second. He who is on the second step, let him not despair of the third. Happy the martyrs, many of whom deserved to ascend from the very lowest step to the first step.

He who lives in this present age cannot at once climb from the first to the highest. So then we ought not to be content with the first step; we ought always to strive toward greater things. Neither let him who is on the lowest despair of the first; nor ought he who is on the first to be secure: for he can fall to the very last. I think this is what Jacob's ladder also signifies, when he fled Esau his brother. 'And he came,' it says, 'to Bethel, and slept there, and put a stone at his head.' See our ascetic; he was fleeing a most cruel man, he was fleeing his brother, and he found help in a stone. That stone is Christ; this stone is a help to those who suffer persecution: but to the unbelieving Jews a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. 'And Jacob saw there,' it says, 'a ladder set up from the earth all the way to heaven; and in heaven,' it says, 'the Lord leaning upon it (epestērigmenon autēi). And he saw,' it says, 'angels ascending and descending.' See what he says. He saw angels climbing up; he saw Paul climbing up. He saw angels descending: Judas the traitor was falling down. He saw angels ascending: holy men going from earth to heaven. He saw angels descending: the devil and the demons and his army cast down headlong from heaven. Great is the difficulty of climbing from earth to the heavenly places.

We fall down more easily than we climb up. We fall down easily: in ascending there is great toil, there is great sweat. If I am on the first step, how much remains for

me all the way to heaven? If I am on the second, if on the third, if on the fourth, if on the tenth, what does it profit me unless I reach the top? Suppose that ladder of mine has fifteen steps: I have come all the way to the fourteenth: unless I hold the fifteenth, what does it profit me that I have come to the fourteenth? If I come to the fifteenth, and fall down, the greater the ascent, the greater the fall. And at the same time consider the sacred meaning: that it is great toil and great sweat to climb from earth to heaven. Do you want to know what those steps are? What is the first step? I think the first step is fasting, for it is still near the earth: we withdraw from the earth, we climb up: yet we still think about earthly and bodily things. Someone may say: What does fasting profit me? I seek that my soul be pure before the Lord: how many do not fast, and yet are holy. I do not say this. If Paul the apostle, the vessel of election, chastised his body and brought it into subjection, lest, having preached to others, he himself should be found a castaway:

if he says 'But I see another law resisting the law of my mind and leading me into captivity,' and afterward says 'Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' — if he fears the snares of the body, are we secure? If he says 'When I am weak, then am I stronger' — weakness of the body is health of the soul. Why do I say all this? Because abstinence is the first step. Let us not at once suppose that, if we have fasted, we climb up to the kingdom of heaven: fastings do not lead us to the kingdom of heaven, but without fastings we do not climb up to the kingdom of heaven. By themselves they do not profit: together with other things they profit. Why have I said all this? Because it is as it were a foundation and a support (hypostērigma) for those ascending to greater things. But the second step is to renounce the world, to seek nothing of the world, to despise earthly things. Someone may say: And is doing this the second? I say, the second. It is nothing to let go of earthly things: to let go of the vices of the soul, that is a great thing. For if I have fasted, that is, if I am on the first step: if I have let go of my possessions, that is, if I am on the second step:

what does it profit me, if I am quarrelsome, if I am irascible, if I am a slanderer, if I am envious? It is nothing great to let go of earthly things: the vices are greater, which are to be let go. But someone may say: It is difficult, it is great, it is hard. And it is great for this very reason, because it is difficult. The athlete of Christ is not crowned unless he has striven lawfully. Let it cause despair to no one: the ascent is arduous, it is difficult, despair is born. Do not despair, O man: on the fifteenth step the Lord is above, he watches you, he gives help. If you are on the first step, and the distance (diastēma) between the first and the fifteenth seems great to you: do not look at the steps, but look to the Lord. And see what he says. He did not say, I saw the Lord standing on the fifteenth step: for we could not reach the Lord standing and upright. But see what he says: he saw him leaning upon the ladder. See what he says: from the fact that he was standing, he bent himself and

humbled himself, so that we might be able to ascend. The Lord is bent down, he humbled himself for your sake: ascend secure.

This man, then, who is now on the first step, is not in tribulation: for he has already withdrawn from tribulation, he has already set his foot on the first step. For he does not say, Now I am in tribulation, now I cry; but because he is on the first step, he reports what he suffered. And what does he say? In my tribulation I cried to the Lord, and he heard me. This little verse seems to have nothing within it, it is a small verse: but it has three meanings glued together in it equally. For what does he say? In my tribulation — behold, one thing: I cried: and after the crying, what? he heard me. In one verse first the tribulation, then the crying, then the being heard. He did not say, When I was secure, when I was glad, I cried: but, when I was in tribulation, I cried. 'You ask,' it says, 'and are not heard, because you ask carelessly.' In my tribulation I cried to the Lord, and he heard me. In what did he hear me? He made me stand on the first step. But in comparison with the fifteenth step, what is it to be on the first step? I have let go of earthly things, I have not yet climbed to the heights. Therefore I ought not to be secure: on the remaining steps I ought to beg for the help of God.

O Lord, deliver my soul from unjust lips and from a deceitful tongue. He says this about all heresies: he says it about the Jews, he says it about the Arians, he says it about the Manichees, he says it about the rest of the heresies. When the Arian says: The Father is greater, the Son lesser; what do we say? O Lord, deliver my soul from unjust lips and from a deceitful tongue. When the Manichee, and those like the Manichees, say: The Lord did not rise in the truth of a body, and — so that you may know it was not a true body — he entered with the doors shut: what do we say? O Lord, deliver my soul from unjust lips and from a deceitful tongue. The wounds of the tongue are greater than those of the sword. The sword kills the body, it does not kill the soul: the tongue kills the soul. The tongue is an evil thing, a great evil: 'it is indeed a small member, but it boasts great things.' How many evils the tongue has, read the epistle of the holy James. The tongue has nothing in the middle: either a great evil, or a great good. A great good, it confesses Christ to be God; a great evil, it denies Christ to be God. So then let no one suppose and say, Meanwhile I have not sinned in deed: if I have sinned, I have sinned with the tongue. What is a greater sin than blasphemy against God?

and yet it is the tongue that sins. Whence did the devil fall? because he committed theft? because he committed murder? because he committed adultery? These indeed are evils: but the devil did not fall on account of these, but he fell on account of his tongue. For what did he say? 'I will ascend into heaven, above the stars of heaven I will set my throne, and I will be like the Most High.' So then let not monks suppose that they ought to be secure, and say, Meanwhile we do not commit great crimes in the monastery: I do not commit adultery, I do not commit theft, I do not

commit murder, I do not commit parricide, and the rest of the great vices. In the tongue too there are great vices. It is a great crime, when I slander my brother; with my tongue I kill my brother. 'For he who hates his brother is a murderer.' See what Solomon says: 'In the hand of the tongue are death and life.' See what he says, in the hand of the tongue. Do you see how great an evil the tongue is? and it has a hand too. For what does he say? In the hand of the tongue. It is a great vice to slander the brethren, to be unable to keep silent, to go round the cells, to slander others. I am a sinner, that man is a sinner: what is that to you? Consider yourself, lest you fall. Why do you exult in another's ruin?

if I fall, will you therefore stand? Although it be my ruin, a brother's ruin ought to be your fear, not your exultation. He has fallen: are you glad, or are you sad? answer me. A brother has fallen: either you are glad, or you are sad. If you are glad, is anyone glad at another's ruin? but if you are sad, why do you go about? why do you tell others? Let God see your sadness, and let the brother himself feel it, let not the ears of the brethren hear it. O Lord, deliver my soul from unjust lips and from a deceitful tongue.

What shall be given to you, or what shall be added to you, to a deceitful tongue? The Holy Spirit answers the prophet, who says, O Lord, deliver my soul from unjust lips and from a deceitful tongue: What shall be given to you, or what shall be added to you, to a deceitful tongue? He answers him and says: You who say, O Lord, deliver my soul from unjust lips and from a deceitful tongue, what do you want given to you? And after it has been given to you, what do you want in turn added to you to a deceitful tongue? See what he says. He did not say, against a deceitful tongue: but, to a deceitful tongue. If he had said, against a deceitful tongue, he would have seemed to speak about an adversary. See what the sacred meaning is: the prophet — or rather the holy man established on the first step — I speak rather simply for the sake of the simpler ones — what does he say? O Lord, deliver my soul from unjust lips and from a deceitful tongue: for example, from my adversary who slanders me. But the Lord answers something else, and what does he say? He did not say, what shall be given to you or what shall be added to you against a deceitful tongue? that is, he did not say, what do you desire to be done against your adversary? But what did he say?

What shall be given to you, or what shall be added to you, to a deceitful tongue? He did not say, against the tongue: but, to the tongue. See what he says, to a deceitful tongue: to your own tongue, not your adversary's. For if your adversary slanders you, it does no harm: you kill yourself, if you slander others. For example, if a brother slanders me, what harm has it done me? if he says I am a murderer, if he says I am an adulterer, if a criminal, if a liar, what harm has it done me? For it is one of two things: either he speaks the truth, or he lies. If he speaks the truth, that which he said does not harm me; but the fact that I truly did it. But if he lies, his lie

does not harm me, but it kills the soul of the one speaking. We are unhappy, we are wretched. When we have someone as an enemy, while we suppose we are acting against him, we are acting against ourselves. We slander him, we go about here and there, we tell everyone about him: do we suppose we harm him? We do not harm him, but we kill our own souls, because we lie. 'For the mouth that lies kills the soul.' What shall be given to you, or what shall be added to you, to a deceitful tongue? Like a good physician, who says: For this infirmity, for this wound, what do you want laid upon you?

what plaster do you want laid upon you? Just as if someone were to say to some wounded man: What shall be given to you, or what shall be added to you, for the wound that pains you? The Lord asks, not because he is ignorant, but so that this man who was asking may know how he ought to ask.

The sharp arrows of the mighty one, with the coals that lay waste. The arrows of the mighty one. This man now answers the Lord as to what he asks. Because the Lord had said, What shall be given to you, or what shall be added to you? now this man says what he asks. O Lord, this I ask: the sharp arrows of the mighty one, with the coals that lay waste. See what he says. The poison of my tongue and my slander nothing can cast out, except your arrows, which make a desolation of my tongue. My tongue swells, it has poison within: unless it is pricked and struck by your arrows, the poison does not come out. We ought to give an example. If ever there is a wound in the body, and in the wound itself the flesh is already putrid, and there is a canker, and there is pus within: unless it is opened, the pus does not come out. And if the pus has come out, unless there is a cautery, the pus is born again. See then what he says. Because my tongue swells, and has pus, and has poison, first wound it with your arrows, so that the pus may be able to come out: then apply your coals and fire, so that whatever is evil may burn away, and make it a desert. See then what he says, The sharp arrows of the mighty one, with the coals that lay waste.

Would that this coal that lays waste were given to us. Would that we too might say: 'Was not our heart burning within us on the way, when he opened to us the Scriptures?' Isaiah says to Babylon: 'You have coals of fire, you shall sit upon them, these shall be for you a help.' And the apostles, before they received the Holy Spirit, still had in their tongue certain human swellings: therefore the Holy Spirit descended in the form of fire, and sat as it were as fire upon their tongues, so that whatever of pus they had, the Holy Spirit might boil away. Let us give another example too. Isaiah, when he had seen the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, what does he say? 'Woe is me, wretched that I am, for I am pricked with compunction, because I have unclean lips, and I sit in the midst of a people that has unclean lips.' See what he says, Woe is me, wretched, because I have unclean lips. And afterward what does he say? Because he had unclean lips, therefore one

of the seraphim is sent, and takes a coal of fire from the altar, and touches his lips and his tongue, and purges it. And what does he say? 'Behold, this has touched your lips, and has cleansed your tongue.' And at once what does he say? 'Whom shall I send to this people, and who shall go?' O the mysteries of the Scriptures!

As long as he had a deceitful tongue and unclean lips, it is not said to him, Whom shall I send, and who shall go? His lips are cleansed, and at once he is sent to speak. So then he who has unclean lips cannot prophesy, cannot be sent into the service of God. With the coals that lay waste. Would that this desolation too be granted to us, so that it may take away whatever is evil from our tongue: so that where there are thorns, where there are briars, where there are nettles, the fire of the Lord may be sent, and burn up everything, and there may come to be the desert of Christ.

Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged. This the holy man says, who does not desire the body, who does not seek the earth, who longs for heaven. Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged. When we are sick, when we are feverish, when we suspect we are dying, when we throw about our arms, when we are afraid, when we beg for a respite, we cannot say this little verse. This man was healthy, he was not sick, and what does he say? Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged. For as long as we are in the tabernacle of this body, we are pilgrims away from the Lord. Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged. My sojourning: he did not say, my dwelling. My sojourning: for in the present age we do not have a dwelling, but a pilgrimage. Hence the apostle too says: 'As strangers and pilgrims.' 'I am a stranger and a pilgrim.' Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged. What he says is this. Unhappy am I, as long as I am in this body. Which of us can say this? If we are eighty years old, we fear to die; if we are a hundred and are sick, we still beg for a respite and a span of time. Why do we do all this? because the consciousness of our sins gnaws at us. For we know that if we depart from the body, we do not go to Christ, but to gehenna.

What does the apostle say? 'I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ.' Give me the security that after death I shall be with Christ, and even now I desire to die. So then this man, because he is holy, therefore says: Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged. I have dwelt with the inhabitants of Kedar. Kedar in our language is interpreted as darkness. See then what he says. In what kind of place are we? in what kind of world are we? I have dwelt with the inhabitants of Kedar. Long have I been in darkness, long have I lived in darkness, long have I been in the body of this death. My soul has long been a sojourner. See what the holy man says. Even if I have lived ten years, my soul has long been a sojourner. For what happiness is it, in comparison with the heavenly things, to be among earthly ones? There are many things that might be said, but the sermon already hastens to its end.

With those who hated peace I was peaceable; when I spoke to them, they attacked me without cause. Unhappy we, we cannot restrain our tongue, we cannot help slandering the brethren. If someone offends us, we as it were present a peaceful face, but for the rest the heart has poison. We are called monks, and although we are not such as we ought to be, yet we are so called. At the third hour we pray, at the sixth hour we pray, at the ninth, we hold the lamp-lighting, at midnight we rise, then at cockcrow we pray. See at what hours we are always roused for the service of God. See what he says: the third hour, the sixth, the ninth, the lamp-lighting, midnight, cockcrow, early morning. All this we do, and we do not consider that if our soul holds enmities against a brother, we pray in vain. For in the Gospel what is said? 'If you offer your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you.' See what he says. He did not say, if you have something against your brother; but, if your brother has something against you. He seems to lay upon us something as it were unjust: for if he had said, if you have something against your brother, it would have been in our power what we had. But now what does he say? If you remember that your brother has something against you. I answer him:

Lord, this is not in my power, whether my brother has something against me: I have nothing against him. If he has something against me, what does it concern me? and why do you refuse to receive my gift and say, If you offer your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you: leave, he says, your gift, and go be reconciled to your brother, and so you shall offer your gift? Behold, I have nothing: if he has, what does it concern me? The Lord answers you, and what does he say? Wicked servant, I understand your mind: you have nothing against your brother? you have nothing? do you love him? why then do you not want him to be saved? if you love him, go, ask him not to have anything against you, so that he may be saved. But you show that you do not love him, because you do not want him to be saved. Go, ask him, cast yourself at his feet, entreat him day and night: say, I have left my gift at the altar, on your account I cannot offer the victims. He is pricked with compunction, and what does he say? If this man who asks me does not offer his gift: I who am asked, if I do not forgive, what shall I do? Therefore the apostle too says that we should give our enemies to eat and to drink.

And what does he say? 'Doing this,' he says, 'you heap coals of fire upon his head.' Someone may say: Enemies do this; do I therefore do good to my adversary in order to heap coals of fire upon his head? But something else is meant. If he has done you evil, and you have done him good, you heap coals of fire upon his head: that is, you cleanse his vices, and you boil away his malice, so that he may turn to repentance. See then what this holy prophet says. With those who hated peace I was peaceable. He did not say, who did not want peace: but, who hated peace. They hated peace, and I loved those who hated peace. Therefore the apostle too says: 'As far as in you lies, having peace with all men.' Let us entreat our brother,

if he is our enemy; let us entreat him even twice, and three times, and seven times. 'Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often shall I forgive him? seven times? I say to you, not seven times, but seventy times seven' — that is, four hundred and ninety times. If we wanted to reckon it up, from morning until evening we could not commit so many sins, four hundred and ninety. Yet what does the Lord say? If he sins against you seventy times seven in a day, and turning back asks you, forgive him. But you say: He does not turn back with his whole heart, he lies.

Let us leave the judgment to God: he asks me, he entreats me: he does not say this truly — God knows. I hear a voice, Christ understands the heart: I accept what I hear, let Christ accept what he knows. Then see your own reward: he lies, you accept it as true; his is the killing, yours is the salvation.

Why have I said all this? Because in monasteries and especially in communities these vices are wont to exist. We do not blush, we do not grieve: we have left our mothers, we have left our parents, we have left our brothers, we have left our sisters, we have left our wives, we have left our children, we have left our fatherlands, we have left our homes, we have left the little rooms in which we were born and reared, we have left the little servants with whom we were reared, we have come into the monastery: and we have left all these things for this purpose, that over some trivial, frivolous matter we should pick a quarrel with the brethren in the monastery. We have left possession, we have left fatherland, we have left the world: and over a reed pen we pick a quarrel in the monastery. If I hear a bitter word, I cannot bear it, it is in my heart, it is inscribed in my very marrow for ten or fifteen days, it cannot be taken from my heart, I speak to my brother who had done me injury, and I promise peace with my lips, and hold poison in my heart. Often even my eyes and the countenance of my mind are an indication. When our heart is wounded against someone, we cannot look at him with straight eyes: the face itself and the eyes are as it were a mirror of our soul.

What does Scripture also say? 'And they could not speak anything peaceable to him': the tongue could not lie about what the heart held otherwise. This, then, I say to your very selves and to myself; for I do not preach for the purpose of making myself, as it were, secure. The occasion of this little verse has compelled me to say these things. The tongue is a great evil. O Lord, deliver my soul from unjust lips and from a deceitful tongue: not from another's tongue, but deliver me from my own tongue. Another's tongue does me no harm: my own tongue is my enemy. O Lord, deliver my soul. Deliver my soul from my tongue: my tongue is a sword, it kills my soul. I suppose that I harm my enemy, and I do not know that I am killing myself. Let my adversaries fight when I speak to them, and let me speak peaceable things. Let them have a hostile mind, but let us have a peaceable mind. Since indeed it is written in Paralipomenon: 'And the children of Israel went out,' it says, 'to fight with a peaceable mind.' Does anyone go to battle, and have a peaceable

mind? But the arms of Christians are peace. 'The peace of Christ, which surpasses all understanding.' Blessed are the peacemakers: not only those who make peace between quarrelers, but those who make peace within themselves. Blessed are the peacemakers.

If others quarrel, and I intervene in the middle, and make peace between them, and I myself do not have peace in my mind: what does it profit me, that they have made peace? 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.' Blessed are the peacemakers, who indeed speak peaceable things to those who hate peace. Blessed are the peacemakers. Christ is peace. For if Solomon is interpreted in Christ, and Solomon is interpreted as peaceable: then Christ our Lord is peace. Going to heaven he left us a standard, saying: 'My peace I give to you, my peace I leave to you.' Let us keep what Christ has given, let us have peace, let us keep peace, and it keeps us in Christ Jesus: to whom is glory forever and ever. Amen.

Homily 42, on Psalm 127

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin).

Blessed are all who fear the Lord. Those who fear the Lord, what reward do they have? What crown? Let us see what praise they have, what reward. Blessed are you, and it shall be well with you. I have already spoken about blessedness; I am asking what this blessedness is: the one who fears the Lord, what blessedness does he have? Your wife like a fruitful vine on the sides of your house; your sons like young olive shoots around your table. I think that, with Christ favoring us, we all fear the Lord. Then do we not have this blessedness? For it is written that whoever fears the Lord has this blessedness: Your wife like a fruitful vine on the sides of your house, your sons like young olive shoots around your table. So then, is the man who has one son, and the man who has two, not blessed? For what does it say? Your sons like young olive shoots around your table. Unless we have so many sons that they encircle our table, will we not have the blessedness of the one who fears the Lord? Isaac did not have this blessedness: for he had two sons, one of them utterly wicked, Esau, for whom it would have been far better had he never been born. But he had one son, Jacob: so then did he not have the blessedness? because one son could not encircle the table. Virgins, then, do not fear the Lord?

For what is said, that the one who fears the Lord should understand blessedness? Your wife like a fruitful vine on the sides of your house; your sons like young olive shoots around your table. John did not have this blessedness, both Johns, the evangelist as much as the baptist: for each of them was a virgin. Paul did not have this blessedness, who says: ’I wish, moreover, that all were as I am.’ You see, then, that wife and sons must be understood spiritually; otherwise, unless we understand them spiritually, the angels do not have this blessedness, because they do not have sons. Let us return, therefore, to the order of the reading.

Blessed are all who fear the Lord. Just as no one can say ’The Lord is my portion’ except the one who has no other portion in the world, so the one who fears anything else outside the Lord does not fear the Lord. Indeed, the Savior himself says: ’Do

not fear those who can kill the body, but fear him who can kill both body and soul in hell.' You see, then, that whoever does not fear the Lord fears some other thing outside the Lord. The one who fears the Lord, what signs does he have? Those who walk in his ways. There are many ways, and many ways lead to one way. Indeed, it is also said in Jeremiah: 'Stand in the ways of the Lord, and ask for the eternal paths of the Lord, and you will find the way, and you will walk in it.' See what it says, Stand in the ways, and ask for the eternal paths of the Lord, and you will find the one way, and walk in it. See how through many ways we come to one way. This is also said in the gospel in other words, under another meaning of the parable, concerning that merchant who had many pearls, who sold them, and bought one most precious pearl. What it says is this: Stand in the ways, that is, have very many pearls. Stand in the ways, and ask for the eternal paths of the Lord.

Beautifully it says eternal, lest we should think that at the coming of Christ the law and the prophets were brought to an end. But see what it says. Stand in the ways, in the law and the prophets. Stand in the ways; do not so believe in the one way that you abandon the many ways; but stand in the ways, and ask for the eternal paths of the Lord. Ask the paths of the Lord, what Jeremiah said, Isaiah, Ezekiel, what the rest of the prophets said. Ask the paths. It is better said in Greek τρίβους (tribous): for a path (semita) is so called from the fact that it is worn (trita) by the heel of those walking. And what is said is this: Ask the paths, that is τρίβους (tribous), which the foot of the Lord wore down: seeing that the Lord too walked in them. But when you have asked for the eternal paths of the Lord, and through those paths you have found the one way, which says 'I am the way and the life and the truth,' walk in it. See the mysteries of the scriptures: see in the simple words of the scriptures very many sacred meanings, in the ways and paths, in the law and the prophets. It did not say, walk, but, stand: do not abandon the law nor the prophets. Yet when you have found those ways, through these ways walk in this one way.

You will eat the labors of your hands. Many, not understanding, have interpreted this passage otherwise: 'You will eat the labors of your fruits.' Indeed the Latin copies have it thus: You will eat the labors of your fruits. But we read it written thus in the Hebrew: You will eat the labors of your hands. For who eats the labors of fruits? Surely it ought to be understood the other way around, that someone eats the fruit of his labors, and not the labors of his hands. For it is understood the other way around. For it can rather be said that someone eats the fruit of his labors, and not the labors of fruits. Since, therefore, it is written thus in the Hebrew, You will eat the labors of your hands, I think that in Greek too the Seventy translators translated this passage well. For in the Hebrew tongue the hand is called IAD; but in this passage it does not have IAD, but CAPH. And CAPH is translated καρπός (karpos)—not καρπός in the sense of fruit, but some part of the hand: seeing that καρπός in Greek means the joints (ἄρθρα, arthra). This we have said concerning

the translation. You will eat, therefore, the labors of your hands. 'Whatever a man sows, this also will he reap.' Behold the man, and his works. So then we too will eat the labors of our hands. In the hands, works are understood. You will eat the labors of your hands. Someone may say:

So then, are we going to eat after the resurrection? For this is said of the blessed man, You will eat the labors of your hands. I say this plainly, that man is composed of two substances, that is, of soul and body. The soul is immortal, but the body is mortal. What is mortal must of necessity have mortal food also; but what is immortal, that is, the soul, which is immortal, must have immortal food also. Do you want to know that the soul too has its own food? The Lord and Savior says it, when he was hungry. What does he say? 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me.' Do you want to know what food the soul has? The prophet too says to us: 'Taste and see that the Lord is sweet.' For just as the body, unless it receives its food, dies: so also the soul, unless it receives spiritual food, dies. Why do I say all this? Because some are accustomed to say: I do not need the holy scripture, it is enough for me only to fear God. And we have said this for this reason: as there are foods for the body, so the holy scriptures are foods also for our soul.

Your wife like a fruitful vine on the sides of your house. Solomon says that he wished to take wisdom as his bride. He says also in another place concerning wisdom: 'Love her, and she will embrace you: encompass her, and she will keep you.' Let us too, therefore, take this wife; let us hold her in our embraces, let us never let her go from our bosom, let her never flee from our hands. If this wife is always in our embrace, we will make from her sons: not daughters, but sons. Indeed, it is said here too: Your sons like young olive shoots around your table. Could it not have said, your daughters? or could it not have said τὰ τέκνα σου (ta tekna sou), so that both men and women might be understood? But see what it says, your sons. He who has wisdom as his wife does not make from her daughters, but sons. He has nothing soft, nothing dainty, nothing tender, nothing effeminate in his mind. Do you suppose it is for some other reason that the saints are written to have had not daughters, but sons? Let us read Genesis: for there the order of the generations is preserved. Holy Abraham had Sarah as his wife, had Hagar as his concubine, had afterward Keturah. From two wives he begets sons, he makes no daughters. Let us come to Isaac. Isaac too makes two sons, he has no daughters.

For he was holy, and had in himself nothing soft and tender and effeminate, but all manly and firm. Blessed Jacob has twelve patriarchs as sons; and he has one daughter by the name of Dinah, which is translated cause, quarrel, strife. Indeed he had one daughter, and twelve sons; and on account of one daughter such great wars arise in Shechem. Jacob had never said: 'I am afraid, you have made me hateful.' He speaks to Levi and Simeon: 'Levi and Simeon, let my soul not come into their counsel.' Why? because as men they wished to plead the cause of a

woman. Why have I said all this? Because the saints do not have daughters, but have only sons. I tell you a new thing, new to those who do not know it; but for those who read the scriptures, and read them diligently, not new, but the very thing they know. Jacob had twelve sons as patriarchs: Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Levi, Issachar, Asher, and the rest up to twelve. Read in the account of the generation, and you will never find that any of those twelve great patriarchs made a daughter, but all of them sons. I will tell you one, lest perhaps you forget. Asher had a daughter, Sarah. Jacob had twelve sons and one daughter: so among the twelve patriarchs one patriarch had only one daughter. Why have I said all this? So that we ought to understand sons and daughters in the scriptures spiritually.

Your wife like a fruitful vine on the sides of your house. Like a fruitful vine. A fruitful vine has very many clusters, so also our wife, that is, wisdom our wife, who is the bride. Indeed, it is written in another place: 'Come my sister, my bride.' Lest in the fact that it had said, bride, you should understand something shameful, sister is joined, so that all shameful love may be excluded. Come my sister: for the love is holy, and therefore I call you sister. And my bride: therefore I call you bride, so that I may have a wife, and from you make many sons, many sons like clusters from a vine. Just as a vine has various clusters, and there is indeed one root, but it spreads its tendrils far and wide, here and there, and the tendrils themselves have their own fruits, and in the fruits themselves are the clusters, and one cluster is larger, another smaller, some grapes are larger, others smaller; so also from wisdom, which is our wife, provided that we never let her go, many clusters are born, that is, very many virtues, holy thoughts, splendid works. Your sons like young olive shoots around your table. We read in another place: 'And wine gladdens the heart of man.' We read also in the Song of Songs: 'Come, brothers, drink and be inebriated.' And wine which gladdens the heart of man. This fleshly wine does not gladden the heart of man, but overwhelms it, and makes it mad.

Indeed, it is written that those who are powerful should not drink wine. The apostle too writes that we ought not to drink wine and eat flesh. Again it is said to us: And wine gladdens the heart of man. But it speaks of a spiritual wine, which, if anyone drinks it, he is immediately inebriated. All of you, that you might let go of your possessions and your parents and your children and your kinfolk, drank wine, and being inebriated for Christ began to be mad. Does it not seem to you to be drunkenness, does it not seem to you to be spiritual madness, to despise delights, to seek out squalor, to flee the cities, to pursue the deserts, to know no affections, to ignore the nearness of the flesh, and to know Christ alone? Indeed, the apostles were inebriated with this wine, and therefore it is said of them: 'They are full of new wine.' For they had not been inebriated from the old law, but from the gospel. Noah too, I think, was inebriated in this way with this wine. Your sons like young olive shoots. To nothing else are our sons compared except to young olive shoots. It did not say, to the old olive tree, but to the young olive. Just as there

too, concerning the drunkenness of the apostles, it does not speak of old wine, but of new wine, so here too it says young olive shoots:

young olive shoots, which are wholly green in the youth of the gospel, young olive shoots full of light. Oil has this nature, that it seasons food, that it provides fuel for light, that it restores an anointed body wearied by a long journey, as it were, to its former toil and to health. Indeed, whoever is weary, and is anointed, as it were recovers his former vigor. Do you think that wine and oil are named here without a reason? It could not have said honey, nor other aromatic spices, nor another tree, but only the vine and the olive. These are the remedies of our life, the vine and the olive, wine and oil. In wine, severity; in oil, mercy. Indeed, that man who was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, who had been wounded, the Samaritan, that is, the guardian, poured into him nothing except wine and oil. Wine, the severity of the precepts, astringent wine; so that whatever there is of bad humor, it may burn out and consume. But since human frailty cannot bear the truth—'for if you should mark iniquities, Lord, Lord, who shall endure it?' for if the Lord should be only just, we cannot live—therefore to his justice, that is, to the wine, the oil of mercy has been added. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord. We have already spoken much, let us hasten to the end. May the Lord bless you out of Zion. Out of this Zion?

And how does another prophet say 'Zion shall be plowed like a field'? The Lord also says: 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kill the prophets, and stone those who are sent to you.' Indeed, when the Lord had drawn near to Jerusalem, and had seen it, he wept. But when he wept over it, surely he wept over it because it was about to fall, as though about to perish. Indeed, what does he say? 'Rise, let us go from here.' And in another place, what does he say? 'Your house shall be left to you desolate.' So then, in what it says, May the Lord bless you out of Zion, it does not mean this Zion, which we see to be desolate. The gates themselves and the field itself and the ruins themselves signify the wrath of God. Even if we do not know it, the very eyes cry out the wrath of the Lord. May the Lord bless you out of Zion. Zion is translated watchtower, Jerusalem is translated vision of peace. If our soul has a watchtower, if it is on high, if it thinks not of earthly things, but of things sublime: if our soul has the vision of peace, that is, if Christ, who is true peace, dwells in it, he himself will bless us. If Christ dwells in us, we too will be Zion, and we too will be Jerusalem.

And may you see the sons of your sons. I am speaking to you. If by my discourse I instruct you, I have seen my sons: if you instruct others, I have seen the sons of my sons. Let us pray, therefore, to the Lord, that we may have sons, may have grandsons, and may always have much offspring. Let us hasten to make such sons: this union is holy. I tell you a new thing: without the embrace of a wife many such sons are born. Peace upon Israel. Israel is translated, a man seeing God. See,

therefore, what is said. Peace upon Israel: upon those who have a mind seeing God. If my mind has the vision of God, if I always see Christ, I will not see others. Whoever has Christ in himself, has peace in himself. 'My peace I give to you, my peace I leave to you.' Although there are many persecutions, although there are many who persecute, yet in whomever Christ dwells, that one always has Christ.

Homily 43, on Psalm 128

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin).

They often attacked me from my youth — let Israel now say — they often attacked me from my youth. Two things are said: both that they often attacked me, and that they attacked me from my youth. If I, for example, at forty years of age, in the middle of my life, should begin to serve the Lord, I cannot say, ”They have attacked me from my youth. But what do I say? ”They have slain me from my youth, they have wounded me from my youth, they have trampled me from my youth. But the one who begins from boyhood to serve the Lord, and is often attacked by the devil and his angels, and yet is not conquered — what does this man say? ”They often attacked me from my youth: and indeed they could not prevail against me. ”An athlete is not crowned unless he has competed lawfully” — unless he has taken a blow, unless his face is bruised, unless blood has been spilled from his face. The bruise earns the crown, the pain earns the joy. They often attacked me from my youth. Let the virgin of the Lord speak this little verse, let the monk speak it, who has begun from a tender age to serve the Lord. But I, who have begun to serve the Lord at forty or fifty years of age, how can I say, ”They often attacked me from my youth”? Let the virgin therefore say this, let the monk who is whole in body and spirit say it.

And what does he say? Why did they often attack me from my youth? Let someone say: O monk, how did the demons and the devil attack you? Those who assailed me seemed indeed to be men: but I understood the devil within the men. When men persecute us, therefore, let us not be angry at the persecutor, but let us feel compassion for them and lament them: for it is another who persecutes within the persecutors. If a man possessed by a demon, who has a demon, should come and strike me with his fist and hit me with his heel, do I get angry at him? He strikes with his fist, and I weep and lament the one striking: for I see that he is more grievously struck by the one working within him than I am by his hand. As often, therefore, as we suffer anything and endure any temptations, let us understand that

it is that one, and those, who breed temptations for us within men. Let someone say: Prove this very thing from the Scriptures: for we ought not to say anything unless it is furnished and confirmed from the Scriptures. Judas was a traitor, but Satan entered into him, and he himself betrayed within the traitor.

Potiphar's wife at the time when she seized Joseph her servant — the mistress the servant, the very rich woman the poor little man, the citizen the foreigner — she was holding Joseph, but the holy man understood, in the hands of the woman, that it was the devil holding him back. Why do I say all this? So that when we suffer something from men, we may not be angry at men, but may lament them, and may see that plotter who works within them.

They often attacked me from my youth: and indeed they could not prevail against me. They attacked me with base thoughts, they attacked me with anger. I gave in to the thoughts: if I gave in to the temptations, if I did something that the thought was driving me to, if anger overcame me and I did injury to my brother, I cannot say "and indeed they could not prevail against me": for they did prevail against me. Upon my back the sinners built. Carefully observe what the Scripture says. The holy man is an athlete, and "he is not crowned unless he has competed lawfully." For you know that there are many kinds of athletes: for there are some athletes, but others are like all-in wrestlers (pammacharii), some contend at the discus, and others are runners, that is, those who run in the stadium. Indeed, the Apostle too says that he runs, so that he may reach the crown. And what does he say in another place? "Forgetting the things that are behind, I stretch myself forward to the things that are before." See, therefore, what the Scripture says. Upon my back the sinners were building. Thus I always ran, and ran so hard, that my adversary might never get ahead of me, but might always be found behind my back. He never came before my eyes, for he could not bear the light of my eyes; but he always pursued that part which is blind, which has no eyes. Upon my back the sinners were building. Whenever anyone disparages his brother, that man is building behind the back. Upon my back the sinners were building: but I did not see their snares. They were building behind my back: and I with my eyes was gazing on paradise. They were contriving snares against me, and I was longing to see the crown.

They prolonged their iniquity. What did he mean by "They prolonged their iniquity"? If I sin, and after my sin I do penance, my iniquity is short, not long. But if I sin, as often as I sin, so often does the cord of my sins grow longer. Whence it is also said in another place: "The cords of sinners have surrounded me." See what he says: The cords of sinners have surrounded me. And in another place it is written: "Each one is bound fast by the cords of his own sins." See what he says: Each one is bound fast by the cords of his own sins. These cords of sins cannot be woven unless I have had many sins. If I commit one sin, it is not so much a cord as it is, so to speak, a single thread. But if it is a single thread, it is quickly broken,

and cannot hold and bind. But if there are many sins, and they have prolonged their iniquities, out of many sins, as out of many threads, a cord is made, and it binds, and is not quickly broken. Why have I said all this? Because we read in this little verse, They prolonged their iniquity.

The just Lord has cut the necks of sinners. See what he says. He did not say, ”he has cut down sinners”: but if he had said this, no one could be saved, for we are all sinners. But what does he say? The just Lord has cut the necks of sinners: those who are both sinners and proud; since ”God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” Therefore he cuts the necks of sinners.

Homily 44, on Psalm 131

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin).

Remember, O Lord, David and all his meekness. Many suppose, from what is written in the Gospel — ”Have mercy on us, Son of David,” which the blind men who were sitting in Jericho said — that this David, whose name means ”strong of hand,” is referred to the Lord Savior. But if in this psalm we should choose to interpret it, as they judge, it does great harm to our understanding. For if this that is said, Remember, O Lord, David and all his meekness, they refer to Christ, then how does Christ say, as though about someone else, ”Until I find a place for the Lord, a tabernacle for the God of Jacob: behold, we heard of it in Ephrata, we found it in the fields of the wood”? And how is it said, ”For the sake of David your servant, turn not away the face of your Christ”? The order does not stand. For if David, as they think, is Christ, then we begin to understand it thus: For the sake of Christ your servant, turn not away the face of your Christ. This I say against those who in this passage interpret David as Christ. Not that we deny that David may be interpreted as Christ according to the character of the passages: but in this passage the sense does not admit it. And I will tell you why they go astray: because it is written, Remember, O Lord, David and all his meekness;

and the Lord says in the Gospel, ”Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart” — with pious sense indeed, but in their error they here interpret David as Christ, and refer his meekness to Christ. Let us therefore interpret this psalm of David, so that he who is born of David may truly be understood as Christ. Then, see the order. For since the psalm is long, and we have already said many things, we ought briefly to touch upon the meanings, not to dispute at greater length: so that the prudent hearer may, from the things we have said, understand for himself even those things we do not say.

As he swore to the Lord, he vowed a vow to the God of Jacob. In the Hebrew it does not have cos, that is, ”as,” nor is that the sense; but it has os, that is, ”who,” and the sense is: Remember, O Lord, David and all his meekness, who swore to the

Lord, vowed a vow to the God of Jacob. And this I think was done not so much by a fault of the seventy translators as by an error of the copyists. If I shall enter into the tabernacle of my house. David says this: I seek no other rest but Christ, who is to be born of my seed, that is, whom you promised would be born of my loins.

If I shall give sleep to my eyes, and slumber to my eyelids, And rest to my temples, until I find a place for the Lord, a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. Many think this is said of the Church: but to me it seems to be said not so much of the Church as of holy Mary. Then it is said: Behold, we heard of it in Ephrata, we found it in the fields of the wood. Let us read the holy Scriptures, and both by day and by night let us sift each single syllable and letter. Let someone say concerning Ephrata: here he said Bethlehem. For we read in Genesis: ”He came into Bethlehem, this is Ephrata.” This is said of Jacob, when his wife Rachel died, that is, in Ephrata. But let us see why Ephrata received its name. For it is written in Chronicles that Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, had for her husband Hur — not Ur, but Hur. And afterward the lineage is described, and it is said: ”Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, this is Ephrata.” This is written in the books of Chronicles: seek and you will find. And so this Ephrata too received its name from that Ephrata. Perhaps it seems to someone not to be true, because it is new: but I refer him to the authority of the book.

Behold, we heard of it in Ephrata. In the Hebrew it does not have ”it,” but has ”him”: that is, that one who is to be born of the seed of David. We heard of him in Ephrata: which the sense is about Mary. But we can also understand it simply, since Ephrata is called Bethlehem, and Christ was born in Bethlehem. Happy therefore the place, which so long a time before was sung by the voice of the prophets. All holy places indeed are venerable, both where he was born, and where he was crucified, and where he rose again, and where he ascended a victor to the heavens; but this place is properly more venerable. See how great is the mercy of God. Here a little one is born, an infant is laid in a manger: ”for there was no room for them in the inn.” O monk, the Lord is born on earth, and has no cell of his own: there was no room for him in the inn. The whole human race had a place: and the Lord, who was to be born on earth, had no place. He found no place among men, he found none in Plato, none in Aristotle; but in a manger, among the beasts of burden and the dumb animals, and among all who are simple and innocent. Whence the Lord also says in the Gospel: ”The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests where they may rest: but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head.”

Homily 45, on Psalm 132

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin).

Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. He says two things: good and pleasant. Martyrdom is good, but it is not pleasant: for it has its tortures and punishments, and there is always pain in torments, and certainly in pain there is no pleasantness. Behold how good and how pleasant. Again, pleasure is pleasant. For example, to eat sweet foods seems to be pleasant: for it drives one to lust. Here therefore he has set down two things, and what seemed to him to be contrary — it is good and it is pleasant — he has joined in a single phrase: Behold how good and how pleasant. Pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity: brethren in mind, not in body. Esau and Jacob were brothers; and because they dwelt together, it was for them a cause of discord. Therefore what he says here, brethren, he does not say brethren in body, but spiritual brethren: the brethren of whom the Savior also spoke, and said to the women: 'Go, announce to my brethren'. Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. This psalm properly suits communities and monasteries. For although it may be understood also of churches, yet there, because of the diversity of purpose, there seems not to be so great a concord. For what brotherhood is there there?

Surely one is hastening to go to his house, another to the circus, another in the church is thinking about interest on loans. But in a monastery, just as there is one purpose, so there is also one mind. Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. Truly good, truly pleasant. We have left one brother behind, and behold how many we have found. My worldly brother (what I say of myself, I say of each one) does not love me so much as he loves my property. But spiritual brethren, who indeed neglect what is their own, do not seek what belongs to others. So too we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that 'of the multitude of believers there was one heart and one soul. And, it says, they had all things

in common'. Rightly did they have all things in common, because they possessed Christ in common. We have said much, but let us hasten on to the rest.

Like ointment upon the head, which runs down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron. Oh, if there were time for us to discuss each detail, a day could not suffice us. We read in Exodus how the priestly ointment is prepared; then we read how there was another ointment, with which the kings were anointed. There was also another ointment with which the prophets were anointed. And why do I say more? All the ointments had their own distinctions and mysteries. Do we marvel about holy persons? A leper, after he has been cleansed, after he has been sprinkled with hyssop and with the blood of a bird, and one bird is released into the wilderness, he too has his own proper ointment. Nothing is sanctified except through ointment. Therefore the young maidens also say in the Song of Songs: 'Thy name is ointment poured out. After thee we will run in the fragrance of thy ointments'. Like ointment upon the head, which runs down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron.

Beautifully did he say, upon the head. Which runs down upon the beard. The beard is a mark of manhood: for nature distinguishes woman and man by this sign. The beard therefore is a mark of manhood. The head then is called the divinity, that is, the Godhead; but the beard indicates the man. 'That, he says, we may arrive at the perfect man' who is Christ. See therefore what he says, like ointment. Like the blessing of ointment from the head, that is, from Hermon of the divinity, it ran down upon the beard, it ran down upon the perfect man, who is Christ; and from that beard, after the ointment itself had run down upon the hem of his garment, so the blessing and the dew of Mount Hermon ran down upon Mount Zion. Ointment therefore is here put for blessing. 'Thou hast loved, he says, righteousness, and hated iniquity: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows'. See what he says. Thou hast loved, he says, righteousness, and hated iniquity. It is not enough to love righteousness, but on the contrary see what he says: And thou hast hated iniquity. For these virtues what did he receive? Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. This is said to Christ: therefore thou art anointed, that thou mightest anoint the others. Thou art anointed with the oil of gladness above thy fellows, that is, more than thy apostles.

For thou didst have the fountain of ointment: they had drops. Like ointment upon the head. May the Lord also bestow upon us this ointment of the Godhead, which came upon the beard, that is, upon the perfect man Aaron, upon Aaron the priest. Now Aaron is interpreted 'mountain-man'. You see that this priest is not from the valleys, but is from the mountains. The beard, he says, of Aaron. That the ointment came from the head upon the beard, it came from the Word, God, to the man whom he deigned to take up. And what does this anointed beard, and this perfect man, profit us? Let us see what benefits he has. Which runs down upon the hem of

his garment. If we are the garment of Christ, we clothe his nakedness with our faith. Behold, naked he hangs upon the cross, a scandal to the Jews, foolishness to the Gentiles; and yet by our faith and word and confession he is clothed. Noah lay naked in his house, and his shame appeared: the elder son mocked, and the younger covered him. And why do I say all this? To show that we are the garment of Christ. I tell you a new thing: rather, not new, but from the Scriptures. We are the garment of Christ: and when we have clothed him with our confession, we in turn put on Christ himself. For the Apostle also says that Christ is our garment. For when we are baptized, we put on Christ.

And we are clothed, and we clothe. Do you wish to know how we clothe the Lord? We read in Jeremiah: 'Take unto thee, he says, a girdle, and go, he says, to the Euphrates, and put it in a hole of the rock. And I did, he says, what the Lord had commanded me. And after some days I returned to the Euphrates, and behold, he says, the girdle had rotted, so that it was fit for no use. And the Lord spoke, he says, to me'. Attentively take heed. 'As, he says, thou hadst a girdle about thy loins, so also I had this people about me, saith the Lord'. Why have I said all this? To show that believers are the garment of Christ. Which runs down upon the hem of his garment: which runs down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron. There is not time to speak of the priestly garments. Indeed the high priest has eight kinds of garments. It is long now to speak of the ephod, of the tunic: it is long to speak of the breastplate, of the manifestations, of the little chains, of the girdle, of the breeches, of the fringes, of the pomegranates, of the little bells, with which virtues the priest ought to enter the temple of the Lord and into the holy of holies.

And we therefore, if we wish to be of this priestly garment, either we are the shoulder-piece, which is interpreted the ephod, that we may have good works, and may carry the commandments of Christ upon our shoulders; or surely we ought to be the inner tunic, which tunic is close-fitting, and clings to the body, is not loose, is not spread out, but clings wholly to the body. You see therefore that whoever is inward is also the inner tunic, and is joined more nearly to the body. But if anyone is the breastplate, which is called λόγιον (the rational thing), that one is nowhere else but upon the breast. Take heed to the order of Scripture: whoever is the breastplate, and is the λόγιον, and is reason, is set upon the breast. Yet it can happen that someone has prudence, that he has the λόγιον, and does not have speech. Whoever therefore is a true priest ought to have the λόγιον, ought to have the δηλώσεις, that is, the manifestations, that is, that whatever he has conceived in his mind he may bring forth, and may teach all. And all these things are in vain, if chastity be not guarded and adorned: therefore there is the girdle, and it girds the loins, binds tight and mortifies. Then it is said that he should have the breeches, so that whatever is shameful and filthy in us may, as it were by this girdle, be cleansed and mortified.

Then it is said that we ought to have the robe (podere), which adorns as it were our feet. And on that robe itself are various flowers: there are pomegranates there, there are also fringes there. I think that woman too who had an issue of blood touched this fringe, and was healed. Then consider this also, that at the very extremities of the feet, among the pomegranates, there were also the little bells; and the high priest did not enter into the holy of holies unless those little bells sounded. And those little bells and those pomegranates are the diversities of virtues, which each have their own voices; and the very going forth of the holy of holies is vocal. For whether we eat, or whether we drink, we do all things in the name of the Lord. We promised smaller things, and have said greater ones.

Like the dew of Hermon, which runs down upon Mount Zion. The dew of Hermon. We read a certain apocryphal book, that at the time when the sons of God descended to the daughters of men, they descended upon Mount Hermon, and there entered into a covenant, how they might come to the daughters of men, and join them to themselves. It is a most manifest book, and it is reckoned among the apocrypha, and the ancient interpreters have said some things about it: but we say this, not for authority, but for remembrance. Like the dew of Hermon, which runs down upon Mount Zion. I read in a certain man's book, who confirms his own heresy from this apocryphal book. For what does he say? The sons of God, he says, who were descending from the heavens, and came upon Hermon, and lusted after the daughters of men, are, he says, angels descending from the heavenly places, and souls that desired bodies: since indeed the bodies are the daughters of men. Do you see how, without your knowing it, the doctrine of the Manichees arises? For just as the Manichees say that souls desired human bodies, and were joined by the pleasure of the bodies: so these too, who say that the angels desired bodies, that is, the daughters of men, do they not seem to you to say the very thing that the Manichees also say? It is long now to speak against them:

but I wished only to point out from what volume, as it were, they confirm their doctrine by occasion of this text. Hermon in our tongue is interpreted ἀνάθεμα (anathema), that is, condemnation. The dew of the Lord therefore was formerly upon the people of the Jews, who were afterwards anathematized; and that blessing, which formerly descended upon the anathematized people, afterwards descended upon Mount Zion, that is, upon the Church. We, if indeed we are of the Church — and by Church I mean the truth of doctrines, the confession of Christ. We are in the building: and how many holy ones are in the desert, how many of us are not in the Church; and those who are not in the Church dwell within the Church of Christ — if therefore we are in the Church, if we have the faith of the Church, the faith of the apostles, the faith of Christ, the truths of the doctrines, we are mountains of Zion. We do not wish to be valleys of Zion, but mountains of Zion. For Zion has its valleys, it has also its plains. Whoever is a sinner is a valley of Zion, he is not a mountain of Zion. Someone may say: You are speaking from your own opinion.

Let us call Isaiah as a witness, at the time when Zion had sinned, after many visions, where it is said, A vision against Idumaea, a vision against Moab, a vision against Edom and the sons of Ammon, at the last is placed: 'A vision of the valley of Zion'. For because it had descended from the height of faith, therefore it collapsed from a mountain into a valley. We therefore, first let us flee the valleys of Zion, let us come to the plains, from the plains let us come to the hills, from the hills let us come to the mountains, let us follow Christ upon the mountains. For our cousin, like a roe and a fawn of the harts, leaps over the hills, and springs across the mountains. Whence also, according to the truth of the ascension, he did not ascend into the heavens after the resurrection from a valley, but from a mountain. Unless we are mountains in virtues, we cannot ascend to heaven. For there, that is, in the mountains of Zion, in the virtues, in the confession of faith, in the truth of the doctrines, there is the blessing and life for evermore. Our life is Christ. He who confesses Christ receives life unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Homily 46, on Psalm 133

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin).

Behold now, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord. This is the last psalm of the Song of Ascents. The first of the gradual psalms had been: 'To the Lord, when I was in tribulation, I cried, and he heard me.' In the second he had climbed higher: 'I lifted up my eyes to the mountains.' In the third: 'I rejoiced in the things that were said to me.' In the fourth: 'To you I have lifted up my eyes, you who dwell in heaven.' See how little by little he ascends through the steps, and arrives at loftier things. It would take long, if we wished to recite the openings of the individual psalms, that is, of the steps. He comes to the thirteenth psalm—nay rather, he comes to the twelfth—and after all the virtues he set humility. For in vain do we have virtues, if the virtues themselves are not crowned by the humility of the Lord. For what did he say? 'Lord, my heart is not exalted, nor are my eyes lifted up.' Since therefore he had shown himself to be humble, he asks for the coming of Christ. And what does he say? 'Remember, Lord, David, and all his meekness.' And again in another place: 'For the sake of David your servant, turn not away the face of your Anointed.' Since he had received Christ, after the faith of Christ he gathers the church.

And what does he say? 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.' But since the brethren are gathered together in unity, and the church of the Lord is gathered, what does the very last psalm say? Behold now, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord. Since it is good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity, and you are gathered together as one: Behold now, bless the Lord. Now bless, after the coming of Christ, because you are gathered in him: now bless, in the last psalm of the steps, because you are gathered at the summit of the virtues. Therefore before you reached the fifteenth step, that is, the height, you could not bless the Lord. So now I say to you, behold now, bless the Lord. When 'behold' is said, in a way the thing is pointed out with the finger. Behold now, bless the Lord. Who are to bless the Lord? All you servants of the

Lord: you who are not servants of sin, but servants of the Lord. Do we think it a small thing to say, 'I am a servant of the Lord'? It is the highest virtue to deserve this. Just as a man claims a kind of rank who says, 'I am a servant of the emperor,' and no one dares approach the emperor's servant: so it is an infinite dignity to say that one is a servant of the Lord.

And so the apostle too glories in the servitude of the Lord, and writes at the beginning of his epistles: 'Paul, a servant of Christ.' And of Moses it is said: 'And not as Moses my servant, to whom I spoke face to face.' See what he says. To the rest I spoke in a vision and in a riddle: but not as to Moses my servant, to whom I spoke face to face. Let us take an example. Let us suppose there is some very rich master: he has a household, he also has servants who wait upon him: surely the servants who are out on the country estates do not have as much confidence as those who serve him daily? Great is the dignity of the one who sees the master's face and serves him. In short, the other servants, who do not see their master's face, if they wish to obtain something, ask a fellow-servant. Why have I said all this? Our Lord Jesus Christ himself also has a large household: he has those who serve him, as it were, before his face, and he has others out in the fields. Monks and virgins I take to be those who serve their Lord before his face; but the laity, who are as it were in the field, belong to the household. In short, those who are in the fields ask these others to entreat the master, if they have any need.

As great, therefore, as is the dignity of those who daily see the master's face, so great is their punishment, if they neglect the master's service. For bad servants, when they are in the field, are wont to fear the master more, because they do not see him: but if they begin to see him daily, they grow contemptuous, and familiarity breeds pride. And so we too ought not, out of habit, to despise the goodness of our Lord. Bless the Lord therefore, all you servants of the Lord, you who are not servants of sin, but servants of the Lord: all you servants of the Lord, who have the Lord alone as God: all you servants of the Lord, over whom anger does not command, over whom lust does not reign, over whom other sins do not reign. Those over whom the vices have no dominion are ruled by the Lord. All you servants of the Lord.

It seems to have stopped here: but see the increase. It is not enough only to be a servant of the Lord, unless the servants themselves also stand. For there are some who stand, others who fall, others who sit, others who lie down. Therefore those who fall, who sit, who lie down—they cannot praise the Lord: you who stand, praise him. But someone may say: Others stand too, there are many churches, there are many congregations. Who then stand? Do the Arians stand? They name Christ—the Eunomians too, and the other heresies: do they then stand? So then, lest he should seem to grant them license to praise the Lord, see what he says. You who stand in the house of the Lord. So that, as the apostle says: 'until I come,'

he says, 'that you may know how you ought to order the house of God, which is the church.' The church does not consist in walls, but in the truth of doctrines. The church is there, where the true faith is. Yet fifteen and twenty years ago the heretics possessed all the walls of the churches. For twenty years ago the heretics possessed all these churches. But the true church was there, where the true faith was. Therefore bless the Lord, you who are servants of the Lord. 'Praise is not comely in the mouth of a sinner.' Therefore praise, you who are servants of the Lord: you who both are servants, and stand.

You who stand. 'He set,' he says, 'my feet upon a rock.' And to Moses: 'But you, stand here with me.' 'God stood in the assembly of the gods.' And you who stand, not just anywhere, but in the house of God. 'In the courts of the house of our God' is not found in the Hebrew volumes: but it is in the following psalm. For how does it run in that psalm? 'Praise the name of the Lord, praise the Lord, you servants: you who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God.' Since therefore this psalm has, 'You who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God,' for this reason someone thought that in the psalm which precedes as well, at 'You who stand in the house of the Lord,' he ought to add, 'in the courts of the house of our God.' But what 'in the courts of the house of our God' signifies, and what the difference is between the house and the courts, will be discussed when the following psalm is read.

In the nights lift up your hands unto the holy place. 'This world is set in the power of the evil one,' and 'our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers of these darknesses.' Whence the apostle also says: 'The night is past, and the day is at hand.' Therefore this present age is the night: but the age to come is the day. Whence the apostle says: 'The night is past, and the day is at hand. Let us walk honestly, as in the day,' he says. As we are to live in the day, that is, in the age to come, so let us now live. In the nights lift up your hands unto the holy place. Whether we will or not, we are in the nights: as long as we are in this age, we are in the nights. The night has darkness: and the nights of these darknesses are the sins of men. See, therefore, what he says: In the nights lift up your hands unto the holy place. 'While,' he says, 'you are in this age and are in the nights, lift up your hands.' Do not let them down, but lift them up: lift them up with Moses. If you lift up your hands, Amalek is conquered: but if you let them down, Joshua is overcome. And at the same time consider the mystery. If we lift up our hands, Jesus conquers. If we lift up our hands in good works, through our good works Christ overcomes the devil.

And hands are interpreted as works. Whence it is written: 'The word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai,' 'The word which came by the hand of Jeremiah the prophet.' Surely the word of the Lord does not come by the hand, but comes in the mouth. But see the mysteries of Scripture. God does not come to speech, except to

good works. For a murderer too confesses Christ, and yet the Lord does not come to him, because his hands do not deserve the Lord's coming. Whence it is written in another place: 'In the hand of the tongue are death and life.' Does the tongue then have a hand? Tell me, why is it said, 'In the hand of the tongue are death and life'? See what he means. God does not hear the tongue, not words, but works: so that whoever says something may also do it. It is commanded us, therefore, in the last psalm of the steps, In the nights lift up your hands unto the holy place. 'Lift up,' he says, 'your hands, because Jesus too lifted his up on the cross.' In the nights lift up your hands unto the holy place. Why did he wish to add, and to say, 'unto the holy place'? Heretics too seem to lift up their hands, and pagans seem to lift up their hands, and Jews seem to lift up their hands. For they too give alms: if they see a poor man, they hold out their hand.

When a Jew gives alms, does he not seem to you to lift up his hand? He does indeed lift up his hand, but he does not lift it up unto the holy place, because he does not confess Christ. But you who are in the house of the Lord, you who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God: you who are servants of the Lord, to whom I had said, 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity': lift up your hands in such a way that you lift them up in the holy, that is, that you confess Christ, and that whatever you do, you do for Christ. Good deeds differ according to the character of the one doing them. For example, a Christian gives alms, a pagan also gives, a Jew also gives, and another Christian, a holy man, gives too. You may find some among Christians who give alms for this reason, that they may be praised by the people. Whenever a poor man asks, they look about this way and that; and unless they see a witness, they give no money. If he is alone, the hand is more closed; he does not give willingly. O you Christian, a poor man asks you to give him money: why do you not give in secret, but give in public? If you seek God as your witness, why do you look for human eyes?

Your almsgiving seems to be almsgiving among the ignorant, but before God it is an injury: for you do an injury to your brother, since you wish to put the beggar on display while others look on. When, therefore, we give, let us not give as if from what is our own, but from what is Christ's: we ought not to give as to a beggar, but as to a brother. We give carnal things, he gives spiritual things: the poor man gives more than he receives. We give bread, which is consumed that very day; he for the bread will repay us the kingdoms of heaven. So this is what I say: that whatever we do, we should do in the holy; that what we do, we should do for Christ's sake. Moreover there are many pagans who give alms: if they see someone with a hand cut off, if they see him with a cancerous and rotten foot, at once their soul grieves: the human soul is overcome by natural pity. And what does such a one say? 'Look, if I were like this, wretch that I am, what would I do? And it may happen that I become like this: who will give to me? So I too ought to give to this man: so that

someone may give to me as well, if I become like him.' This man indeed gives the poor man bread; but in the poor man he pities himself, not the other.

This mercy is not the mercy of Christ, but mercy for oneself. Everything, therefore, that we do, let us do for Christ's sake, let us do in the holy. 'Whether we eat or whether we drink, let us do all things in the name of Christ.' We read the Scriptures, we learn the psalms by heart, we hold fast the gospels, we expound the prophets: we ought not to do this in such a way as to boast among the brethren, but so as to please Christ, so that his word may resound in our mouth. Men are wont, and monks are wont, and even poor little women are wont to have this rivalry among themselves, to learn more of the Scriptures by heart; and they think themselves the better in this, if they have learned more by heart. He has learned more who does more: for what you learn by heart, I do: my works retain the Scriptures more than your speech, which resounds emptily. In the nights lift up your hands unto the holy place. Lift up your hands, lift up the banner of the cross. In the nights lift up your hands unto the holy place: and when you have lifted them up unto the holy place, and have done the things that are holy, let Christ be, as it were, the healing balm of your good works. And bless the Lord. Whence the apostle too says: 'In every place lifting up pure hands.' And bless the Lord. Whatever you do, refer it to the Lord.

Let the hands be lifted, let the mouth resound with Christ. In the nights lift up your hands: give alms to the poor man. And bless the Lord: give thanks to the Lord, who gave to you the means from which you might give to your brother. You should give thanks to Christ more, when you have given, than the brother who received from you gives thanks to you. The poor confer a great benefit on us. Our sins, which we can no longer wash away in any other way, almsgiving extinguishes. For what is written? 'As water extinguishes fire, so almsgiving extinguishes sins.' Almsgiving accomplishes the same as baptism. As baptism forgives us our sins, so almsgiving too forgives us our sins. As water extinguishes fire, so almsgiving extinguishes sins. For the fires of gehenna are prepared for sins: but almsgiving extinguishes them.

May the Lord bless you out of Sion, he who made heaven and earth. You bless the Lord, and the Lord blesses you. Out of Sion: from the watchtower, from the church, from true doctrines, from pious faith. May the Lord bless you out of Sion. These little verses the Holy Spirit speaks, or certainly the prophet speaks in the Spirit. And what does he say? O you who through the fifteen steps have climbed to the last, who have done this and that, who bless the Lord, who in the nights lift up your hands unto the holy place and bless the Lord—receive, you too, your reward. May the Lord bless you out of Sion. What you have given, receive back. You gave alms, you performed good deeds: from God you obtain a reward and a blessing. May the Lord bless you out of Sion. Out of Sion: from the heavenly Jerusalem,

in the mother of the firstborn, where the joys to come are, where the archangels are, where the other powers are, where the apostles, where the prophets, where the saints, where the martyrs, where the multitudes of angels and of saints follow, wherever the Lamb goes. In short, John too saw the holy city let down from heaven, built up with gems, having twelve gates. It was all golden: it had golden walls, and it had streets of various gems. In this city Christ reigns, in this city the inhabitants themselves are both inhabitants and gates, they themselves are both houses and inhabitants.

Do you wish to know that they are houses? Christ dwells in them, Christ walks about in them. 'I will dwell,' he says, 'in them, and I will walk about.' See how great the holy soul is: it contains Christ, whom heaven does not contain. See what he says. 'I will dwell,' he says. But it can happen that someone dwells in cramped quarters. 'I will dwell, and I will walk about in them.' Wherever he walks about, surely the house is spacious, where there is room to walk. 'You are,' he says, 'the temple of God, and the Holy Spirit dwells in you.' Let us prepare our temple, that Christ may come and dwell in us: that our soul too may be Sion, that it may be a watchtower, that it may be set upon the heights, that it may be above, not below. We read in the prophet Zechariah: 'And the angel,' he says, 'who spoke in me, said to me.' If an angel spoke in the prophet, how much more does he who dwells in us have us both as his houses and as his conversation-partners?

May the Lord bless you out of Sion, he who made heaven and earth. If you are holy, hear what he says, 'who made heaven': if you are a sinner, 'who made earth.' He made both heaven and earth. For the moment let us speak according to the letter. He said this to distinguish God from the idols. 'The gods,' he says, 'who have not made heaven and earth, let them perish from the earth.' 'But the Lord made the heavens.' This he says to distinguish God from the idols. This much for now according to the letter. But according to the spiritual understanding, just as it is said to the sinner, 'You are earth and unto earth you shall go,' so also to the holy one it is said, 'You are heaven and unto heaven you shall go.' Why have I said all this? To prove that the saints are heaven. 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims the works of his hands.' 'And let the waters that are above the heavens praise the name of the Lord.' 'The heavens of heavens are the Lord's.' Who made heaven and earth. Although we are earthly, although we walk upon the earth, yet our citizenship is in the heavens: there we have our commonwealth. Who made heaven and earth. Although you are a sinner, do not despair: the Lord is almighty. Many from earth become heaven, and many from heaven become earth. Unhappy Judas was heaven, and became earth.

The apostle Paul, at the time when he was persecuting the church, was earth: he confessed, and became heaven. Neither should he who is heaven be complacent; nor should he who is earth despair of life. Jacob, at the time when he was fleeing

his brother into Mesopotamia, came to Luz: and there, it says, he placed a stone for himself at his head. Under his head the stone was Christ. He never placed a stone at his head, except at the time when he fled his persecutor. When he remained in his father's house, as long as he was in his father's house and had the comforts of the flesh, he did not have a stone at his head. He departed from his home naked, he departed with a staff; and at once, that very night, he found a stone, and placed it at his head. Because he had such a pillow on which to take his rest, see his vision. 'He saw,' it says, 'a ladder reaching from the earth to heaven; and he saw,' it says, 'angels descending and ascending.' He saw angels coming from heaven to earth, and others ascending from earth to the heavens. Do you wish to know that that stone, which was at Jacob's head, was Christ the cornerstone? 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner.' That stone which is written of in the book of Kingdoms, Ebenezer. That stone is Christ.

And Ebenezer is interpreted 'stone of help.' 'Jacob arose,' it says, 'in the morning.' And what did he say? 'This,' he says, 'is the house of God.' And what did he do? 'He took,' it says, 'oil, and anointed the stone.' Unless we understand the mysteries of the Scriptures, what reason was there that he should anoint the stone with oil?

Homily 47, on Psalm 135

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Confess to the Lord, for he is good. And yet, even though heretics say that there is no repentance, still the prophet urges us to confess our sins. For God is good. Blessed, therefore, is he who confesses his sins, just as the apostle also says: ”I who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.” If an apostle confesses, how much more the sinner? And again: ”The just man is his own accuser at the beginning of his speech.” If, then, the just man is, how much more the sinner? Confess to the God of gods. He means these gods, of whom it is written: ”I have said, you are gods.” And again: ”God stood in the synagogue of the gods.” Those who cease to be men, and abandon their vices, and are made perfect: these are gods, and sons of the Most High.

Confess to the Lord of lords. This is referred to the Son, and ”to the God of gods” to the Father. To the Father, then, and to the Son we confess: for the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father. Who alone does great wonders. First he said, ”Confess to the God of gods”; and again, ”to the Lord of lords.” And since he named two persons, now he says, ”Who alone does great wonders,” so that he may not speak of two gods. For it is written: ”One God, from whom are all things; and one Lord Jesus, through whom are all things, and we through him.” Who made the heavens with understanding. These are the heavens which ”declare the glory of God,” who have put on the image of the heavenly One: and there are heavens who have not put on the image of the earthly one. With understanding, in wisdom: for Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, just as Wisdom herself also says in Proverbs: ”When he made the heavens, I was with him,” and the rest.

Who established the earth upon the waters. Although the earth is said to hang upon the waters, that is, to hang in the sea, yet he founded and established our earth in baptism. He did not say, ”he lifted up,” or ”he exalted,” or ”he made it ascend into the heavens.” For baptism forgives sins, and frees us as if from prison: but it cannot grant the kingdoms of heaven. For unless someone enters through works

and faith, he cannot be secure. Who made the great lights. According to the letter he speaks of the stars. Although we behold them as small, yet they are great. For just as with us, if we climb a high mountain, and see a man in the valley below, he seems to us as if something small: so also the stars are great, but from their height they seem small to us. For the star that is seen in Britain appears everywhere as well. But he says this to those to whom he said: ”You are the light of the world.”

Who divided the Red Sea into divisions. The Hebrews say that the sea was divided into twelve divisions, that is, one way for each tribe. And it is called ”Red” from the blood. And he shook off Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea. Well did he say, ”he shook off”: for he shook off his sins, and he did not do penance; therefore he died. Just as he also says to Jerusalem: ”Shake off your dust.” Who struck the great kings. First he struck Pharaoh, who is understood to be the devil, and thus his army. For in our humility he was mindful of us. He did not say, ”in wisdom”: he did not say, ”in riches”: he did not say, ”in learning”; but, ”in humility he was mindful of us.” For although these too are virtues; yet unless someone has humility, he is not received by God. ”For God resists the proud, but to the humble he gives grace.”

And he redeemed us from our enemies. He did not say, ”he freed,” but ”he redeemed,” that is, with his own blood. Who gives food to all flesh. Consider for me the elephant, the camel, the ox, the stag, and these great four-footed beasts, how each one has on its face eyes, nostrils, mouth, feet. But consider also the tiny creatures, that is, the fly, the ant, the flea and the rest, and in these tiny ones consider also the eyes, and the nostrils, and the mouth, and the feet, and all things in like manner as in the greater ones, and glorify the Lord: and to all these he furnishes food. Otherwise, as it is written: ”And I will take away from them the heart of stone, and I will give them a heart of flesh,” that is, a soft one, with which they may be able to receive the law of God. For unless someone turns from his hardness, and becomes soft, he cannot receive food, and the bread which came down from heaven, so that he may be able to say: ”Give us this day our supersubstantial bread,” that is, the bread which is of your substance. In the Hebrew Gospel according to Matthew it has thus: ”Give us this day our bread for tomorrow,” that is, the bread which you are going to give us in your kingdom, give us today.

Homily 48, on Psalm 136

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin).

Super flumina Babylonis illic sedimus et flevimus, cum recordaremur Sion — ”By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Sion.” If someone is not sick, he does not know how much health is worth. And again, a lame man does not know how much he is worth who is sound of foot. Likewise the blind man does not know the one who sees. All this has been said because the psalm says: ”By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Sion.” Babylon is interpreted as ”confusion”: therefore Babylon is this world. So the sinner who fell from paradise, and came into the valley of tears — that is, into Babylon, into this world — says (or rather the prophet, in the person of the one who fell, says): ”By the rivers of Babylon.” Now, the rivers of Babylon. When you see someone who is beautiful for a moment, and being sick he loses his beauty, and his flower withers — this passes like a river, and the waters that follow one another, coming and receding, perish, and again others rise up, and these too perish: so also in this world, because for a moment or for some short time we are either enriched, or we are strong, or we are beautiful, and after a little while it passes like water, and perishes. There, then, we sat down and wept, when we remembered Sion. Granted that it was indeed by our own fault that we fell from paradise, nevertheless we call to mind our former happiness, and we do not forget it. And that man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho — which is interpreted ”moon,” that is, that which is always changing (and this is understood to mean this world) — fell among robbers, and the Samaritan takes him up, and heals him with oil and wine, mingling severity with mercy.

In salicibus in medio eius suspendimus organa nostra — ”On the willows in the midst of it we hung up our instruments.” The willow has such a nature: it is indeed a barren tree, and it is said that if anyone takes a drink from it or eats of it, he does not beget children. There, then, we hung up our instruments. Now the instrument is the body of man. For just as an instrument is put together out of many pipes, yet

sends forth one melody by its tuning, so too we have our instrument, the sense of touch: through it, that is, through works, we render back to God melody and song and hymn. Likewise through hearing, and through smell, and through taste, and through sight, and through all these faculties, as though from one instrument, we render back hymn and song to the Lord. It is said, again, that the willow has no root; but if a branch is cut off, and is planted beside the water, it at once grows green. So too the sinner, although he has sinned, although he has fallen: nevertheless, if he is beside the waters — that is, if he reads the holy Scriptures, and hears the divine word from a holy man — his soul grows green, and is turned to repentance.

Quia illic interrogaverunt nos qui captivos duxerunt nos verba canticorum — ”For there they that led us away captive asked of us the words of songs.” The demons, who deceived us and led us away captive, now, as though mocking us and boasting, say to us: ”Give us back a word about your faith, and just as when you were in Jerusalem, sing a hymn to God.” Quomodo cantabimus canticum Domini in terra aliena? — ”How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” They answer, those who have sinned and been deceived, and they say: ”How shall we sing you the Lord’s song in a strange land, set as we are in our sins, we who have fallen from Jerusalem into Babylon?” Therefore no one can praise the Lord unless he is holy. For the sinner ought not to sing to the Lord, but to mourn his sins.

Si oblitus fuero tui Hierusalem, oblivioni detur dextera mea — ”If I forget you, Jerusalem, let my right hand be given over to forgetfulness.” Therefore, because he has sinned and fallen, he calls to mind his former way of life and Jerusalem, and he sets before himself this resolve: that unless I shall always be mindful of you, and always hold you in mind, let my right hand be given over to forgetfulness — that is, my works. He did not say the left hand, but the right: for the left hand is always in forgetfulness. Do you wish, then, always to be in remembrance of the Lord? Do works of the right hand. Adhaereat lingua mea faucibus meis, si non meminero tui — ”Let my tongue cleave to my jaws, if I do not remember you.” That is, let me have neither works nor speech, if the memory of you is not continually turned over in my heart.

Memor esto Domine filiorum Edom, in diem Hierusalem — ”Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom, in the day of Jerusalem.” Edom is interpreted as ”earthly” and ”bloody.” Who then is this, if not the devil? See, then, what he says. This is spoken in the person of Adam: ”Lord, remember how the serpent, the devil — who is understood to be Nebuchadnezzar — deceived me and dragged me off, and cast me out of paradise. Remember and repay him, and let him feel the punishment which he by his own malice brought upon me, dragging me and leading me into Babylon and to the Assyrians.” Filia Babylonis misera — ”Wretched daughter of Babylon.” The daughter of Babylon is the soul which is always in motion and in confusion, and has no stability, but is in vices and in sins — which is truly wretched.

”Blessed is he who shall repay you your recompense which you have repaid to us.” Blessed is he who shall repay her what she herself has done. For example: she cast me out of paradise; I, through abstinence, bring her back there. She deceived me into fornication; I, through chastity, bring her back into Jerusalem, and out of vices into virtue. Therefore I do this not as an enemy, but as a friend.

Beatus qui tenebit, et allidet parvulos tuos ad petram — ”Blessed is he who shall take hold of and dash your little ones against the rock.” The ”little ones” are said to be thoughts. For example: I have seen a woman, I have desired her: at once, if I do not cut off that desire, and, as it were, take it by the foot and dash it against the rock while the desire is small, it cannot afterwards be cut off when it has grown. Blessed, then, is he who cuts it off at once, and dashes it against the rock. And the Rock is Christ.

Homily 49, on Psalm 137

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). I will confess to you, O Lord, with my whole heart. As the wounds are, so too is the poultice. For just as the body has various wounds, so too the soul has its passions and its wounds; and against sin we ought to perform a corresponding repentance. If someone confesses for all his sins, that man confesses to the Lord with his whole heart. For example, someone has committed fornication, and he confesses for the fornication: but since he is either greedy, or wrathful, or a slanderer, or a blasphemer, and has very many vices, that man does not confess with his whole heart. But if someone performs repentance for all the vices and passions of his soul, that man can say: I will confess to you, O Lord, with my whole heart. For you have heard all the words of my mouth. This little verse is not found in the Hebrew. But as for what it says, this is the meaning: Therefore I will confess to you, O Lord, with my whole heart — that is, for all my vices and sins, since I have confessed to you not for one vice alone, and you have heard me.

And in the sight of the angels I will sing psalms to you. See the advancement of the penitent, that after confession and repentance he is counted worthy to sing psalms with the angels. But he who sings psalms no longer performs repentance, but gives thanks, and blesses. I will worship toward your holy temple. If this is the temple which now is seen to be deserted, in which one ought to worship: then the Jews ought not to worship, since the temple has been overthrown. But by ”temple” he means the holy and heavenly Jerusalem. Upon your mercy and your truth. Let the sinner hear ”mercy,” but let the just and proud man hear ”truth.” You will multiply strength in my soul. You will multiply: that is, that the soul is subject to many anxieties. Let all the kings of the earth confess to you, O Lord. The kings of the earth are those who reign in sin. Therefore let those very ones confess, who reign in sin. For he is not speaking of the kings of this world. For it is written: ”The heart of the king is in the hand of God.” Do you suppose that the heart of the most impious Julian was in the hand of God? God forbid. Or of Nero, or of the persecutors Maximian and Decius? God forbid. But he is speaking

of those who reign in sin, because those who conquer the vices and passions of the soul and reign over sin, their heart is in the hand of God. Because they have heard all the words of your mouth: because they have kept your commandments.

And let them sing in the ways of the Lord. The philosophers of this world did not sing in the ways of the Lord, but we sing in the ways of the Lord, that is, in Moses and Isaiah and Jeremiah: and from these ways we come to that way which says, ”I am the way.”

Homily 50, on Psalm 139

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Snatch me away, O Lord, from the evil man. The devil cannot deceive us so much by himself as he can through the instrument of a man; and it is from this that the prophet prays to be delivered. Who have devised iniquities in their heart. He is speaking about the heretics. The venom of asps is under their lips. For they seem to have words of friendship, yet they are full of death-dealing poison. Beside the path they have set a stumbling-block for me. That is: by bringing forward testimonies from the Scriptures, which seemed to have some semblance of reason, they were trying to deceive me. I said to the Lord: You are my God. Unless a man is holy, he cannot say this little verse; he who is not reigned over by sin, he it is who says, 'The Lord is my portion.'

Do not hand me over, O Lord, from my desire to the sinner. Scripture says that 'if anyone looks upon a woman to lust after her, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart.' So this is what the prophet is saying: Because of my concupiscence, do not hand me over to the devil; rather, it is well for me to be judged in the deed, and not in the thought. The head of their compassing about, the labor of their own lips shall cover them. Just as a serpent, when it sees someone coming to strike it, makes a coil of its whole body and hides its head in the middle, where it knows its life resides: so too these heretics, by the discourse of the philosophers and of Aristotle and the rest, seem to hide themselves, and as it were to shield and defend themselves. But the man of the Church, as it were with a rod — that is, with the cross — unwinds the coil, and finds the hidden head, and strikes it there; that is, he brings forth a testimony from the Scriptures.

The upright shall dwell with your countenance. And what is the countenance of God, if not Christ? 'Who thought it not robbery to be equal with God.'

Homily 51, on Psalm 140

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). O Lord, I have cried to you, hear me. Moses was standing with the people, and Pharaoh was pursuing behind his back, and on every side there was distress for him. At that time he wept to God, and immediately God said to him: ’Why do you cry out to me?’ While he was praying in silence, he was heard; yet Scripture does not record that he spoke, but only that he wept. And the blood of the martyrs always cries out to the Lord, and it is heard. And the Lord spoke to Cain: ’The blood of your brother cries out to me.’ And in the Apocalypse of John the souls of the righteous beneath the altar were saying to the Lord: ’How long, O Lord, will you not vindicate us?’ And at the same time let us consider that the souls of the righteous are an altar to the Lord. Attend to my voice, when I have cried out to you. That is, see and consider, O Lord, what I ask of you: for I do not ask of you a bodily desire, or gold, or any such thing of this world, but that I may obtain mercy. Therefore he says, attend, that is, listen carefully, because I ask nothing that is foreign.

Let my prayer be directed as incense in your sight. That is, let my prayer come straight to you, having no filth or faults or diabolical thoughts. Now incense is the prayers of the saints. And this we know from the Apocalypse, when the twenty-four elders held censers and said: ’These are the prayers of the saints.’ The lifting up of my hands an evening sacrifice. The lifting up of the hands points to the Lord, and in the lifting up of the hands we behold the Creator. But notice that he did not say, the stretching out of my hands. For stretching out is not lifting up; but one stretches out both behind his back and to the side, that is, into faults, just as the Lord too says: ’When you stretch out your hands to me, I will not hear you.’ The evening sacrifice, of the eleventh hour: that is, in the Gospel I lift up my hands. And again the Apostle: ’Lift up your hands to prayers.’ And when Moses lifted up his hands, Jesus was winning; but when he lowered them, he was being beaten. If I understand the Scriptures according to the history and according to the letter, Moses holds his hands downward: but if spiritually, he lifts his hands on high.

Set, O Lord, a guard to my mouth. 'Death and life are in the hands of the tongue.' And again: 'Amen I say to you, that for every idle word which you have spoken, you shall render an account on the day of judgment.' This therefore the prophet asks, that everything he speaks may not be idle, but holy and worthy of God. And set a door of enclosure to my lips. He asks for a door of enclosure like a wall around the whole house, so that he may be overcome in nothing. For Jeremiah says: 'Death has entered through your windows.' Now we have five windows: that is, sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. If therefore I have looked at a woman to lust after her, I have already committed adultery with her in my heart; and death has entered through my window, that is, through sight. If the lyre or the organ or the reed-pipe as it were dissolves me, death has entered through my hearing. But if I touch something soft, and am unstrung by the softness of the body, death has entered through my touch, and the rest likewise. Therefore this the prophet begs for, a door of enclosure, that is, that his whole house may be fortified, so that the adversary may have no place by which to enter and to lord it over men. For it is said in the epistle of St. Peter: 'Our adversary the devil goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.' The devil does not quickly fight against anyone by great faults, but by small ones; so that he may somehow or other enter, and lord it over the man, and afterward drive him into greater faults. Not through fornication, not through avarice, but through lesser faults does he enter.

Incline not my heart to words of malice, to make excuses for excuses in sins. O most wretched human race, who excuse our sins, saying, I was overcome by nature: when it is in our power both to sin and not to sin. We always excuse ourselves, and say: I did not want to sin, my flesh overcame me. That woman came to me, she sent for me, she touched me, she said that to me, she called me; and instead of doing penance and saying, Lord, I have sinned, we make excuses and join sins to sins. We all have an equal body, but different labors. 'God is no respecter of persons.' Do you wish to know that we and the saints have an equal body? Paul the Apostle says: 'But I see another law fighting against the law of my mind, and taking me captive in the law of sin.' And again after this: 'Therefore I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest, preaching to others, I myself should be found reprobate.' And again: 'Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' We have, therefore, different labors; and as much as each one labors, so much reward also does he receive.

With men that work iniquity. From the common sense it is understood: Incline not my heart with men that work iniquity. And I will not communicate with their chosen ones. Just as the Lord has his chosen saints, so the devil too has his own chosen ones. Understand for me the leaders of the heretics, and you do not doubt about their chosen ones. For if he had said the chosen ones, and not with the qualification 'their,' he would now be excluding the chosen of God. 'I will communicate' is understood in two ways: either I will consent, or I will become a second, that is,

unclean. For you know that Scripture calls two things unclean. The Apostle says: 'That he might create both, that is, two men into one new man': two, the interior and the exterior; that is, making the unclean holy. And again Noah brought into the ark with him seven and seven of the clean, but two and two of the unclean.

The just shall correct me in mercy, and shall rebuke me. 'Whom the Lord loves he corrects, and he chastises every son whom he receives.' Blessed is he who is corrected here: 'the Lord will not requite twice for the same thing.' It is a great wrath of the Lord, when here he is not angry with us: for he reserves us like a calf for the slaughter. For to Jerusalem he says: 'Many are your sins and many your iniquities, therefore I will not be angry with you.' That is, when you were only an adulteress, I was jealous over you as one who loves you; but when you had many lovers, I despised you, and I will not be angry with you. Just as a man is jealous over his wife when he loves her; but if he is not jealous, he hates her, and does not attain to the words of him who says: 'I will visit their iniquities with a rod.' And again: 'And I will not visit their daughters when they have committed fornication.' The just shall correct me in mercy, and shall rebuke me. Set here some teacher, or father, or physician. If a physician sees rotten flesh in a body, and says, What is that to me? know that he is cruel. But if he cuts it away, and applies the cautery, he is merciful: because he saves the man. Likewise a teacher too, if he lets the boy go, and does not demand discipline of him, he hates him.

But if he demands it, and like a physician heals him; what is thought to be harshness is clemency. And Ahab is reproved by the Lord concerning Naboth, when he killed him, and took his vineyard, and shed innocent blood. Elijah the prophet was sent to him, who said: 'You have killed, and moreover you have taken possession.' At once, stricken in conscience, he bowed down his neck and his eyes: and this an impious king, and clothed in purple. And afterward Scripture says that he went and put on sackcloth beneath the purple. And God, seeing this, said: 'Because Ahab has reverenced me, I will not bring evil upon him.' See therefore how much the sackcloth availed, and the fasting, and how much blood a little tear washed away. So then one ought to wear sackcloth and to fast in such a way that no one sees. 'Shall correct' is understood in two ways: either he will reprove, or he will teach.

But let not the oil of the sinner fatten my head. 'My people, they who call you blessed lead you astray.' The praise of heretics and their oil, with which they anoint the heads of men and promise them the kingdoms of heaven, fattens the head. Now every fat thing Scripture reproves, as it says: 'And Jacob ate, and was filled, and the beloved kicked back, he grew thick, he grew fat, he grew broad.' But the manna of the angels is thin. For my prayer also is still in their good pleasures. This he says: They indeed were raging; but I was praying for them, that they might be converted. Their judges have been swallowed up, joined to the rock. As elsewhere he says:

'Blessed is he who shall take hold of and dash your little ones against the rock.' 'And the rock was Christ.' Now the little ones are the lesser and small thoughts before they grow up. And now these very heretics, although through Aristotle and Plato they seem to despise the simplicity of the Church, yet when they have come to the Scriptures they are at once swallowed up by the rock, that is, by Christ, and are converted to him. For 'swallowing up' is said for victory, as the Apostle says: 'Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? where, O hell, is your sting?' Now he calls that very swallowing up a victory, the victory which it had in swallowing.

They shall hear my words, for they have prevailed. The Lord himself says: Those who have come to me have been overcome, and have been delighted by my words, and have been converted to me in my Church. As the thickness of the earth. Everything thick is near to the earth: and the soul that sins clings to the earth. For the Lord from the beginning made all things thin. By his own fault, therefore, each one is made thick, and is drawn down to the earth. Let us give an example. As a wound in the body, swelling, is thick, and is full of pus, when the physician comes he cuts it, and heals it and makes it thin, then it is brought back to its own nature, as it was also created. Therefore he says: As the thickness of the earth has been broken up over the earth.

And the Savior — Our bones are scattered beside hell — in the twenty-first psalm says: 'All my bones are scattered.' If we understand according to the letter, it does not stand: since he was only crucified. When you see Arius, Eunomius outside the Church, understand the bones of the Lord to be scattered beside hell. The bone, which is strong: those very greater ones, who seem to be something through their much talking and philosophy and contention, are led astray by the heretics.

Keep me from the snare which they have set for me. Always either heretics or demons stretch snares for us. For faults are near to virtues. They have set a snare for me in almsgiving, if I stretch out my hand so that men may see, and, as though doing a good deed, I come into a fault and into sin. But if I give a tunic to a brother so that another may see, they have set a snare for me. Always nets are stretched for stags and snares are set, where the hunter has caught their tracks. Now the stag is taken for the saints: because it is lofty, and has great horns, and kills serpents. Therefore it is said elsewhere: 'Who made my feet like those of stags.' For it is said to be of such power that with the breath of its nostrils it draws serpents out of their caverns and thus devours them. Those very serpents, therefore, that is, the demons, set stumbling-blocks for us in our very tracks where we walk: in the virtues, in almsgiving, that we may do it before men for the sake of vainglory: in fasting, in prayer, in wearing sackcloth, and showing it to men. For he who wears sackcloth ought to mourn his sins, not to boast and show it to men. And from the stumbling-blocks of them that work iniquity. That is, that I may not stumble.

The sinners shall fall into his net. Above he said, Keep me from the snare which they have set for me, concerning many; but now concerning one, The sinners shall fall into his net. Just as the Lord casts a net, and catches a multitude of fish, and has the apostles as fishermen gathering and bringing to him, that is, those who believe through them: so also the devil has demons, who are subject to him, who both deceive men and bring them to him. I am alone until I pass over. Jeremiah says: 'I sat alone, for I was filled with bitterness.' That is, I was in penitence. Alone: clean, not a second. And Moses says: 'Passing over, I will see this great vision.' Unless he passes over, that is, all the faults, he cannot see the great vision. Now the vision was great, because the bush was burning, and was not consumed: the thorns were burning, that is, the sins. By this fire Isaiah too is cleansed: for this is the coal which touched his lips, which was upon the altar. Of this coal the prophet David also makes mention: 'The sharp arrows of the mighty one with desolating coals.' This coal is a desolator: it makes solitude, and purges of sins.

Homily 52, on Psalm 141

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). The intelligence of David when he was in the cave, a prayer. This title is prescribed according to history, indeed, when David was fleeing from the face of Saul in the desert of Engaddi, hidden in a cave; and Saul entered, unaware, as if on his own account. But since it has in its heading "The intelligence of David," we ought to understand the psalm spiritually. This psalm is indeed taken also as referring to the Lord, the true David; and Saul is understood as the devil, the cave as this world, and the fact that the devil does not send anything good into this world, but dung, and whatever is rotten. Now this world is understood as a cave, because it does not have perfect light in comparison with what is to come; but the Lord, coming into this world, shone forth like some light. Therefore the Apostle also says: "Who is the light of his glory." Therefore, just as David entered into the cave, hiding himself from Saul, so too the Lord entered into this world, and suffered persecution.

I pour out my prayer in his sight. He said it more expressively: I pour out my whole heart in the sight of the Lord — just as someone might confess his wound to a doctor, and tell him all the sufferings he has, so that the doctor may thus apply the cure to him. I declare my tribulation before him. This is the tribulation which the Apostle enumerates, which, when counted with the rest, produces hope, and hope does not confound. When my spirit was failing within me. If the evil spirit that was choking Saul does not fail from us, the Lord cannot know our paths. And what are the paths of the righteous? Righteousness, good works, an upright life, chastity, self-restraint, and other things like these. In this way in which I was walking, they have hidden a snare for me. The vices are near to the virtues. In whatever way anyone wishes to walk, in that way they set snares: whether in fasting, or in almsgiving, or in the other virtues.

I looked to the right hand and saw: and there was no one who knew me. If we make this psalm refer to the Lord, the Lord himself is speaking. All my disciples abandoned me, and fled. One had remained, Peter, who had promised himself, saying,

”If I must die for you, I will not abandon you”: and he too denied me. Therefore he said, I looked to him on the right hand, and he did not say on the left, because Peter did penance. Flight has perished from me. When he was seized by the Jews. And there is no one who seeks after my soul. For they all were shouting: ”Crucify, crucify.” Attend to my supplication, for I have been humbled exceedingly. Unless someone has been humbled, he is not heard by the Lord. For what does it profit anyone to pray with words and to keep his neck held erect? But if we understand it of the Lord: ”Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart.”

Deliver me from those who persecute me, for they have been made stronger than I. Those who fight against us are stronger than we are, that is, the princes of this world. Bring my soul out of custody, that it may confess to your name. That is, out of this body. To confess, that is, to glorify, as he says: ”I confess to you, Father.” The righteous await me, until you reward me. The Lord says: The apostles await me, until I rise again from the dead.

Homily 53, on Psalm 142

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). O Lord, hear my prayer. The words of a humble man, full of humility and mercy. Give ear to my supplication in your truth. These are the words of one who trusts. In your truth, that is, in your Christ. ’I am the way and the life and the truth.’ Hear me in your justice. Here too, in your Christ. That is, I do not trust in myself, but I ask for your truth and your justice, that it may have mercy on me. And enter not into judgment with your servant. See, he has shown most plainly that he awaits the mercy of Christ, saying: And enter not into judgment with your servant. Here it is as though someone judges between God and the prophet, just as it is also written in the fiftieth psalm: ’That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged.’ And God enters into judgment for this reason, that he may punish justly. Something of this sort was done also by Cyrus, king of the Persians and Medes, to the king of the Armenians, when he had violated his friendship. He conquered him, and took him captive; and he made that man’s own kinsmen, and his wife, and his sons judge between them, so that he might justly either show mercy or punish. For in your sight shall no living man be justified. ’The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: the God of the living, and not of the dead.’ Therefore not even the patriarchs themselves will be justified in the sight of God. ’For the stars are not clean in his sight.’

For the enemy has persecuted my soul. This needs no interpretation: no one doubts that it is the devil. He has humbled my life on the earth. This is what he means. Before this I had wings, and I flew: but now the enemy has persecuted me and seized me, and bound my feet and my hands; just as a bird is caught by a man, and seems as it were to be dead, because it does not have the free use of its wings to fly. So too, he says, the enemy has bound me with the awareness of my sins. He has placed me in dark places, like the dead of the world. Like the dead of the world: not yet dead. Why? Because he stands in repentance. But if anyone who sins does not do penance, this man is dead to the world, and not like one dead, but perfectly dead. This, then, the enemy supposed—that I would not do penance for

my sins, which he himself suggested to me that I should commit. And my spirit was in anguish over me. 'Do you first tell your sins, and you shall be saved.' And again: 'If you only sigh for your sins, you shall be saved.'

My heart within me was troubled. Because of my conscience, because I sinned. I was mindful of the days of old. I was mindful of my former days, how I used to have confidence: but now it is night for me. I stretched out my hands to you. Bound by the enemy, I can do nothing else except do penance, and lift up my hands to you. My soul is as earth without water to you. As earth without water thirsts and seeks the rain, so too my soul longs for and thirsts after you, its God. Hear me speedily, O Lord, my spirit has failed. My soul has failed, my flesh has failed: my spirit alone remained in me, and it too has failed: but hear me speedily, and have mercy on me. Make known to me the way in which I should walk. Make your Christ known to me, who said, 'I am the way.'

Your good Spirit shall lead me into the right land. Here the most impious Arians set before us and say: 'Good Master, what good shall I do, that I may be saved? And he says: Why do you call me good? No one is good, except God alone.' Therefore if the Son is not good, but the Father is, the Father is greater than the Son. Therefore according to your reasoning, most impious Arian, who is greater, the Son or the Holy Spirit? You certainly say, the Son. Here, then, he says: Your good Spirit shall lead me into the right land. Therefore if the Spirit, who is lesser, is good, as you say: how much more is the Son good, who is greater, Christ. But the Gospel has it thus: 'And one of the scribes coming and tempting him said: Good Master. And he said, Why do you call me good' and do not confess it? Just as if someone tempting his bishop, whom he despises, should say to him, Bishop; and the other should answer, I am no bishop to you, depart from me. But have you not read elsewhere: 'The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep'? But what is better than the Son, who put on flesh for our sake and suffered, was nine months in the womb of the Virgin, and coming down from his majesty was in blood, was in the cradle, suffered to grow little by little, and to be beaten, and to be struck on the cheek, and to be crucified? What is better than this?

Homily 54, on Psalm 143

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). For the sake of those who do not know the Latin language, although we have said much about the Gospel, we ought nevertheless to say certain things also about the Psalter as well: so that, while some are filled, others may not go away hungry. But since the psalm is long, and if we should wish to linger over each single little verse, the day will slip away: we ought briefly to run over each individual point, unfolding the sense rather than the words. Blessed be the Lord my God, who teaches my hands for the fight. He who interprets briefly gains this: that he himself has no praise, and yet whatever there is in the interpretation, those who have heard retain it. Blessed be the Lord my God, who teaches my hands for the fight, and my fingers for war. Let us lift up our hands in holy things without thoughts and disputes, and let us lift them up in every place; and when we have lifted up our hands, our prayer to God is a weapon against the devil. Who teaches my hands for the fight, and my fingers for war. This is our lyre, this our harp: on this we sing to God.

My mercy and my refuge, my helper and my deliverer: my protector. With how many names is God called! As many benefits, so many names. Who subdues my people under me. This can be said in the person of Christ, that is, from the assumed man. But it can also be said in the person of the apostles, that which he says: Who subdues my people under me. This too the holy father in the monastery says, and gives thanks to God, and says: Blessed be the Lord my God, who subdues my people under me. For it is not subjected to me, but subjected to you; therefore it serves me, that it may serve you.

Lord, what is man, that you have made yourself known to him? or the son of man, that you take account of him? This very thing is said also in the eighth psalm. ’What is man, that you are mindful of him? or the son of man, that you visit him?’ Lord, what is man, that you have made yourself known to him? He speaks of the frailty of the body and of the human condition: and what does he say? If you look at the flesh, what is man? If at the spirit, man is a great thing. Let us not despise the

flesh, but let us despise the works of the flesh. Let us not despise the flesh, which reigns with Christ in heaven. 'Flesh and blood shall not possess the kingdom of God': not flesh and blood, but the works of the flesh. Flesh and blood shall not possess the kingdom of God. And how do they reign in Christ? and how do we sit with Christ in the heavenly places? Lord, what is man, that you have made yourself known to him? or the son of man, that you take account of him? He gives thanks to God, and this is what he says. As regards the human condition, man is nothing. 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, said the preacher.' If all is vanity, then heaven too, then the angels too. If heaven and the angels are vanity, how much vanity is man?

And if the angels are vanity, if heaven is vanity, why then did God work vanity? Vanity in comparison with God: but in itself not vanity. Lord, what is man, that you have made yourself known to him? That you have made yourself known to him. Great is the happiness of man, to know his Creator. In this we differ from beasts and from wild animals, that we understand our Creator, and they do not understand. But even the very posture of the body seeks out its Maker. For the animals look toward the earth, and there is the belly where also is the eye. But our eyes are lifted up toward heaven: so that even if the mind should be blinded, still with unwilling eyes we may see heaven.

Man is made like to vanity: his days pass away like a shadow. Truly our days are like a shadow. I was a little infant, I was a boy, I was a young lad, I was a youth, I was a man, that is, of perfect age, I was of middle age. While I know it not, I am an old man. Death creeps up upon old age. I am changed daily, and I do not perceive that I am nothing. Not for even a single moment of an hour do we stand in our own state, but we are always either growing or diminishing. Therefore man is changed by moments, and while he knows it not, he perishes. I, an old man, recall what I was as a little infant, what I did, how I played, how I ran hither and thither: now I see myself weighed down with excessive burden. His days pass away like a shadow. Our life is a shadow: it is seen, and it has no substance. But that which has no substance quickly passes away. Since therefore man is so wretched, and since he is thus infirm, what do we pray for? what do we ask? what does the prophet say here? what does he pray for?

Lord, bow down your heavens, and descend. You will not be able to save this vileness of man, unless you yourself put it on. Lord, bow down your heavens, and descend. Your straying sheep will not be able to be healed, unless it is carried back on your shoulders. Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke. 'Amen I say to you: if you shall have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, Pass over, and it shall be transferred.' There it was being said concerning the lunatic. Concerning that mountain, which could not be transferred by them, it is written in Jeremiah: 'Give glory to the Lord our God, before your feet stumble against the dark mountains.' Why have we said all this? Because now too there

follows, Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke. The mountains that reign, the mountains that are raised up through pride, who say 'The rivers are mine, and I made them.' Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke. He did not say, they shall be set ablaze; but, they shall smoke. Let them have the token of punishment: not of blaze, not of splendor.

Flash forth the lightning, and you shall scatter them. See what he says. He did not say, you shall destroy them: but, you shall scatter them. We read in Genesis, at that time when they were building the tower, God says: 'Come, let us descend and confound their tongue' lest at some time they should have agreement among themselves; but let them be scattered abroad, it profits them. Send forth your hand from on high. 'Lord, who has believed our report? and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?' Send forth your hand from on high. Lord, bow down your heavens, and descend. This is said to the Son: Bow down your heavens, and descend. And how does he say, Send forth your hand from on high? If he descended, how does he send his hand from on high? But although he may be on earth, still he sends his hand from heaven: for he does not withdraw from heaven. Rescue me and free me from the many waters. Since you descended, since you bowed down the heavens, and sent forth your hand from on high, and deigned to assume human flesh, and many believed in you, in place of one water many waters began to be. You may see diverse heresies scattered throughout the whole world. Rescue me and free me from the many waters. This the catechumen says: Free me from the many waters, and grant me the living fountain. For there is one baptism: 'one faith, one baptism.' Free me from the many waters. For those many waters do not bring forth your sons, but the sons of strangers. Whence it follows: Free me from the many waters, and from the hand of the sons of strangers. For they are not your sons who are born in the many waters, but they are the sons of strangers.

Whose mouth has spoken vanity. They promise themselves knowledge, and they raise up their mouth against their Creator. 'They have set their mouth against heaven.' Whose mouth has spoken vanity. Their knowledge is the knowledge of vanity. And their right hand is the right hand of iniquity. Both are condemned, both mouth and hand, both knowledge and works. Whose mouth has spoken vanity: this to knowledge. And their right hand is the right hand of iniquity. The right hand, in work. They say that they have a right hand, but they are wholly left-handed. It is the right hand of iniquity, and not of equity. Whence to such a left hand it is said: 'Let the devil stand at his right hand.' He who has such a right hand, and the right hand of iniquity, the devil stands at his right hand. O God, I will sing to you a new song. A new man, a new song. O God, I will sing to you a new song. 'Sing to the Lord a new song.' How beautifully he did not say, I sing, but, I will sing. In the future he made his promise; for in the present he knows there is a battle, not a song. An army never sings, except when it has conquered. Therefore since in the present I fight, I have no leisure to sing. When I shall have conquered, then I will

sing. On the ten-stringed psaltery I will make music to you. Then I will stretch out both hands, and on such strings I will sing to you. My prayer is your psaltery.

Who gives salvation to kings. To what kings? 'The heart of the king is in the hand of God.' Even of Julian the persecutor, and of Nero, and of Decius? The heart of the king is in the hand of God. Those who reign over their own body, who subject their body and reduce it to servitude, lest, while preaching to others, they themselves be found reprobate. These are the kings of whom wisdom says in Proverbs: 'She gives a kingdom to kings.' Rescue me and free me from the hand of the sons of strangers. The little verses which were spoken above are repeated again. Whose mouth has spoken vanity, and their right hand is the right hand of iniquity. Whose sons are like new plantings established in their youth. From the hand of the sons of strangers. Let us see what sort the sons of the heretics are. Whose sons are like a new planting in their youth. From the hand of the sons of strangers. Attend diligently to what is said about the heretics.

Their daughters are adorned, decked round about like the likeness of a temple. Their storehouses are full, belching forth from this into that. Their sheep are fruitful, abounding in their goings-out: their oxen are fat. There is no ruin of the wall, nor passage, nor outcry in their streets. They called blessed the people who have these things. This they said. What do I say? Blessed the people whose God is their Lord. We shall therefore expound each point briefly for your prayers. Whose sons are like a new planting in their youth. Their planting is not old, but is new. For it is not from the old law, it is not from the prophets, it is not from the apostles; but it is from new masters. Their sons are like a new planting in their youth. In their youth: they are always young. Although there are many old heresies, still, since they change daily, and daily find new things, the heresies themselves are new. Although they are old, still, since daily they renew their doctrines, they are new. For they are not content with the error of the old masters, but daily they themselves discover new things. Whose sons are like a new planting in their youth.

What is said about the Church, about the one who fears the Lord? 'Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways.' What is said about them? 'Your sons are like new olive plants round about your table.' About the table of Christ are those sons, they are not far from the table of Christ. There daughters are not spoken of, but only sons. But the heretics have both daughters, and have the frailer sex too, the delights of pleasure. Their daughters are adorned. The speech is adorned, and the sense is filthy. In the holy scriptures thoughts are always called sons: words, daughters. See therefore what he says. Their thoughts, that is, are new sons. But their words, that is of the heretics, which they have from the wisdom of the world, are adorned: for they have adorned words, elegant speech. Their daughters are adorned. They do indeed seem to be adorned: but because they are daughters, and not sons, they have no strength. Decked round about like the likeness of a temple.

Beautifully he said, the likeness of a temple: they do not have the true Church, but the likeness of a church.

Their storehouses are full, belching forth from this into that. They are ready for contending. If you hold them fast on one testimony, they pass over to another. If you hold them fast in the scriptures, they flee to Aristotle. If you hold Aristotle fast, they pass over to Plato. Their storehouses are full, belching forth from this into that. Properly that is called a storehouse which has riches laid up in it. The heretics have storehouses: for they have prepared words with which they contend. But the men of the Church are simple, they have nothing prepared. They open their mouth, and it is filled by the Lord, according to what is said: 'Open your mouth, and I will fill it' and 'Do not consider what you shall answer them, for your Father will give you in that hour what you should say.' You see that we do not have storehouses prepared, but our riches are sudden. Let someone say: Give a testimony, how the saints do not have storehouses. 'Behold,' he says, 'the birds of heaven, for they have neither storehouses nor barns: and your heavenly Father feeds them.' Those birds are especially the monks: they have no storehouses, they have no pantries, but they have the very Lord of pantries and storehouses, Christ himself. They have no barns, but the Lord of barns. They have not the riches of the devil, but they have the poverty of Christ. What does the devil say? 'All these things are mine:

if falling down you will worship me, I will give them to you.' What does Christ say to his own? 'He who will not sell all his things which he has and give to the poor, cannot be my disciple.' The one promises kingdoms and riches, that he may kill: the other promises poverty, that he may save. We do nothing great, if we leave our own things: Christ left the Father and the kingdoms of the heavens for our sake. Let no one think that I have blasphemed, because I said, he left the Father. I speak according to the dispensation, according to that in which he is sent, according to what he says: 'The Father, who sent me, is greater than I.' God is not sent, God is not subjected, does not serve: but the dispensation is sent. If God is everywhere, and all things are in God, how is God sent to anything, since all things are God's? Christ therefore for our sake was made poor. Why have we said all this? Because now it was read, Their storehouses are full, belching forth from this into that. Beautifully he said, belching forth: from excessive fullness. They belch from fullness, and perish: we are saved by fasting.

Their sheep are fruitful. They have many sons: for the number of heretics is great. Their sheep are fruitful. Whence it is said also in Hosea the prophet: Lord, give to them. What will you give them? A barren womb and dry breasts. About whom is this said? About the masters of the heretics, who applaud themselves in the number of their disciples. Their sheep are fruitful, abounding in their goings-out. He did not say, in their goings-in; but, in their goings-out. For they do not go into the Church, but they go out of the Church. They went out from us, but they

were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would surely have remained with us. Abounding in their goings-out. Daily they go out of the Church. Abounding in their goings-out. What is said about the Church? All her glory, the daughter of the king, is from within. Their oxen are fat. Pharaoh too saw in a dream fat Egyptian oxen. Their oxen are fat. The Israelite peoples are lean, the Egyptians are fat. For you may see that the masters of the heretics do nothing else, except pursue riches. They pursue riches, and they despise the poor Christ. Their oxen are fat. Beautifully he says, fat oxen: whose God is the belly, and whose glory is in their confusion.

There is no ruin of the wall, nor passage. Does it not seem to you to be obscure what is said, There is no ruin of the wall, nor passage, nor outcry in their streets? You will find heretics unschooled with difficulty: for all the heretic masters are equipped with worldly knowledge. They do not have the apostolic net, but the little chains of dialectic. There is no ruin of the wall, nor passage. If ever they are in disputations, when they begin to dispute with you, their words are so brief, so enclosed with artful speech, that it is difficult to escape from there. For when they have bound you with their syllogisms, and have shut you in, and have woven and built up the syllogism for you like a wall, you cannot fall down, you cannot pass through, you are held enclosed. There is no ruin of the wall, nor passage. And when they have held you there as though enclosed in a certain ring, then you will not be on the narrow way that leads to life, but on the broad one that leads to death. Nor outcry in their streets. Jesus cries out, and calls to himself, and says: Let him who thirsts come and drink. The outcry of Jesus is on the narrow way; in the streets of the heretics it is not.

They called blessed the people who have these things. Many, not knowing, think such people blessed. But for us there is Christian simplicity: we do not want Platonic eloquence, but we want the apostolic simplicity of fishermen. This one holds the net, has feet and hands muddied from the work; this one has a calloused hand from the work. Blessed the people whose God is their Lord. Blessed is the people, who instead of all riches have Christ. Those people have sons and daughters, and storehouses, fruitful sheep, oxen fat and sleek and comely. But we do not have a multitude, but we know that saying in the Gospel: Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst. Fear not, little flock: for it has pleased God to dwell in you. Let not the monks say: Behold, such great multitudes, the cities are full, the whole world: is no one then saved, except him who is in the monastery? Behold, such great multitudes: are we then alone saved? When you have thought this, hear: Fear not, little flock, for it has pleased the Father to dwell in you. And now it was read in the Gospel, that one soul is saved, so that two thousand swine perish. Why do I say all this? Because more precious is the soul of one saint, than infinite multitudes of sinners. Out of the whole world he chose

twelve apostles: out of the twelve one departed, eleven remained. The cross came, ten fled:

one Peter remained, one with the One. And that one fled, and would that he had fled: and he denies. Therefore let us say, the whole human race perished. Since it had perished, therefore the Lord, being crucified, said: I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the nations there was not a man with me. At that time the psalm was fulfilled: Save me, O Lord, for the holy one has failed. There is none who does good, there is none, even to one. He who had promised, saying If it be necessary for me to die, or to go into prison, I will not deny you, denied. Why do I say all this? Because the monk ought not to look to the multitude of sinners, but to the manner of life and the fewness of the saints. All Judea was being led into captivity. Nebuchadnezzar had come, so many thousands of men were being led captive into Babylon. Jeremiah alone was there who confessed God, and he himself was being cast into the pit of mud; and yet more precious was the soul of that one man, than of the whole people. Do you wish to know what one man does? Jesus the son of Nave, when the whole earth was inhabited, was alone. Surely there were infinite multitudes, and he alone was. Alone he commands the sun and the moon, and it stands still; a man bids, and heaven hears. Heaven hears him, because he himself was hearing the Lord. Jeremiah was in captivity;

but there were also many multitudes. And what does he say? I sat alone, because I was filled with bitterness. How were you alone in the city? But therefore alone, because I had no companion of my purpose.

Homily 55, on Psalm 145

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Praise the Lord, O my soul. This psalm has a heading: Of Haggai and Zechariah. And this we must know first of all, that it is not found in the Hebrew, but in the Septuagint translators. But let us speak also according to the common edition, Of Haggai and Zechariah. Since the restoration of Jerusalem is here spoken of — The Lord shall reign forever, thy God, O Sion, unto generation and generation — they suppose it to be said, as it were, concerning the restoration of Jerusalem, which took place under Haggai and Zechariah.

Praise the Lord, O my soul. He did not say, praise the body, but, praise, O my soul; not that he condemned the body, but he condemned the works of the flesh. Praise the Lord, O my soul. The soul exhorts itself. Just as if David were to say, Praise the Lord, O David; so too the soul itself says to itself, Praise the Lord, O my soul. I will praise the Lord in my life. See what it says: it exhorts itself, and it itself answers. What does it say? It says to me, Praise the Lord, O my soul: I myself answer, I will praise the Lord in my life. At present I cannot praise, I am weighed down by sins. As often as I open my lips in the praises of God, so often does the consciousness of my sins glue them shut. I will praise the Lord in my life. Beautifully he said, I will praise, not I praise. When I shall have been with my Lord, then I will praise my Lord in my life. Now I am in death, I cannot praise. I will praise in my life. Our life is Christ: let us praise the Lord in life. I will sing to my God as long as I shall be. See what it says. When we do something righteously, we are: but when we sin, we cease to be. There are many things that might be said, but the discourse hastens to its end.

Put not your trust in princes, nor in the sons of men, in whom there is no salvation. This he says generally to all: Put not your trust in princes, not in the emperor, not in prefects, not in the judges of the world. Put not your trust in princes. Who are the princes? The sons of men. Who are the sons of men? Those in whom there is no salvation.

His spirit shall go forth, and he shall return into his earth. But when he shall have returned into his earth, what will happen? In that day all his thoughts shall perish: all the confidence of princes. All their thoughts shall perish. Put not your trust in princes. Many have trusted in princes. Today he was, tomorrow he is not. Today the army goes before him, and in the evening he lies in the tomb. After such great magnitude, such great glory, no intervals of time intervene: in the same moment is the working of Christ. In the sons of men, in whom there is no salvation. Who are the princes? The sons of men. If the men themselves are nothing, what are their sons? His spirit shall go forth. Whose? Man's. His spirit shall go forth. Here he puts spirit for soul. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. His spirit shall go forth, and he shall return into his earth. It is not the spirit that shall return into his earth, for the spirit is not of the earth: but the spirit shall go forth, and the man shall return into his earth. In that day all their thoughts shall perish. We ourselves, who are not princes, how many things do we daily ponder, and say: Tomorrow I will do this, I will pull down my barns, and again tomorrow I will build them. It is said to me: Fool, this night thy soul shall be snatched away: and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? This is said concerning those who trust in princes. But concerning the holy man, what is said?

Blessed is he whose helper is the God of Jacob. These trust in chariots, and these in horses: but we will call upon the name of the Lord our God. They have more helpers: but they are princes, but they are men, but they collapse. We have one, who is able to save. His hope is in the Lord his God. Let us see what the three young men say in the Babylonian furnace, when Nebuchadnezzar summons them, and compels them to worship Bel: what do they answer Nebuchadnezzar? O king, we have no need to answer thee concerning this word. God indeed is able to deliver us from the burning furnace: but even if he shall not deliver us, know, O king, that we do not worship the image which thou hast set up. See their faith. We believe, they say, that he is able to deliver us: but if perchance our sins should hinder it, nevertheless we believe also in him who is unwilling to deliver. For we do not believe in this life, but in the life to come: we do not believe in him so that we may not burn here, but so that through these fires we may not pass over to other fires. Set us aflame therefore, prepare the furnace: this burning, this consuming, is our purgation. Blessed is he whose helper is the God of Jacob. See the significance of the words. His helper. And he could not work any sign there because of their unbelief. God is our helper.

He delivers and labors alongside those who are willing and who labor: those who sleep and lie idle and are unwilling he does not deliver. His hope is in the Lord his God. Excellently he said, hope: even if in the present he does not deliver, nevertheless there is hope concerning the future. Who made heaven and earth. This God who made heaven and earth, the sea and all the things that are in them. In comparison with heaven and earth and the sea, we men, according to the condition

of the flesh, are as if ants and fleas. He therefore who made heaven and earth, can he not deliver the man whom he made?

Who keepeth truth forever. If a lie oppresses us, let us not be saddened: the Lord keepeth truth forever. Someone or other has lied against us, and the one lying is believed more than we who speak the truth. We ought not to despair: the Lord keepeth truth forever. Beautifully he said, keepeth. He keeps it, and holds it in his treasury: he will give back to us what he has preserved. Who keepeth truth forever. Christ is truth: let us speak truth, and truth preserves truth for us. He executeth judgment for them that suffer wrong. Even if it comes late, do not despair: coming he shall come, and shall save. He executeth judgment for them that suffer wrong. Let this alone be in our conscience, that we suffer unjustly. Let us hold this in our conscience, that we do not suffer on account of our sins, and that we do not do that of which we are accused. He giveth food to the hungry. And according to the letter it is profitable; and even if it be understood simply, it edifies the hearer. Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap, and your heavenly Father feedeth them. He giveth food to the hungry. To the hungry he gives, not to those who belch. He therefore who as a monk has nothing, let him confidently receive: he who has and is belching, let him not receive. You know that you are hungry, you know that you have nothing:

if you are hungry and have nothing, you rather confer a benefit, if you receive, than is bestowed on you. But if you have and are not hungry, you ought not to take away the food of the hungry, so that you, being sated, may receive. Receive what you may put into your belly, not what goes into your purse: receive a tunic that may cover your body, not one that may fill your chests. He giveth food to the hungry. This according to the letter. Let us speak also in another way. Let us hunger for Christ, and he himself gives us the heavenly bread. Give us this day our daily bread. Those who say this, hunger: those who desire bread, hunger. He who says, Give us this day our daily bread, surely speaks as one hungering. He giveth food to the hungry. Someone supposes that he speaks of the heavenly bread from the mysteries. And this indeed we receive, since it is truly the flesh of Christ, and truly the blood of Christ. But let us speak also in another way. The bread of Christ and his flesh is the divine word and the heavenly teaching. Whoever shall have received this bread and been sated, what will happen? What?

The Lord looseth them that are fettered. If this bread shall have refreshed our soul, that is, the divine word and the heavenly teaching, at once our feet, which had been bound, are loosed. The Lord looseth them that are fettered. Lazarus too was bound; and he said: Loose him. The Lord looseth them that are fettered. And the daughter of Abraham had been bent over and bound for eighteen years; she is loosed, and looks up to heaven. See what is said there in the Gospel. And behold, it says, there was a certain woman, who had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years:

and she could not, it says, lift up her neck. Because she had a spirit of infirmity, she could not lift her neck upward. The Lord looseth them that are fettered. These same fetters are also works: since indeed the same sins, which take our necks captive, also bind our feet. Whoever is fettered cannot run. Whoever is fettered cannot run in the stadium of Christ: for the feet are weighed down by fetters, and are pressed to the ground, and fasten us to the earth. The Lord looseth them that are fettered. See the order. He giveth food to the hungry: first we hunger, then we receive food. But when we shall have been sated, our feet, which had been fettered, are loosed. And when they shall have begun to walk freely, what follows? The Lord enlighteneth the blind. See what it says.

If he were speaking of these blind men, he ought to have said, The Lord enlighteneth the blind. But he did not say this: but according to the Hebrew and Greek truth, what did he say? The Lord maketh the blind wise. If he were speaking of these eyes of the flesh, he ought to have said, The Lord enlighteneth the blind: but now indeed he says, The Lord maketh the blind wise. If ye were blind, he says, ye should have no sin. Our heart has been blinded by the darkness of sins. Foolishness and stupidity are the darkness of our eyes. When therefore we hungering shall have been refreshed, and our feet shall have been freed, then also the eye of our heart will begin to see the light which it had once lost, and to have wisdom. If one shall have been made wise, what follows?

The Lord raiseth up them that are cast down. And if you were lying down, be secure: the Lord stretches out his hand. The Lord loveth the just. I see two things: he loves, and he guards. He who loves, loves it as his own: but he who guards, guards him who is set in danger. The Lord loveth the just. Whoever is just and perfect, he is loved; but whoever is a stranger, and has not come to the servitude of the Lord, he is preserved.

The Lord keepeth the strangers: he will take up the orphan and the widow. And according to the letter it is profitable. He will take up the orphan and the widow. O martyr, you who are held fast to shed your blood for me, do not be anxious about your children, do not be anxious about your wife: they have me in your place. Let us speak also according to the spirit. He will take up the orphan and the widow. He will take up the orphan, who had lost God his father through sins. And he will take up the widow. The widow, that is, that soul which had lost Christ her husband. But see what it says. The orphan and the widow: he did not say, he will guard: he did not say, he will save: but, he will take up, if she return to the father, if she come back to the husband. And the way of sinners he will destroy. He did not say, sinners he will destroy: according to the first psalm, And the way of the ungodly shall perish. If the way of the just is Christ, the way of sinners is the devil. And the way of sinners he will destroy. The way, therefore, of all sinners is the devil, him he will destroy: but us he will save, who walk along it, and are unlearning to walk.

The Lord shall reign forever. When the way of sinners shall have perished, then the Lord shall reign forever. He did not say, unto the age: but, unto the ages. As long as the way does not perish, Christ does not reign in us: as long as the way of sinners does not perish, Christ does not reign in us. As long as our feet walk in the way of the devil, Christ does not reign in us. I grow angry without cause with my brother: I walk in the way of the devil, Christ does not reign in me. I disparage my brother: I walk in the way of the devil, Christ does not reign in me. In whatever sin I shall have walked, I walk in the way of the devil, Christ does not reign in me. My mind is empty, and is dragged off in different directions. I am in one place, and my mind wanders through the whole world. It holds angels in the world, it holds kings, it holds armies, it holds the world: one monk it cannot hold. Why do I say all this? Because of those who wander through the whole world, and cannot sit in one place. Thy God, O Sion, unto generation and generation. Thy God, O Sion. We have frequently said that Sion is interpreted as a watchtower, or the Church, or the soul contemplating God. Thy God, O Sion, unto generation and generation. In the first generation, of the Jews; in the second, from the Gentiles.

In all the scriptures and in all the psalms, generation and generation is said, so as to signify two peoples. But we can also say it in another way: The Lord shall reign forever, thy God, O Sion, in this generation and in the generation to come. Let Christ reign in us: let not sin reign in our body. The heart of the king is in the hand of God. Let us be kings: let us rule over our body, and subject it, and let our heart be in the hand of Christ. To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Homily 56, on Psalm 146

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Praise the Lord, for a psalm is good. The one hundred and forty-sixth psalm is headed with the title ”Alleluia.” Those who do not know the Hebrew language, when they see ”alleluia” set at the head of a psalm, are wont to ask what it means. This psalm, then, has ”alleluia” not only in its title, but also at the very opening of the psalm. For where it says ”Praise the Lord,” in the Hebrew it says ”alleluia.” For God among the Hebrews has ten names: he is called Sabaoth, he is called Saddai, he is called Eloim, he is called El, he is also called Iao, he is called Eser Iaia. Among the other names there is one name which is called ”Ia.” Now ”Ia” is interpreted ”invisible.” Where therefore we say ”praise,” in the Hebrew it says ”allelu.” So here it says ”allelu Ia,” just as if one were to say ”allelu Sabaoth,” ”allelu Saddai,” ”allelu Eloim”: so therefore even now it says ”allelu Ia.” Finally Theodotion, who is one of the translators, wishing to declare the truth of the interpretation, says ”praise Ia” (αἰνεῖτε τὸν Ἰα). Why have we said all this? So that we may know that in this psalm ”alleluia” is set at the head. Praise the Lord. This interpretation, once we have gone out, will be pondered in your hearts; but for now the discourse will be extended further.

Praise the Lord, for a psalm is good. He did not say ”a good psalm,” but absolutely, ”a psalm is good”: that is, it is a good thing to sing psalms. But to sing psalms not with the voice, but with the heart. How many have a good voice, and, because they are sinners, sing badly! He sings well who sings in his heart, who sings to Christ in his conscience. Let praise be pleasant to our God. Let the praise be pleasant, not with the voice, but with the conscience. Finally, Noah too offered victims, and the Lord smelled the odor of sweetness. There are many things that might be said: but we ought briefly to touch on the highest points, so that we may point out the meaning rather than broader words. The Lord who builds Jerusalem shall gather together the dispersions of Israel. How Jerusalem is built, how the dispersion is gathered together, has already been said. Since therefore these two little verses have been discussed, and we ought not to build upon another’s foundation, let us

pass on to what remains. Let us therefore see how Jerusalem is built: for in what follows the prophetic word has described it.

Who heals the contrite of heart. You see how Jerusalem is built: the contrite of heart are healed. A contrite and humbled heart God does not spurn. And who binds up their bruises. Do you crush your own heart, and the Lord will bind up your bruises. That Samaritan who was coming down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he saw the wounded man lying in the road, bound up his wounds. This is the one of whom now too it is said, And binding up their bruises. This is said of those who do penance. But of those who do not do penance, it is said: There is no way to apply a poultice, nor oil, nor bindings.

Who numbers the multitude of the stars. What is the connection, according to the letter, between ”And binding up their bruises” and ”who numbers the multitude of the stars”? But because he healed the contrite of heart and bound up their bruises, those who before had been contrite, and afterward were healed, he turns into stars. Who numbers the multitude of the stars. The multitude. For many were those who sinned: many are those who have been cured. Who numbers the multitude of the stars. He does not number the wounded, but he numbers those who have already been turned into stars: God numbers none but those who are worthy of his number. And calling them all by their names. Because he speaks of Lucifer and of Orion, of those things which we see in the sky, this indeed can be understood: for God is wonderful, who made heaven and earth and all things that are in them. But let us understand it in such a way that what happens every day may profit us. And calling them all by their names. Do you wish to know how stars are made out of the contrite? It is written in Genesis that God led Abraham out, and showed him the stars, and said to him: So shall your seed be. And calling them all by their names. From Abram he calls him Abraham: he was called Abram in Chaldea, and in heaven he is called Abraham. At that time when he was made a star, he is also called Abraham. He who before was Saul, afterward is called in heaven Paul. John and James, sons of thunder: thunder is surely in heaven. And so the stars are numbered, the countless saints are numbered: and Christ alone cannot be numbered.

Great is our Lord, and great is his power, and of his wisdom there is no number. Great is his power: Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God. And of his wisdom there is no number. Christ is wisdom: and the one wisdom cannot be numbered. The Lord who lifts up the meek. What are those stars? The Lord who lifts up the meek. The meek are turned into stars. But the just shall shine like the stars of heaven: Daniel says it. But bringing down sinners even to the ground. See the difference of things. Angels fall down to the earth: men go to heaven. The Lord who lifts up the meek. Meekness calls up to heaven: pride drags down to the earth. But bringing down sinners even to the ground. Sing to the Lord in confession. This

David fulfilled: he who had offered us examples of righteousness, offered us also examples of penance. For he taught us how we ought to do penance, himself doing it. See, holy prophets, that not only their righteousness has profited us, but also their sin. Sing psalms to our God upon the harp. Let no string of the virtues be broken; let all the strings of the virtues sound together. Sing psalms to our God upon the harp. The harp has many strings: if one is broken, the sound cannot be produced. So too the holy man, however holy he may be, if one virtue is lacking, cannot send forth a tuneful sound.

Who covers the heaven with clouds. This heaven, which we behold, cannot be covered with clouds. But there is another heaven, and there are other clouds. And your truth reaches even to the clouds. Then does the truth of God reach even to those clouds, which are quickly dissolved when the wind blows? The truth of God is Christ. I am the way and the life and the truth. Is then the truth of Christ in these clouds, which have not in themselves the substance of truth? Can it then be that truth is there, where the wind has power to scatter? I will command, he says, the clouds not to rain rain upon them—that is, upon the people of the Jews. The clouds are the prophets: the Lord commanded them not to rain rain upon Israel. The prophetic word has been turned toward us. These clouds, if they are dashed against one another, make thunder and lightnings. Who covers the heaven with clouds. Why did he say, He covers the heaven with clouds? If the clouds are prophets and apostles, how then is the heaven covered by apostles and prophets? The heaven is the divine mysteries. Since therefore the mysteries, whatever are divine, are called heaven: whoever is unworthy, these clouds protect the sacraments from him. If anyone is unworthy, he cannot receive the sacraments: they are covered by the clouds. Who prepares rain for the earth. The earth needs rain: our earth, unless it receives rain, the fountain of doctrines, will bring forth no fruit. When the earth has been moistened by a fountain of such doctrines, what follows?

Who brings forth hay on the mountains. If he were speaking of hay alone, surely hay is born more in the valleys than on the mountainous places: for wherever the rain is more abundant, there hay is born more. From the mountains the waters flow down into the valleys, and grass is born more abundantly.

And who gives to the beasts their food. This Scripture which we read, which we handle, which we have in our hands, is called the mountains; in the Scriptures Abraham is called a mountain, Isaac is called a mountain, Jeremiah a mountain, the holy prophets are mountains. These mountains have both grain and hay. If you are a man, you receive grain from them: if you are cattle, you receive hay. Men and beasts you will save, O Lord. If you are a beast, you receive hay; if you are a man, you receive grain: according to your faith you are saved. Who brings forth hay on the mountains, and gives to the beasts their food. If you are a man, in the holy Scriptures you receive spiritual understanding: if you are a beast, you receive

it according to the letter, in the Jewish manner. I see a great thing. God, who has been praised with such great acclamations, is brought down to lowlier things, and it is said: And to the young ravens that call upon him. If he were speaking of birds, he would rather name eagles or vultures. And to the young ravens that call upon him. No other bird is named, but the young of the ravens; and not the ravens themselves, but the young of the ravens. The raven is not saved, but the young that is born of it. We are the young of ravens: for we are born of idolatrous parents.

We read in Solomon that the eye which mocks its father and the word of its mother, let the ravens dig it out of the valleys. He did not say ”the young of ravens,” but the ravens themselves. For he who is a raven cannot be saved. The raven is sent out from the ark, and does not return. In the flood it is with the rest: after the flood it is cast out in the time of prosperity—that is, at that time when there is calm, it cannot be in the ark of God. If ever there is a storm, if ever a flood, the raven is in the midst: calm returns, and the raven flees. Who are these ravens? Who are the young of ravens? I think that the ravens of black color, who always pursue the corpses of the dead, who always with a most raucous voice provoke quarrels, are demons; and whoever have served the demons, like ravens, they too take on the color of ravens. Therefore our parents, as we have already said, who served idols and demons, were ravens. For they are not found except where there are corpses and filth and foulness and the corpses of the dead. But we who are born of ravens do not await corpses, but the dew. For the young of ravens are said to live on the dew. For so the natural philosophers say, that the young of ravens live on the dew. Do you wish to know yet another mystery about ravens?

Elijah, which is interpreted ”God the Lord”: Elijah—that is, our Lord and Savior—suffers persecution from the Jews; and is fed by ravens, the people of the Gentiles. And to the young ravens that call upon him. If you call, you are a young raven: if you are silent, you are a raven. And to the young ravens that call upon him. We read in the prophet: And everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. If therefore we take it simply of ravens, then will the ravens too be saved? Answer, Jew: answer, you who in the Jewish way follow only the letter. You say that these ravens are truly ravens, you do not interpret spiritually, but carnally: for you say it is written of ravens. If then it is written of the young of ravens, and here it is said, And to the young ravens that call upon him: and it is written, Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved: then will the young of ravens too be saved in the resurrection? We therefore, the young of ravens, call upon him and are saved. Finally the apostle Paul too wrote to the church of the saints, and wrote also to those who call upon the name of the Lord.

He will not take pleasure in the strength of the horse. We promised brevity, and, compelled by necessity, we have disputed at greater length. We have lied, but the

lie is most useful. Would that Herod had lied and had broken his oath! And so we too promised lesser things, and, as you prayed, have offered greater things. The hour compels me to be silent: the greatness of the mysteries compels me to speak. He will not take pleasure in the strength of the horse. I hear ”horse,” and a neighing horse: I cannot pass it by. It is written in the psalter: The horse is a false hope for safety; and in another place: The horse and its rider he has thrown into the sea. It is even commanded to the king of Israel that he should not rear horses. Finally Solomon, who brought chariots out of Egypt, was overcome by pleasure. He will not take pleasure in the strength of the horse. The horse and its rider he has thrown into the sea. They have become to me as maddened horses after women, each one neighed after his neighbor’s wife—Jeremiah says it. Over such horses, then, God has no pleasure. We have spoken of the horse. The horse and its rider he has thrown into the sea. We have said who the horses are: let us say who the riders are. I think that the horses are sinful men, and the riders are demons who ride upon them. If ever therefore we see some brother a persecutor: him who is called a brother persecuting us and being an enemy: let us know that he is a horse. And he is a horse: but the rider is the devil, who strikes us with his lance. This one runs, and that one strikes. But the horse itself too is driven by the heels, is pierced, and against its will goes mad.

Nor is he well pleased with the legs of a man. See what he says: he did not say, in the head of a man: he did not say, in the hands of a man: but, in the legs, which are below. Nor is he well pleased with the legs of a man. The legs here, like the thighs also, are always taken for lusts. Finally in Ezekiel too God is seen from the loins upward as amber (electrum), from the loins downward as fiery. Whatever is above, that is gold: whatever is below, that is prepared for Gehenna. Nor is he well pleased with the legs of a man. Let us speak according to the letter. Since he had said, He will not take pleasure in the strength of the horse, and had, as it were, described a warrior man: it seems to me here, where he said ”not in the legs,” that he is not naming the legs, but the greaves (περικνημῖδας). We see therefore that whatever covers the legs does not please God, but that which is above. It does not please God in strength, it does not please him in the legs of a man: but it pleases him in his own fear. Might does not please, fear pleases. He destroys the one who wages war, he raises up the one who prays, he exalts the humble, he casts down the proud.

The Lord is well pleased with those who fear him. One fear casts out many fears. Is it not better to fear one, that you may not fear many, than to fear many, that you may not fear one? And with those who hope in his mercy. They hope not in their own works, but in the mercy of the judge. Praise the Lord, for a psalm is good; for in those who hope in his mercy is salvation alone. To whom is glory forever and ever. Amen.

Homily 57, on Psalm 147

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion. Just now we heard the holy presbyter preaching that, because of its transgression of the law, the Jewish people has been forsaken; and how is it that now it is said, Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion? Then what follows? For he has strengthened the bars of your gates. Is it, then, of this Jerusalem that he speaks? Of this Zion? Praise your God. Why? For he has strengthened the bars of your gates. There are no gates: and how, then, are the bars kept safe? He has blessed your children within you. How has he blessed, he who said, Your house shall be left to you desolate?

Who has set your borders as peace. Where has peace been set, which was overthrown by war? And he fills you with the fat of the wheat. Does wheat have fat? Answer, O Jew, does wheat have fat? If, then, wheat does not have fat, and you are compelled by necessity to understand it spiritually, then according to this verse the rest too must be understood. Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem, ”vision of peace. Praise your God, O Zion. Zion is interpreted ”watchtower. You see, then, what he says: Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem. Wherever there is a vision of peace, wherever there is contemplation of God, there let there be praise of God. Praise the Lord, then, O Church, when you have begun to believe in him and to have peace, and have begun to see peace: this is Jerusalem, ”vision of peace. You who were formerly of the idols have been made the servant of God: praise, then, your God. But when you have begun already to have knowledge, and to be a watchtower — this is Zion — praise the Lord: that is, you praise Jerusalem, you praise Zion, you soul of the Church, you Church. Let not the heretics praise, let not the synagogue praise, but you praise. Why? For he has strengthened the bars of your gates. The Lord loves the gates of Zion above all the tabernacles of Jacob. We said the gates of Zion are the prophets.

Since, then, we know the gates of Zion are called the prophets, let us see what the bars of the gates are. For truly the prophets are the gates of the Church: we

cannot enter the Church except through the prophets. Manichaeus wanted to enter without the gates, and did not enter. Marcion does not receive the Old Testament, and without the gates of the Old Testament he could not enter into the Gospel. We, then, receive the gates, the prophets, and through the gates we enter. But let us see what the bars of the gates are. Many robbers, many thieves long to enter through the gates. All who came before me were thieves and robbers. Oh, if only the Lord would grant to me too that I might be a bar of the gates of Zion! If any of the heretics wished to enter through them into the arrangement of the Gospel, I would stand in the gates, and I would keep him out. For he has strengthened the bars of your gates. He has strengthened them. Give me some churchman learned in the heavenly Scriptures: let Eunomius come, let Arius come, wanting to take away something from the prophets against us — does he not stand like a bar, does he not conquer like a bar? For he has strengthened the bars of your gates. Beautifully he said, he has strengthened: so that when you see a churchman disputing, you should not think that it is he who disputes, but he who strengthens the churchman.

And he fills you with the fat of the wheat. Unless, he says, the grain of wheat shall fall, it alone shall be saved; but if it itself shall fall, it makes many to be saved. Our Lord, the grain of wheat, fell into the earth, and multiplied us. But this grain of wheat is very rich; it has marrow, it has fat, it has richness. And he fills you with the fat of the wheat. Happy is he who understands the fat in this wheat. We read the holy Scriptures. I hold the Gospel to be the body of Jesus; the holy Scriptures I hold to be his teaching. And when he says, He who has not eaten my flesh and drunk my blood — although it can also be understood in the mystery, yet truly the body of Christ and his blood is the word of the Scriptures, is the divine teaching. If ever we go to the mystery — he who is faithful understands — if a little crumb falls, we are in peril. If ever we hear the word of God, and the word of God and the flesh of Christ and his blood is poured into our ears, and we are thinking of something else, into how great a peril do we run? And he fills you with the fat of the wheat. The divine word is very rich; it has in itself all delights. Whatever you wish is born from the divine word:

just as the Jews hand down that the manna, when they ate it, tasted in the mouth according to each one’s desire. For instance, he who ate the manna, if he desired apples, or a pear, or grapes, or bread, or meat — according to the kind and the desire of the one eating, so too was the taste in the manna. So too in the flesh of Christ, which is the word of teaching, that is, the interpretation of the holy Scriptures, as we wish, so also do we receive the food. If you are holy, you find refreshment; if you are a sinner, you find torment. And he fills you with the fat of the wheat. He leaves no remnants. He has blessed your children within you. As many as received him, he gave them power to become children of God. Who has set your borders as peace. In another psalm we read: And his place was made in peace. My peace I give to you, my peace I leave to you. My peace: not as the world

has peace, since indeed the peace of the world is our war. My peace I give to you. Have war with the world, and you will have my peace. Who has set your borders as peace. He, then, who is not at peace with his brother, this man is not within the borders of Jerusalem. Let someone say: What am I to do?

My brother does not want to be reconciled with me — am I then outside the borders of Jerusalem? As much as it lies in you, he says, having peace with all men. With those who hated peace, I was peaceable. You, keep the peace: if another is angry, he has war, and through his war peace is born for you. Do you want to know how there can be both war and peace? The wretched Judas was coming to the betrayal, and the Lord offers him peace by a kiss: he creates war out of the kiss.

Who sends forth his word to the earth. Answer, O Jew: if he was speaking of wheat, And he fills you with the fat of the wheat, how does he now say, Who sends forth his word to the earth? In the beginning was the Word. This Word is sent forth in the flesh. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. Who sends forth his word to the earth. At that time was fulfilled, The earth has given its fruit. Who sends forth his word to the earth. He is speaking of the preaching of the Gospel, of the teaching of the apostles. Then follows: Swiftly runs his word. For into all the earth his word was heard, and into the whole world the apostolic teaching. One poor man, already old, preached from Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum, and swiftly runs his word. Since, then, it had come from Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum, and his word had run swiftly, next it follows, and that very word which had said, From Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum, says: But I wish to go even to the Spains. This the apostle Paul speaks. See the swiftness of the word. He is not content with the east: he longs to run to the west.

Who gives snow like wool, who scatters mist like ashes. He sends his crystal like morsels. See how great is the difficulty, how obscure are the things that are said. Before the face of his cold, who shall stand? Whose? Nothing is said. Then it is said:

He shall send forth his word, and shall melt them. Of that one of whom he had said, He sends forth his word to the earth: He shall send forth his word. Who shall send it forth? God the Father. And the Word was with God, and the Word was God. We have named the Father, we have named the Son: we cannot believe in a twofold number, unless the Trinity be completed. His spirit shall blow, and the waters shall flow. You see that where the Father and the Word of God are, at once the Holy Spirit is there too. Let us see, then, from the beginning what is said. And he fills you with the fat of the wheat: he sends forth his word to the earth, swiftly runs his word. Suddenly, what follows? Who gives snow like wool. The word of the Lord, which runs swiftly, is given as it were like snow, and that snow is as it were like wool. See the mercy of the Lord. The food of the Lord is turned for us into a garment. John had said of the Lord the Savior: Behold the Lamb of God, behold

him who takes away the sins of the world. And in another place Isaiah: Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter. Of this lamb, then, and of this sheep, this wool is as it were like snow. Isaiah says: If your sins be like scarlet, they shall be made white like snow.

You shall sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed: you shall wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow. Who gives snow like wool. Take away, O Lord, my filth, take away whatever vice there is. Grant your snow and your purity to Christian minds. Unless you give us the snow of your cleansings, we cannot have your garment. Christ is our garment. If we wish to have the garment of Christ, let us be clean like snow. He scatters mist like ashes. The Latin translated badly, ”mist”: for what is called ὁμίχλη (homichlē, ”mist”) in Greek, in Hebrew has ”hoarfrost. And so it follows thus: He scatters hoarfrost like ashes. He teaches us, and makes for us a garment like snow; and when he has clothed us with his garment, then he grants us nourishment. He scatters hoarfrost like ashes. See what he says, like ashes. Do you wish to be clean? Do penance. I ate my bread like ashes, and mingled my drink with weeping. Do you not see how he scatters his hoarfrost like ashes? A great change of things: out of ashes snow is made, out of penance one is made clean.

He sends his crystal like morsels. As his loaves are broken and become morsels, so too this crystal is broken and turned into morsels. Crystal has this nature: it forms whenever waters are frozen — what we call ice. Between crystal and water, then, there is the same difference as between water and ice: for water is poured out, as it were, very broadly, whereas crystal is, as it were, compacted into itself, and reduced into one form. Whenever water freezes, it makes crystal. Since, then, we cannot grasp the flesh with the whole word, it is broken, so that we may grasp it through those parts. The matters are obscure, and the difficulty of interpretation does not allow us to speak more broadly. Before the face of his cold, who shall stand? Whose? Some say the crystal’s, but others say God’s. To me, however, it seems that Before the face of his cold, who shall stand? is said of God. Of God I say it, Before the face of his cold, who shall stand? What torments are said in the holy Scriptures to be prepared for the sinner? Nothing is hotter than Gehenna, and yet it itself is cold. Gehenna is of fire: but if anyone has grown sufficiently cold, he is cast into the fire of Gehenna. It is written that in the last days the love of many shall grow cold. Whoever, then, has grown cold in this way, this man is cast into the fire.

May the Lord grant to us that cold may never enter our hearts: we do not sin unless love has first grown cold. Then, what does the apostle also say? Fervent in spirit. Our God is a fire. If, then, God is fire, he is fire for this reason: to cast out the cold of the devil. The north wind, the coldest wind; but by name it is called ”the right. Beautifully he said, is called: it has taken to itself a name, though it is on

the left. If, then, anyone's soul has grown cold, like the north wind, the coldest wind — if ever the warmth of love grows cold in our heart, if it has sinned, if it has grown cold, if it has died... Attend diligently to what I say: if it has grown cold, if it has died. To grow cold belongs to the dead, to be warm to the living. If anyone, then, has grown cold and died, God will send his word, and will melt him. May the Lord grant that our cold too may be melted, that that crystal may be dissolved and become soft. He shall send forth his word, and shall melt them. Give me a sinner who does not look to God, who has no warmth, but is wholly cold, and dead:

if at the word of God he is pierced with compunction, and begins to do penance, and the hardest things of his heart are softened, at that time is fulfilled, He shall send forth his word, and shall melt them. The Father sends forth, the Word is sent, the Holy Spirit is joined. His spirit shall blow. Fervent in spirit. The cold is not driven out except by the warmth of the Holy Spirit. Where are the Eunomians, the Arians, where are the Macedonians, who say: We do not number the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son? God the Father sends, the Word is sent: and yet there is no full healing, unless the Holy Spirit shall have blown. His spirit shall blow, and the waters shall flow. The waters. What before was hard shall become soft. He who before could give righteousness to no one, this man is now a disciple.

But since we have spoken at length, and the things that follow are plain, let us pray the Lord that our hardness too may soften, that our sins too may be purged, that we may be made as it were fire, that the cold of the devil, whatever there is of it in our hearts, may be driven out, that we may grow warm with the Holy Spirit. For there is also an evil warmth. All the adulterers, their hearts are like an oven. But that warmth is driven out by the warmth of the Holy Spirit. To whom be glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Homily 58, on Psalm 148

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). This psalm has two alleluias in its title; and many think this is because they belong to the title of the psalm itself. But we ought to know that one alleluia belongs to the end of the preceding psalm, while the other alleluia is the beginning of the following psalm. And we ought to take up this rule and understand that all the psalms which have alleluia at their beginning have it also at their end. Many, however, suppose that it is the beginning of another psalm. It is not so: rather, that psalm which has alleluia at its beginning is the very one that has alleluia at its end as well. Why have I said all this? So that you may know why in this psalm two alleluias have been placed at the front.

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the heights. For the praise of God the nature of men alone does not suffice: let the heavens too be joined in. Praise the Lord from the heavens. He did not say, Praise, O heavens; but, You praise who are in the heavens, that is, you who dwell in the heavens, thrones, dominions, powers, seraphim, cherubim, and every name that is named, not only in the present age, but also in the age to come. Praise the Lord from the heavens. You who are in the heavens, you who are in the heights, praise him in the heights. You lofty ones, praise the Lofty One. He did not say to the lowly and to those placed below, Praise; but to you who are on high. Praise him, all his angels. Do you see in what rank the angels are? First the thrones are named: thrones, seats. Let us not suppose these to be chairs on which God sits: but certain powers among the heavenly beings on which God ever sits, as it were in his own chariot. Praise him, all his angels. All his angels. He who is an angel, let him praise: he who is a demon cannot praise. Praise him, all his hosts. Since we have summoned the angels to the praises of God, and I, a man, cannot know the name of all the hosts, I say in general terms: Praise him, all his hosts. So far concerning the invisible things. Praise him, you who are invisible, whom the human eye cannot behold. Now he comes to the creatures which we discern with our eyes.

Praise him, sun and moon. Look, you pagans: look, you Manichaeans. The sun praises, it is not praised. Praise him, sun and moon. You call the sun a god. See after how many others it praises. Praise from the heavens, praise in the heights, praise, you angels, praise, all you hosts. Your god is placed as one that praises in the fifth rank. Praise him, sun and moon. He did not say, moon and sun; but, sun and moon. What is greater in light praises first. See the order of the visible things. Praise him, O sun: after the sun, the moon: after the moon, all the stars. All the stars: not only the morning star, not only the greater stars, but let the lesser ones as well alike praise the Lord. Let someone say: How do the sun and moon and stars praise God? In this, that they do not depart from their office and service. Their service is the praise of God. You have great honor, O human soul. The sun and moon and stars run their course for you, they serve for you. The angels, thrones, dominions have no need of the sun, nor of the moon, nor of the stars: for they are above the sun and moon in the heavenly places. The sun therefore and the moon and the stars are for our sake, they serve us. The apostle too says that the very creation groans together and is in travail for the deliverance of the sons of God.

But when the sons of God shall have been taken up, then the creation itself also is set free from this servitude. Let someone say: How does the sun serve, and how is it set free? how the moon? how the stars? The sun is set free, that it may not look upon the Jews, nor upon the pagans, nor upon those who blaspheme their Lord. It sees parricides, it sees murderers: and yet it serves the command of him who ordered it. For he makes his sun to rise upon the just and the wicked. Praise him, all you stars and light. Let someone say: What is light without the sun, without the stars, without the moon? We can say, between night and day, or between day and night, there is that which shines apart from the sun: though many think that this very brightness belongs to the sun. He says therefore, Praise him, all you stars and light, so that just as he had said of the invisible things, Praise him, all his hosts, so also of the visible things he may say, Praise him, everything that shines.

Praise him, you heavens of heavens. We speak of several heavens. Indeed even Paul says that he was caught up into the third heaven. See therefore how great is the splendor, that there should be a heaven of heaven. And the rest, which follow, he said concerning the visible things. For he spoke, and they were made. For God to have commanded is to have made: his command is the fashioning. For he spoke, and they were made: according to that which is written in Genesis, And God said, and God made: that is, God the Father spoke, God the Son made. Let someone say: Then greater is he who commands, and lesser is he who is commanded. This the Arians say, this the Eunomians say, and this the Macedonians say. I answer you according to your own way of thinking, O heretic. You say: Greater is the Father who commands, and lesser is the Son in that he is commanded by him. If this be according to human reasoning, answer me: which is greater, to command, or to make? I say, Let a house be built: and another builds the house. To speak is no

great thing: to make is difficult. Greater therefore is he who makes than he who gives the order. But this too is impious: for the Son is not greater than the Father. For just as it is impious to believe this of the Son against the Father, so also it is impious to believe that of the Father against the Son. For he spoke, and they were made; he commanded, and they were created. One nature commands and makes: God commands, God makes. The painter orders that the painter should paint, and the painter paints what he had ordered to be painted.

He established them for ever, and for age upon age: he set a decree, and it shall not pass away. Great is the honor of man, and great his unhappiness. The sun runs its course for you, the elements serve you: and you do not know your Creator. He set a decree, and it shall not pass away. He set a decree for the sun: behold, through so many years the decree of God has never passed away. So far has it not passed away, that its course has even been grasped by human observation. He set a decree, and it shall not pass away. He set a decree for the moon, that through thirty days it should wax and wane: does it ever change its courses? In heaven the decree of God is kept, and on earth it is not kept. He set a decree for the sea, that it should not go beyond its shores: the ocean comes swelling with its waves, and returns into itself, and remembers the decree of God. The whole world serves God, and remembers his decree: and man alone does not remember. Therefore we say also in the Lord's Prayer: Your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. As in heaven the angels serve you, and the creation serves, so let man too serve. O unhappy race of men! God has come down to you, because you are unwilling to ascend to heaven. It is not enough for you that you do not receive him, but you kill:

you kill, you crucify, you blaspheme, you scourge. It is not enough for you that you kill: but you do not even do penance for having killed. He spoke of the invisible things, he spoke also of the visible things, but of the visible heavenly things: now of the earth as well. See the order of praising. First the invisible things praise, then the visible: and the visible things themselves are divided into two, into the heavenly and the earthly. He spoke of the heavenly things, now he speaks of the earthly.

Praise the Lord from the earth. Since the angels have praised, the heaven has praised: let the earth also praise. Let us see which things of the earth praise first. Dragons and all deeps: fire, hail, snow, ice, the spirit of storms, which do his word: mountains and all hills, fruit-bearing trees, and all cedars: beasts, and all cattle, serpents and feathered fowl. After such great things, what is said? After the dragons, after the serpents, after the fire, after the hail, after the beasts and all the cattle? O man, you who seem to yourself so great, it is said of you: and not of the simple man, but of those men who are the greatest among men. Kings of the earth, and all peoples: princes, and all judges of the earth. Then there follows: Let young men and maidens, old men with younger ones praise the name of the Lord:

for the name of him alone is exalted. And the rest that follows. Oh, how many mysteries are contained in these words! The heavenly things have praised, the invisible things have praised, the visible things have praised: now he descends to earthly things, and to the praise of God first the dragons and the deeps are stirred up. Where sin abounded, grace has superabounded. You who were first a dragon, who had the venom of the serpent: O you who were first a deep, and darkness was borne over the deep. See what he says. Where dragons are, there is venom: where the deep is, there is darkness.

Do not despair therefore, O you who were a dragon, who were full of darkness, and did not dare to praise God; do penance, and at once you will be converted. Although in the Hebrew it does not have ”dragons,” but has THANNINIM, which is rendered ”sea-monsters. Now the sea-monster (cetus) is said to be of boundless size. Indeed the sea-monster itself is said to be in the deeps. Let us then speak first according to the letter. See what he says. Praise, you things that are in the sea, and praise, you things that are outside the sea: dragons and all deeps. The whole from a part, by way of synecdoche (synekdochikōs). Then follows fire. See the concord of discord: water and fire together praise the Lord. Dragons and all deeps, fire. All things that are born from water are also born from fire, that is, from moisture and heat: neither can fire alone generate without moisture, nor moisture without fire. Nothing is so contrary as moisture to heat, and heat to moisture; yet by the will of God these things, which are diverse among themselves, come into concord in our birth. Hail, snow, ice, the spirit of storms, which do his word. There are many things that might be said, and we cannot linger over each one. Hail, snow, ice, the spirit of storms. All the things that we see in the world serve us. Serpents and deeps, fire, hail, snow, ice, the spirit of storms seem to be without reason: but they serve us.

Yesterday there was a storm, it seemed to us to be against us: there was cold, there was damp, there were rains. This which for an hour seems to us to be against us, is for us: for it brings forth fruit for us. For see what he says: these things and those, which do his word. Blush, O man: serpents and deeps, snow, rains and storm do the word of God, and you do not do it. Mountains and all hills. Neither are mountains changed into hills, nor valleys into mountains: they keep their own nature. Fruit-bearing trees, and all cedars. You see a tree as if dry, its leaves lost: and at once, when the spring has come, it sends forth a bud for you, it brings forth fruit for you. The tree brings forth fruit for you, and you bring forth no fruit for God. And all cedars. Imitate the cedar: cedars strive toward the heights, as if they hasten to go to heaven. And you, imitate the irrational trees. Beasts, and all cattle. They change nothing of their nature: all stand in their own order, except man alone, to whom all things are made subject. Serpents, and feathered fowl. Neither do those things which are of the earth go to heaven, nor do those things

which are in heaven come to earth: they serve you. Let someone say: You speak according to the literal sense, you do not speak allegorically:

if you speak according to the literal sense, why do first the deeps, and snow, and hail, then the fruit-bearing trees, and the other irrational things praise the Lord, and last of all man? Let us read Genesis, and according to the order of the birth and the creatures, so shall we also see all things praise. For there it is written that first those living creatures were made which are in the water: then were made those which are on the earth: then the flying things were made: and afterward he made man alone. Therefore, as each was first made, so let it praise the Lord. But there is another sense. O man, all these things which I have named, for whose sake were they made? Beasts, serpents, fruit-bearing trees, feathered fowl: all these praise God in this, that they do not change their nature. For he set a decree, and it shall not pass away. Imitate therefore the things that serve you. They were made, that they might serve you: you were made, that you might serve God. They serve you: imitate the things that serve you, and serve God, just as they too serve you, and through God serve. To whom is glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Homily 59, on Psalm 149

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Presbyteri Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos, Anecdota Maredsolana III (Maredsoli, 1897) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Psalm 149 has been read, which has at its beginning: Sing to the Lord a new song. The holy presbyter has said that both the ninety-fifth psalm and the ninety-seventh have the same beginnings. The ninety-fifth psalm is headed with this title: A Psalm of David, when the house was being built after the captivity. The house of Christ is built after the captivity, that is, after repentance. Since, therefore, he said in the first one, Sing to the Lord a new song, so that a new people might sing a new song — and he put it well — let us run through the rest. Let Israel rejoice in him who made him. Let that man rejoice who sees God with the mind: for Israel is interpreted as ”one seeing God with the mind.” And let the sons of Zion exult in their king. Let the sons of the Church, the sons of the new people, exult in their king: in Christ, who reigns over them. You see how lightly we touch upon each of the highest points.

Let them praise his name in the choir. Wherever there is a choir, there diverse voices are gathered together into one song. For just as diverse strings produce the one sound of a song, so also diverse voices — that is, when they have been gathered together at once — make the choir of the Lord. Let them praise his name in the choir: where there is dissension, where there is envy, there is no choir. Let them praise his name in the choir: let them sing praise to him on the timbrel and the psaltery. Let this choir have a song, and have a timbrel and a psaltery. Let us crucify our bodies to Christ, and with such a timbrel let us sing to God. Let them sing praise to him on the timbrel and the psaltery. A timbrel does not have flesh, but a skin: and we, as long as we are fleshly, are not a timbrel. It is not a timbrel unless it has no flesh, unless it is stretched taut: a timbrel cannot be shrunken, but stretched out. And let sins not shrink us up, but let righteousness stretch us wide. Let us run through the rest. Let them sing praise to him on the timbrel and the psaltery. What we say in the choir, let us say this on the psaltery. The psaltery properly is a kind of musical instrument, which is like a lyre. It has a resemblance to a lyre, but it is not a lyre.

Between the psaltery and the lyre there is this difference: the lyre is struck below, whereas the psaltery is struck above, which in the common word is called polyphthongon (many-toned). This, then, is the psaltery. Here, therefore, it is enjoined upon us that in the new song we should not sing to the Lord from below on the lyre, but from above, that is, on the psaltery. For the Lord is well pleased with his people, and he will exalt the meek in salvation. ”Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth. If, therefore, it is said there, Blessed are the meek — that is, the gentle — for they shall possess the earth; and here it is said, And he will exalt the meek in salvation; and these meek shall possess the earth by inheritance: therefore this earth is not below, but is above. For what does he say? He will exalt the meek in salvation. For if these meek were to possess the earth that is below, he would not say, He will exalt.

The saints shall exult in glory. In what glory? ”Arise, my glory; arise, psaltery and lyre: I will arise at dawn.” In glory. ”For the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” — that is, he had not yet been crucified. Scripture says this, The Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus had not been glorified, that is, he had not been crucified. The saints shall exult in glory. Why do I say all this? Because it is said, The saints shall exult in glory. This, then, is what I say: the saints shall exult in the cross. ”But far be it from me to glory, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Behold, in the voice of the apostle the prophecy is fulfilled. Let the saints exult in glory. Let them rejoice in their beds. ”I will wash my bed every night; with my tears I will drench my couch.” That belongs to the sinner, that belongs to the penitent; but this which is said, They shall rejoice in their beds, pertains to the saints, pertains to the just. Which of us rejoices in his bed? Who does not fight with his own flesh? When I have lain awake on my little bed, I do not rejoice, but I fight: I do not sigh for the kingdom of heaven, but I fight with the flesh. The burning of the flesh I drench with tears, and I quench it. For this reason it is said, I will wash my bed every night; with my tears I will drench my couch. My little bed, which burns with lust, is quenched with tears. Happy are those of whom it is said, They shall rejoice in their beds.

The exaltations of God are in their throat. Surely he who cries out does not cry out in the throat, but on the lips: that is, he does not cry out in the throat, but cries out on the lips. And how does he say here, The exaltations of God are in their throat? ”Crying out in our hearts, Abba, Father.” The voice that cries out to God is not of the lips, but is of the heart. Finally, the Lord says to Moses: ”Why do you cry out to me?” And certainly Moses had said nothing. And two-edged swords are in their hands. These who exult in their beds — it is said of the saints, it is said of perfect men — what else do they have? And two-edged swords are in their hands. Two-edged swords. The swords of the saints are two-edged. We read in the Apocalypse of John, which is read in the churches and is received — for it is not held among the apocryphal scriptures, but among the ecclesiastical — it is said there,

then, of the Lord Savior: ”And a sword, he says, sharp on both sides went forth from his mouth.” You see, therefore, that these saints received those two-edged swords, which they have in their hands, from the mouth of the Lord. The Lord, therefore, gives a sword from his mouth to his disciples: a two-edged sword, that is, the word of his teaching. A two-edged sword: both according to history and according to allegory, both according to the letter and according to the spirit. A two-edged sword: which both kills adversaries and defends its own. A two-edged sword. This two-edged sword has two edges: it speaks both of the present age and of the age to come: and here it kills adversaries, and in heaven it opens the kingdoms of heaven. Why do the saints have these swords?

To execute, he says, vengeance upon the nations. Oh, if only I too might have that two-edged sword, that I might execute vengeance upon the nations, that I might slay the various peoples, that I might slay Arius, that I might slay Eunomius, that I might slay Manichaeus, that I might slay all the heresies! And see what he says, To execute vengeance upon the nations. That they may be killed? that they may perish? He does not say this. Rebukes among the peoples. Rebuke, that the peoples may be saved, that those who have been led astray by evil teachers may be saved. But the peoples cannot be set free unless the teachers have been bound. Whence it follows:

To bind their kings in fetters. Do you wish the peoples to be set free? bind the teachers. To bind the kings. He did not call them teachers, but kings: for they reign by the miseries of those people. To bind their kings in fetters. He put it well, in fetters: lest the teachers should run about too much, lest they deceive many, but let them be bound and stand still. And their nobles in iron chains. Their nobles. You may see them saying among the heretics: This man is learned, that one works signs, this one casts out demons. The saints of the Lord, who have the two-edged swords — that is, of two edges, both of the Old and of the New Testament — bind those teachers, and shackle their feet, so that they cannot run. And their nobles in iron chains. They bind, they do not kill; they do not slay, but they bind. They fetter the hands, and lead them captive to the Church in iron chains. These chains are made only from the testimonies of the scriptures, when I join testimony to testimony. If you wish that these chains not be broken, let them not be single, but woven together from this side and that. ”A threefold cord is not broken.” But why is all this done?

That they may execute upon them the judgment that is written. What is the judgment that is written? That those who at first had denied God may afterward return through repentance. The judgment that is written: that they may loose their captives, that those whom they had bound, those whom they had led bound out of the Church, they may afterward set free in the Church. That they may execute upon them the judgment that is written. I speak in simpler words. That they may

execute upon them the judgment that is written: that is, that they may so judge them as it has been set forth in the holy scriptures. This is the glory for all his saints. Truly it is not glory where there is gold, where there is silver, where there are jewels, where there are silken garments. Whoever has these swords, what else does he need? See what he says, This is the glory for all his saints. Let us ask the Lord that we may have this glory: that a sword going forth from the mouth of our Savior may arm our hands, and that we may be able to say: "Blessed be the Lord my God, who teaches my hands for the fight, and my fingers for the war." He who has this broadsword does not fear the sword of the world. He who has this sword does not fear the sword of the world. I tell you a new thing. Frequently the sword of this world grants that sword: frequently it happens that the sword of the world bestows that sword upon us. For if we do not fear this one, we receive that one. Let us therefore give thanks to him who has this sword, and let us bless him for ever and ever. Amen.

Homily 60, on Psalm 10 (Alternate Series)

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos quattuordecim (alternate series), Anecdota Maredsolana III, Pars III (Maredsoli, 1903) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin).

What the phrase "unto the end" signifies — for which Symmachus rendered ἐπινίκιον (a song of victory), while Aquila and the sixth edition rendered τῷ νικοποιῷ (to the giver of victory) — has been discussed more fully above. Now let us return to the order of the tenth psalm: a number which is both an end and a beginning, in which every reckoning is rolled around, and to which the decalogue also — that is, the first law — is owed. The just man too, on account of the Lord's money doubled in the Gospel, received cities of this number to govern. And, to bring in something rather curious: from this the name of Jesus, that is, of the Savior, begins, and that ineffable name of four letters among the Hebrews takes its start from here, being written with ioth, he, vau, he; into which, through its tens, the hundredth number unrolls, and again the thousandth grows through ten hundreds, and as far as human reason can proceed, always this number is both an end and a beginning, according to that sense: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. In the Lord I trust; how do you say to my soul: Flee away to the mountains like a sparrow? Those who eat the raw flesh of the lamb and follow the letter that kills would have this psalm understood of the person of David, when he fled from the face of Saul and was compelled to dwell in the deserts of Judah.

And they say that it is spoken by him thus: Although Saul and all his army do not permit me to dwell in my homeland, and I flit or run to and fro, here and there, wandering and roving after the manner of birds and beasts, yet I have God as my protector, in whom trusting I shall not fear your snares. And in truth, if only the beginning be read, their exposition does not appear frivolous. But what follows — "For they have destroyed the things which you have perfected" — and the rest down

to the end does not agree with this exposition. Therefore the spiritual man, who judges all things and is himself judged by no one, says that this psalm was sung by our Lord and Savior according to a twofold understanding: either he was speaking to the angels who ministered to him, or to the adverse powers, which desired to mock and terrify him. If to the angels, this is the sense: Why do you exhort me to return to heavenly things, and, leaving behind earthly and lowly things, to dwell in my mountains, because of the snares of the devil and all his army, which you behold stirred up against me? Why do you wish that I take up the wings of my deity, and desert human converse, and dwell secure in the heavens, when I have come for this purpose: that in the Lord — that is, having confidence in my own divinity — I may overcome my exulting adversaries?

But if his speech is to the adverse powers, it is to be understood thus: In vain do you think that I am to be terrified by your voices and by the wedge of battle drawn up against me, since I have come for this purpose: that I may fight, and by fighting overcome — as is also shown by the very title of the psalm, according to Aquila and Symmachus. Furthermore, another (since this psalm has nothing so special that it cannot also be understood under the person of any just man) will indeed accept the holy intention of those who refer the psalm to Christ, but will also assert that the whole context can be understood from the person of the prophet — that is, of the just man. In the Lord I trust; how do you say to my soul: Flee away to the mountains like a sparrow? The crafty adversary both tempted the Lord and Savior in the wilderness, and wishes all the saints to depart from the land of Judah and to dwell in the desert of the virtues, that there he may more easily strike them down. But even his very counsel is deceitful: for he does not exhort that one take the wings of the dove — a bird gentle, simple, and domestic, said to lack gall, and which is offered for the Lord in the temple — but the wings of a sparrow, a bird chattering and roving, which after the rearing of its young knows nothing of the fidelity of wedlock;

although Aquila and Symmachus rendered ”bird” generally in place of ”sparrow. By the mountains, however, we can understand those of which it is said in another place, ”Draw near to the eternal mountains,” and in the second psalm of the steps, ”I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains from whence help shall come to me”: and to which, after the abomination of desolation shall stand in the holy place, we ought to migrate. For behold, the sinners have bent the bow, they have prepared their arrows in the quiver, that they may shoot in the dark the upright of heart. For which it is written in the Hebrew, ”For behold, the impious have bent the bow, they have set the arrow upon the string, that they may strike in the dark the upright of heart. Therefore, he says, you wish me to migrate to the mountains, because the sinners, or the impious, burning, have prepared arrows, which must be repelled with the shield of faith. And in their quivers they have darts to strike the just, not in the day, not in the faintly-lit night, when the darkness is tempered by the solace

of the moon, but when the night is full, and the darkness is palpable — that is, ψηλαφητὸν σκότος (touchable darkness, psēlaphēton skotos). Know that for this very reason I do not heed your counsels: because the adversaries are prepared for battle, and desire to wound not so much me, whom they cannot overcome, as my just ones;

and since I have come from heaven for their salvation, I ought not to leave them orphans. For behold, as you say, they have set their arrow upon the string, and they wish to capture my boys, the sons of my ripening youth, my little young men, with the sweet enticements of pleasures. For all the strength of the devil is in the loin: for which cause also, when Jacob wrestled with me in the struggle, I made his γλαφυρόν (sinew, glaphyron) wither — that is, dry up. Since, therefore, they wish to strike the upright of heart in the darkness, let my just man speak and say: ”Your word is a lamp to my feet, O Lord, and a light to my paths. But I, standing in the battle-line and placed in array, do not forsake the contest once begun, especially when you say that they have bent the bow, prepared arrows in the quiver, wish to wound my saints in the darkness, and yet have not yet been able to strike. For they have bent the bow, they have prepared arrows in the quiver, that they may shoot in the dark the upright of heart. Since, then, they are thus prepared, I will set myself in the midst, I will receive their arrows, that my servants may not grieve at my grief, may be healed by my wounds, may not suffer while I suffer, and may say: ”O Lord, you have crowned us as with a shield of your good will. But it can also be understood otherwise:

that the heretical or adverse powers, through the dogmas of the heretics, have aimed their blasphemies, and desire to deceive my just ones with varied fraud. For they are archers who, through the occasion of their darkness — which they understand as hidden mysteries — wish to strike the upright hearts of the just. Therefore I and my saints must migrate to the sublime testimonies of the Scriptures, as it is also written in the Gospel: ”If he strike you on the right cheek, offer him the other also. He does not say, offer him the left, but the other — that is, the other right — because the just man has nothing left-handed in himself. If, he says, he confounds you in one testimony of the Scriptures, do you overcome him from another, and fulfill that which is written in another psalm: ”Deep calls to deep at the voice of your cataracts”: so that each Testament may be a defense to the other in turn, and in such a way the snare of the heretics may be broken by the opposing of the other right hand, and by migration to the mountains, and by the calling of deep to deep. For they have destroyed the things which you have perfected. And this too those who above still speak either to any just man or to the Lord: Therefore you must return to the heavenly things, because both the adversaries are so bravely prepared for the fight, and whatever you build up, they demolish.

For daily they undermine your precepts and the law written in the hearts of believers, and by persuading diverse things they overturn them. But what did the just man do? This is understood in various ways. Either concerning the person of the just man, in this manner: While they strive to destroy the laws of God, the just man has done nothing worthy of ruin, and in vain suffers their snares; or certainly, while they oppose and attempt to destroy God's commandments, the just man does this one thing only: that he implore the help of him who dwells in his holy temple, whose throne is in heaven, and whose eyes look upon the poor man, that he may rescue him from the snares prepared. But concerning the person of God in this manner: Although the adversaries are prepared for battle, and lie in wait in secret like a lion in his den, that in hidden places they may kill the innocent and destroy the temple of God, yet the Lord dwells in his holy temple, and never is either temple or throne wanting to him, because as some fall others rise. Whence in what follows it is written: The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's seat is in heaven. By the seat — that is, the throne of God — let us, according to the custom of the Scriptures, understand the kingdom, as in that place: "God shall give him the throne of David his father. And elsewhere: "With justice is the throne of dominion prepared. And:

"When a just king shall sit upon the throne. The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's seat is in heaven. Before the bodily temple was built by Solomon, the prophet knows the spiritual temple of the Lord and his throne in heaven. Whereupon it is asked, how it is said elsewhere, "Heaven is my throne. When the throne of the Lord is in heaven, his throne is encompassed by heaven, and the throne of the Lord is in a part of heaven; when heaven is the throne of the Lord, the whole heaven is turned into the throne of the Lord. From which, according to the ἀναγωγήν (higher spiritual sense, anagōgē), the Lord dwelling in his holy temple — that is, in the soul of the believer — dwells either in a part of it or in the whole. When we are still imperfect, and there is in us both something good and something evil, God dwells only in a part of our soul, that is, in heaven. But when we are consummate and perfect, we are wholly turned into a dwelling-place of God, and we are made heaven, his throne. But the temple of God, properly, is understood either as our Lord and Savior, who says, "I am in the Father and the Father in me": or as that man who was assumed by the Savior, or generally the Church, or specially each one of the saints. His eyes look upon the poor man, his eyelids question the sons of men.

Against those who understand the wrath and fury of God simply, let us set forth the eyelids and eyes of the Lord. For if they understand those things ἀνθρωποπαθῶς (after the manner of human passions, anthrōpopathōs), they will be compelled to take these things likewise. But if it is absurd to place eyes and eyelids in the almighty Lord, they will equally be compelled to seek some spiritual interpretation for wrath also and fury. For it is exceedingly unfitting not to understand both those and these alike, either spiritually or carnally. Whence in this place it is to be

perceived that the just man does not dread the assault of the adversaries, having God as his helper, who beholds and sees all things, and does not permit his poor man to be deceived by their frauds and wounded by their darts. The poor man: that one of whom it is said above, ”To you the poor man is left. And at the same time it is to be observed, that God opens his eyes, bringing an open judgment, to the lowly with help, though he be one and poor, and always watches over him with his regard. But where he is judge, and those who are judged are sons of men (for they do not deserve to be called sons of God), there he does not look with his eyes, but examines with his eyelids, in a manner half-closing them and dissembling, and unwilling to know what he knows. ”For if you, Lord, will mark iniquity, who shall endure?

Varro relates that eyelids (palpebrae) are so called from the fact that they move and quiver (palpitent), that is, ὀνοματοποιῶς (by onomatopoeia, onomatopoiōs). The Lord questions the just and the impious: but he who loves iniquity hates his own soul. For which it is better written in the Hebrew: ”The Lord tests the just, but the impious and the one who loves iniquity — his soul hates him. So that the sense is joined with the foregoing: In vain are the adversaries prepared, that they may shoot in the dark the upright of heart, and so on; because the Lord is a just judge, and nothing can be hidden from him, and he does both: that he both prove his just ones by tempting them, and hate those who are impious. The impious and the one who loves iniquity — his soul hates him: that is, he hates them with his whole heart and his whole soul. But let us understand ”soul” in accordance with the eyes and eyelids, according to that: ”My soul hates your new moons and feast days and sabbaths. Furthermore, according to those who say, with the Septuagint, The Lord questions the just and the impious, the sense is far different: that he himself is the judge of the just and the impious, and that the impious are to be judged in this, that by loving iniquity they hate their own soul. And in a certain way the last part of a syllogism is knit together, which is called the conclusion.

For although a man may deny that he hates his own soul, yet from the fact that he loves iniquity, he is convicted of hating it. As Solomon also says in the Proverbs: ”He who rejects discipline hates himself. But if he who loves iniquity hates his own soul, contrariwise he who loves justice loves his own soul, according to that: ”He who possesses prudence loves himself. Whence also the Savior says: ”He who loves me keeps my commandments. For he himself is justice. Nor indeed is it to be thought, according to the Septuagint interpreters, that something contrary is now said — The Lord questions the just and the impious — to that which is written in the first psalm, ”Therefore the impious shall not rise again in the judgment”: because just as there is a difference among the just, so also among the impious; and just as the just, differing among themselves, possess mansions, so also the impious who are perfect in malice and iniquity and who fight with their whole mind against the Lord shall not rise again in the judgment; but other impious ones, who are

sometimes understood as sinners, because they are of lesser malice, are reserved for God's judgment. He shall rain snares upon sinners.

There is no doubt but that the Lord does this even for the sake of the sinners themselves, so that those who were badly abusing their liberty, being ensnared in the Lord's snares, may walk in the right path as if under his bridle, and may be able to advance through him who says, "I am the way. Whence also fishermen are sent, and hunters, in Jeremiah, that they may hold with their nets the fish that wander and toss about in the depths, and may capture unto salvation the beasts straying about on all the mountains and hills. Therefore it is not, as many suppose, punishments that are promised to sinners from this little verse and from those that follow, but remedies. Fire, brimstone, and the spirit of storms is the portion of their cup. It is said to Babylon: "You have coals of fire, you shall sit upon them, and they shall be for a help to you. The brimstone rouses the fire of these coals into a flame; which flame is fanned by the rushing wind, by the whirlwind of the tempest, so that whatever is filthy in our gold, and whatever — according to the prophecy of Ezekiel — consuming the silver in us, the bronze, the tin, and the lead, may reduce us into gold. Whence also it is written in Isaiah: "The Lord shall wash away the filth of the sons and daughters of Zion, and shall cleanse the blood from their midst by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning.

And in Malachi: "Behold, the Lord enters in like the fire of the smelting-furnace and like the herb of the fullers, and he shall sit smelting his people like gold and silver. The cup of sinners is full of fire, brimstone, and the spirit of tempest. "A cup of pure wine full of mixture," from which "all the sinners of the earth shall drink. I judge that from this cup of fire and brimstone Sodom had drunk, and therefore it is prophesied concerning her through Ezekiel: "Sodom shall be restored to her former state. And in the Gospel: "It shall be more tolerable for the land of the Sodomites. "For the Lord will not take vengeance twice upon the same thing. Whence also Lazarus, who had received his sins in his lifetime, and had drunk the cup of the Lord's fury, in the bosom of Abraham drinks that cup of which it is written: "I will take the cup of salvation, and I will call upon the name of the Lord. Jerusalem too had drunk the cup of punishments for her remedy; whence it is said to her: "Rise up, rise up, Jerusalem, you who have drunk the cup of ruin, the goblet of fury. And Jeremiah received this same cup of pure wine from the hand of the Lord, that he might give it to Jerusalem to drink, and to all the nations round about; who, drinking, vomit, and fall down, and, their pride broken, are laid low in repentance. For the Lord is just and has loved justices;

his countenance has beheld equity. For which the Hebrew has: "For the Lord is just and loves justice; their faces shall behold equity. The Lord, he says, is just for the causes stated above: because he both, leaving the just man in the present age to temptations, does not punish but proves him, and his soul hates the impious

man who loves injustice. For it is one thing to sin overcome by the necessity of the flesh, another to pass over into the disposition of the sinner. Whence also such men, whose heart is impenitent, the soul of God hates. And because he rains snares upon sinners, and gives them to drink the goblet of torments which they deserve, God himself, being just, loves justices. For just as there is one true God, even if there are many gods who are so called by participation in him, and there is one only-begotten Son of God, while others are called so by adoption; so also there is one true justice, as is written in the beginning of the Proverbs, but from communication of it the Lord loves many things called justices. But in that he says, His countenance — that is, God's — has beheld equity, so that the sense is, He judges the things that are right; in the Hebrew, according to that understanding, it is said:

Those very ones who shall be judged, both the just and the impious and sinners, shall behold the justice of God, and their faces shall contemplate the equity of the Lord, and they shall say, "You are just, O Lord, and your judgment is right."

Homily 61, on Psalm 15 (Alternate Series)

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos quattuordecim (alternate series), Anecdota Maredsolana III, Pars III (Maredsoli, 1903) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin).

An inscription of a title, to David himself. In place of this the fifth edition put the Hebrew word itself, ”MACTHAM David,” which Aquila translated as ”of the humble and simple David,” and Symmachus as ”of the humble and unstained David. And Aquila himself again, in the fifty-fifth psalm and in the rest as far as the fifty-ninth, rendered this very thing so as to say ”of the humble and perfect David. From this we understand that one word signifies both ”simple” and ”unstained” and ”perfect,” yet in such a way that humility is always set before each of them; for among the Hebrews it is compounded of two whole words, so that, just as we say ”almighty” (omnipotens), enclosing two words in one utterance, so also the word MACTHAM in the syllable which is called MAC shows humility without ambiguity, while in the following one which is called THAM it signifies the three things we mentioned above. Now there are six psalms, unless we are mistaken, which are headed by this title: the fifteenth psalm, and the fifty-fifth, and the fifty-sixth, and the fifty-seventh, and the fifty-eighth, and the fifty-ninth. All of these refer to the dispensation and passion of our Lord and Savior; and although in their headings they have among themselves certain things added, or removed, or varied, yet in this one phrase they agree, namely, in ”the inscription of a title,” which here stands alone by itself only in the fifteenth psalm.

For in the remaining five certain historical notices too are prefixed, so that the prophecy concerning the Lord Savior might be shown not only in word but also in deed. And I think there are six psalms containing this mystery and headed with such a title for this reason, that the Savior, crucified for all on the sixth day of the world, dying and rising again, left us this as it were the title of his victory; so that we may inscribe upon our hearts these psalms which are marked with these headings,

and press into them the words of God, and that our minds may be mindful of the Lord's death; so that, just as Jacob made a monument for Rachel and it remains to this day, so we may mark in our heart the memorial and remembrance of his passion. Nor indeed let that be thought contrary to our exposition which the Lord commanded in the Law: "You shall not make for yourself a monument, things which the Lord your God hates"; but to the singular number "a monument" he joined a plural of the neuter gender, saying, "things which the Lord your God hates," that is, you shall not do such works as remain for your condemnation forever. For these things the Lord your God hates.

If perchance, through our negligence, he who oversows tares should erect such monuments in the land of promise, the clear-sighted ones (dioratikoi), namely the teachers, command the children of Israel to overthrow them and undermine them and banish them from the land that flows with milk and honey. Such a monument Absalom too built for himself, an empty tomb, which remains to this day for the disgrace and testimony of the parricide. Into such a monument Lot's wife too was turned, because she wished to look not at what lay ahead but behind her back. After this it is asked why the Seventy translators wished to translate otherwise than it stands in the Hebrew and in the other editions. This can be understood from many other passages too, but especially from the heading of the ninth psalm. For whereas among the Hebrews it is headed LAMANASSE ALMUTH LABEN, which Symmachus translates "the triumph of the youth of the son," but the fifth edition "the triumph of the flowering youth of the son," the Seventy translators, unwilling to disclose so openly to King Ptolemy and to the Gentiles the passion and resurrection of the Savior, translated "Unto the end, for the hidden things of the son"; and by the very title showing that certain hidden things lay concealed which they were unwilling to translate.

So now too, because humility, simplicity, spotlessness, and perfection pointed not to a man (for there is no one who would dare to head himself with such a title) but to the Son of God, therefore they chose to translate "stelographia" (stēlographian), that is, a thing worthy to be marked with an inscription; so that we might understand one thing shut up in the title, and another uttered aloud in the word. Now a title is also placed for brave men upon their tombs in memory of their former courage, and for those who fell for their fatherland, and wherever there are trophies and victories, and where public laws are inscribed. The interpretation of all of which is easier when applied to the person of the Lord Savior. Preserve me, O Lord, for I have hoped in you; I said to the Lord: You are my God, for you have no need of my goods. If one apostle were to interpret this psalm, if two, the authority even of one and of two would be great. But now (a thing written of no other of the psalms) we have found concerning this in the Acts of the Apostles that Peter, together with the apostles of Christ—when Matthias had already been taken in as

one of the twelve in place of Judas—expounding it lifted up his voice, and after many words said:

”Men and brethren, let it be permitted to speak boldly to you concerning the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is among us to this very day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn to him with an oath that from the fruit of his loins one would sit upon his throne, foreseeing this he spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that he was neither left in hell, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we all are witnesses. Since then all the apostles alike have referred this psalm to the Lord Savior, we, who wish to be Christians, must surely follow their opinion. And no wonder that he who was equal to God and humbled himself, taking the form of a servant, now speaks with the words of a servant. Hence in the very title he is inscribed as humble and simple and unstained and perfect; because he who needed no one’s help humbled himself so far as to entreat the Lord on our behalf, on behalf of the Church, that is, on behalf of his own body. And in very truth it is great humility—for God to pray for men, for the Lord to pray for servants, for the Holy One to pray for sinners:

so that he not only says that he himself is clothed and given drink and visited in his servants, but even, when they have prayed and have been heard, confesses that he himself has prayed and been heard. Therefore, taking on a human body, he saw the hostile powers, he saw too the army of the devil, drawn up in a wedge-formation against him, doing battle; and therefore he now says: Preserve me, O Lord; for unless you preserve my body, the Church which hopes in you, they who guard her keep watch in vain. But what follows—”I said to the Lord, You are my God”—he directs his speech to the apostles and to the disciples and to us, if indeed we deserve to be disciples, teaching what he has said to the Lord of the universe. What, then, does he say he has spoken to the Lord? ”You are my Lord”: that is, you who are the Lord of all have become peculiarly mine, that is, the Lord of my own. He was the Lord of all even in the Old Testament, since he had created all things; but he became peculiarly the Lord of the saints, saying: ”I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. As, then, you are theirs, so you are now especially my Lord, because you deign to be the Lord of my own. And the reason why he is his Lord is added: For you have no need of my goods.

For God almighty has no need of a man’s goods, nor do our virtues contribute to God’s advancement, since God receives no increase: but whatever we labor at and strive for, he receives and requires it of us for this reason, that he may restore to us what he has received. For that man too in the Gospel who from one mina had made ten minas not only received back what he had given, but was even granted the other mina, which another could not multiply. It is said also to Job: ”What does it profit the Lord, if you make your way blameless? Other masters, however powerful they may be, cannot yet say to their servants, ”We have no need of your

works”: for indeed they make full use of their service. But God alone is a Lord who needs the service of his servants only for this, that he may have occasion to give more. And at the same time we are taught that if the Savior prays for us (for he did indeed pray also for the apostles in the Gospel, and therefore permitted those whom he had earlier urged to keep watch to sleep), we surely ought all the more to pray for ourselves: because, although we run, yet without him we cannot arrive at our goal, according to the interpretation of Symmachus and of the fifth edition, who said ”My good is not apart from you”; so that this translation may be referred to that saying:

”Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it. Unless the Lord guard the city, he keeps watch in vain who guards it. To the saints who are in his land, he made all his wishes wonderful in them. In place of which it is written in the Hebrew: ”To the saints who are in the land, and to my exalted ones, is all my will in them. These goods of which you have no need, O Father, my saints do need—the saints in whom I have made all my wishes to be wonderful. But I made my wishes wonderful not outside them, but in them: so that, while each one is corrected, and understands both who he was before and who he has now begun to be, my wonderful wishes may be brought about in them; yet only if, going out from Egypt and crossing the desert, they are able to enter the land of promise, which land is the beginning of the land of the living. Nor is this at once contrary to it—that wonders are said to be done only in the land of God—namely that in the field of Tanis, that is, in Egypt, wonders were done. For there is a great distance between the wonders done by Moses and those done by Jesus. There one flees from Egypt, here one enters into Judea; there lord Pharaoh is avoided, here those who are to serve are taken captive;

there frogs and gnats and soot and hail and darkness are employed among the wonders, here command is given to the sun and to the moon; there God goes before the people in a pillar of cloud and of fire, here the Savior himself comes to meet them holding a sword and declaring that he will fight for his army. Do you see how the wonders that were in the land of promise are greater than those done in Egypt or in the desert? But we may understand the land of God as the Church, since to the saints who are in the Church all the wishes of God seem to be wonderful; for to those who are outside the Church nothing seems wonderful which by its own nature is wondrous. Let us therefore be in the land of God, and let us be transformed into the image of the Savior, and he will make all his wishes wonderful in us. Their infirmities have been multiplied; afterward they made haste. Whose infirmities have been multiplied? Surely those of the saints who above are recorded as being in the land of the Lord. When they were foolish, unbelieving, straying, and serving various desires and pleasures, passing their lives in greed and envy, their infirmities were being multiplied. But when they were washed and were sanctified and, turned to repentance, abandoned their past sins, then they made haste.

I have read in the Epistle of Barnabas (if anyone is pleased to accept testimony from it) that God chose apostles who were more wicked than every sin. And surely, if they were more worthless than all sinners, their infirmities were nonetheless being multiplied in them; but see how quickly they afterward withdrew from them. To Peter and to his brother Andrew it is said: ”Come and follow me. Likewise to James and John, who leave both their father and the boat and the net. Matthew rises up from the tax-booth, and at once is an apostle. Zacchaeus comes down from the tree, and is holy. Paul, persecuting the Church, suddenly believes, is washed, teaches, is subjected to persecutions, is beheaded. What is swifter than this conversion? The people of the Gentiles too, before they were converted to the Lord and heard through Isaiah, ”Drink this first, do it quickly,” was in all infirmities—or, as Symmachus translated, ”hardships,” or, as more fittingly Theodotion and the fifth edition, ”idols. But when the cults of idols had been multiplied, believing at the first word of the apostles, it was quickly converted to the Lord. Which indeed Aquila too, translating ”diaponēmata” (laborious things), according to his custom signifies as idols. For in the Hebrew it says ASABOTH, the very same word that is placed also there: ”The idols of the Gentiles are silver and gold. Further, in that he says ”proikisamenōn,” which the Seventy had rendered ”they made haste,” he seems to me to show a lofty meaning:

namely that the apostles, or the people of the Gentiles, after they were converted to the faith of Christ, and the Lord had forgiven them their sins (for this is what ”proikisamenōn” means, that as by a ”proikia”—that is, as a free gift—their vices were reversed), their ”diaponēmata,” that is, their pains, were increased in them, since they knew in how great a sea’s waters they had been and from what an abyss they had been freed; according to that which is written in Ecclesiastes: ”He who adds knowledge, adds sorrow. And Paul: ”I who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But it can also be discussed otherwise, since ”strength is made perfect in weakness”; and when an apostle is weaker, then he is stronger. We too, if we wish to come quickly to the Lord, ought to multiply our infirmities, so that, made weak in the flesh, we may be stronger in the spirit. I will not gather their assemblies out of bloods. Clearly he who speaks is the Savior. For who else could say, ”I will not gather their assemblies out of bloods”? But ”their”—understand it either of the nations or of the apostles. If of the nations, this will be the meaning: Although they are guilty of blood, and have perpetrated many crimes, yet because after their infirmities they hastened to me, their assemblies will be pure and utterly foreign to blood. If of the apostles, this will be the meaning:

They will by no means offer me victims as in the old Law, but there will be the spiritual religion of the New Testament. But according to a higher understanding, this must be said: That the Lord will abhor the man of bloods and the deceitful one; and the blood of the wicked is required from the hand of the watchman who has

refused to preach the coming wrath of God; and whoever shall scandalize the least, he will slay him; and those whose hands are full of blood—it is certain that they cannot be gathered into the synagogues of the Lord, who must first be purged by the spirit of burning. As for ”the synagogues of the Lord,” let us understand either the churches in the present, or, as I think better, the various dwellings with the Father in the heavens, which he will not be able to enter who has been sprinkled with the gore of sins. Nor will I be mindful of their names through my lips. The saints, whose infirmities have been multiplied, and whose assemblies I will not gather out of bloods, because they hastened to me—I will by no means call them by their former names, but by new ones: that is, after I have washed them in my fountain, I will not call them, as before, sons of men, but sons of God. Or otherwise: I will change, he says, their names, and out of Simon I will make Peter, because upon his rock my Church is founded;

out of the sons of Zebedee, sons of thunder, for I am about to entrust to them the sublime mysteries of my Gospel. And not only to these, but to Abraham too of old and to Sarah were their names changed; nor is it fitting that those whose life is different from their former manner of living should keep the same names. But another will interpret this—”Nor will I be mindful of their names through my lips”—thus: I will not name them lightly and as it were in passing, but I will hold them in the depth of my heart, I will keep them in my soul. So that, just as it is said to the unbelieving people, ”This people honors me with its lips, but its heart is far from me,” so, on the contrary, the Lord names his saints not with the lips only, but holds them with the inmost affection of his mind. The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup: it is you who will restore my inheritance to me. Our Savior in the Scriptures is called both high priest and king. High priest, in this: ”You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. King, as in that place: ”But I have been established as king by him over Zion, his holy mountain. According, then, to the fact that he is a priest, the Lord is his portion. For it is written in the Law:

”To the sons of Levi you shall not give an inheritance in the midst of the children of Israel, for I am their portion, says the Lord. Hence from Jesus they received no portion in the land of Judah, but were dispersed throughout the tribes, that prophecy being fulfilled: ”I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel. But if the Levites had no portion except the Lord, how much more does this one who is high priest, and who dares to say ”The Father abiding in me does his works,” have the Father as his special and proper portion. But according to the fact that he is king, it is said to him: ”Ask of me, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, and the ends of the earth as your possession. And note how elegantly the wording is measured in both cases. Of the Father it is said, ”You are the portion of my inheritance. ”You are,” he says, not ”you were”: for the Son always remained in the Father, and the Father in the Son. But of the nations, ”You,” he says, ”will

restore to me my inheritance”: for they ceased to be the Lord’s inheritance when their infirmities were multiplied, and their assemblies were being gathered out of bloods. Although some think that the lower verse too should be referred to God the Father, so that the meaning is:

Because I emptied myself, taking the form of a servant, and came down from my majesty to the earth, restore to me my inheritance; that is, yourself, in whom I always was, and glorify me with the glory which I had with you before the world was made. For you will not give me any new possession, but you will restore my inheritance, namely the divinity and nature of God, which I seemed not to have for the reason that I had taken the form of a man. Further, in that he says ”and of my cup,” it is doubtful to no one that in the Scriptures the cup is sometimes taken for a longed-for drink and joy, as in that place, ”How excellent is your inebriating cup,” and elsewhere, ”I will take the cup of salvation, and I will call upon the name of the Lord. So that, just as our Savior is our food and drink (for indeed we feed on his flesh and drink of his blood), so of that man who was assumed by the Savior the food and cup is the Father, that is, the one common divinity with God the Father. The cords have fallen to me in excellent places: for indeed my inheritance is excellent to me. In place of that one people, I have possessed the whole world as my inheritance; and from the world, not just anyone, but the strong. For this is what ”in excellent places” means, which in Greek is said ”among the strong”:

according to that, ”The Lord is my strength and my refuge and my deliverer,” and in another place, ”The Lord is my strength and my praise. If, then, anyone is excellent and strong, he is of the Lord’s inheritance. Hence that Theophilus, ”friend” or ”lover of God,” because he was such as to request that a Gospel be written to him, is called ”kratistos,” that is, excellent, strong: which was more simply translated by the Latins as ”most excellent Theophilus. Further, the measuring-cord is used in the division of fields, and wherever possessions are distributed, or a census of earthly revenues is conducted, land is divided, as also in Joshua the son of Nun. An angel holding a measuring-cord is shown to the prophet who is about to build Jerusalem, so that first of all he may measure the extent of the city by reason and order, and thereafter build up what has been measured. And in the canticle of Deuteronomy we read: ”The Lord’s portion became his people Jacob, the cord of his inheritance Israel. In the second book of Kingdoms too, when David overcame the Moabites, the Scripture records two cords set apart for putting to death, and two for keeping alive. But what it means that of the Moabites some are set apart for death, others for life, Orpah shows, and Ruth: of whom the one, turned back to the idols and to her ancient homeland, is destined for death;

the other, following her mother-in-law—whose name means ”sweet”—says, ”Your people is my people, and your God is my God. And so we too, if we wish to be of the Lord’s inheritance and of his cord, let us be strong and robust, and let us say: ”I

can do all things in Christ who has strengthened me. Let there be nothing weak in us, nothing feeble, nothing that the heir would not deign to receive. Since indeed Christ glories in his saints, and says: For indeed my inheritance is excellent to me. Do you wish to know that the Savior's inheritance was excellent? Consider Peter, look at Paul, all the apostles and saints, since indeed they believed throughout the whole world, and you will see the inheritance of Christ, and an excellent one. In place of which Aquila translated: "For indeed my inheritance is most beautiful to me. So that it may be that which is said in the Song of Songs: "You are wholly beautiful, my love, and there is no spot in you. And again: "Behold, you are fair, my near one, behold, you are fair, your eyes are doves. You who are fair and strong, when you have become like him of whom it is sung, "In your beauty and your comeliness," you will hear from the Bridegroom: "Forget your people and your father's house, and the King will desire your beauty. I will bless the Lord who has given me understanding: moreover even until night my reins have rebuked me.

He who speaks below, "My flesh shall rest in hope, for you will not leave my soul in hell, nor will you give your holy one to see corruption," consistently now too says: I will bless the Lord who has given me understanding, moreover even until night my reins have rebuked me. For he who is Wisdom, how does he receive understanding? But because "Jesus advanced in age and wisdom and grace before God and men," the Son was instructed not so much by the Father as the man was instructed by his own divinity. Hence too, concerning him who flowered from the root of Jesse, there is the prophet's oracle: "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding. Which indeed, for beating back the madness of the Arian heresy, Aquila and Theodotion translated better, saying: "I will bless the Lord my counselor"; so that the Father did not so much give the Son wisdom and understanding which he did not have before, as join his own counsel to the Son's judgment. So that, just as in Proverbs Wisdom says that she was a counselor to God when he rejoiced in the completed world, and she rejoiced in herself daily; so also that same Wisdom, in the fact that he assumed a human body, that he died and rose again, shows that he was not without the Father's counsel, but according to that saying, "That I might do your will, my God, I willed it.

But this too which follows, "Moreover even until night my reins have instructed me," must be taken thus, that we understand "reins" for hidden thoughts and deep affection, which is properly an idiom (idiōma) of the Scriptures. For as far as is in my memory, neither in any of the philosophers nor among the rhetoricians, nor among the poets, nor even among the physicians themselves, who promise a knowledge of the nature of bodies, do I recall ever having read that "reins" are put for the understanding and for deep thought. But Scripture uses this custom, so that when it wishes to indicate something secret and hidden or mystical, it says, "God who searches hearts and reins"; so that, since the heart is secret, the reins are the more secret parts of the heart. In Wisdom too, which is inscribed with the title of

Solomon, I have found written: ”God is the witness of his reins, and the true beholder of his heart, and the hearer of his tongue. In the book of the Patriarchs too, although it is counted among the apocrypha, I found it thus, that as the gall was created for anger, so the reins for cleverness and for shrewdness. But ”panourgia,” that is, cleverness, may be taken either in a good or in a bad sense: in a good sense, according to Proverbs, ”That he may give,” it says, ”shrewdness to the innocent, and to the younger boy sense and understanding”;

in a bad sense, as in the apostle, ”But I fear lest, as the serpent seduced Eve by his shrewdness, your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. What he says, then, is this: my instruction and deep thought and the inner affection of the heart was not only with me in the heavenly places, but even while I dwelt in the night of this world and in darkness, it was engaged with me in the man, and instructed me, and was never absent from me, so that whatever the weakness of the flesh could not do, divine thought and power might accomplish. Or at least thus: my reins instructed me, who possess the inner wisdom of divinity, by which I was taught, when the passion was imminent, not to yield to human frailty through the terror of the cross. Moreover, what else does this declare (since the Savior’s life is our example) but that he, not only waking but even sleeping, was free from every sin, and remained pure from every phantasm of the flesh: so that the saints too, who desire to be like their Lord and Master, may guard their heart with all watchfulness, and be overcome not only when waking, but not even in sleep—that is, not only by day, but not even by night. This too must be noted, that he said, ”Moreover even until night my reins have rebuked me”:

to show that before night came, or before the Savior himself began to be in the night, he was always instructed by his own wisdom. There is another interpretation: because divine Scripture always speaks of God’s powers after the likeness of human limbs—for example, when it says he has feet, eyes, ears, hands, and other things of this kind—that here ”reins” should be taken for the places of the seed; so that, just as the beginning of men and the element of human flesh is founded in the seed, so our judgments too, and the beginnings of our thoughts, have their reins: so that, before we handle anything either in deed or in word, silent thought may hold this in its own movement and consider it within itself. So that the meaning is: our Lord and Savior could not sin—not only in deed and word, but not even in thought or in the beginnings of thoughts, which they call ”propatheiai” (pre-passions)—he whom the Word of God was daily instructing. Not that God is one and the man another; but so that one and the same Son of Man and Son of God may now, as man, pray, now, as Lord, hear. I foresaw the Lord in my sight always: for he is at my right hand, that I may not be moved. In place of what we read in Latin, ”I foresaw,” and what in Greek is written ”proōrōmēn,” it stands better in the Hebrew SEBETHI, which we may render ”I set before myself. So that it means:

I set the Lord before me always at my right hand, and I could be overthrown by no fraud of my enemies. And at the same time consider that it is in our power to set the Lord before our eyes. He who is just and is like the Savior places God at his right hand, and says, ”Because he is at my right hand, that I may not be moved. But he places him at the right hand for this reason, that he has before his eyes the one whom he follows as he goes before. But he who is a sinner casts the word of the Lord behind his back, and the Lord becomes for him at the left hand. And when the devil has looked at him on the left of the sinner, he at once moves to the sinner’s right, so as to possess the place of God: and that is fulfilled which is written of Judas: ”Let the devil stand at his right hand. Why this is put not as in narration but as in prayer belongs to another place to discuss. For the Lord Savior, then, or through the Lord for his saints, God always stands at the right hand. But the just man has no left hand, and wherever he turns, ”the angel of the Lord encamps round about those who fear him, and will deliver them. Do you wish to know that the just man has no left hand?

When Moses, in the type of the cross, lifted both his hands to heaven, it is not written, ”Aaron was at his right and Hur at his left,” but that on this side stood Aaron and on that side Hur. In the book of Judges too, that leader Ehud, whose mystery is manifold and great, who had a sword upon his thigh, and had cut off desires, and had also run through with his blade his very fat and gross adversary, is for that reason written ”amphoterodexios,” that is, having both hands as a right hand, whom in Latin we may call ”ambidextrous. Someone may object: If the just man has no left hand, how is Wisdom written to have both a right hand and a left? A diligent reader will very easily judge how great is the difference between the right hand of Wisdom and the left, when he has noticed what things are said to be in her right and what in her left. For it is said: ”Length of eternity and years of life are in her right hand, but in her left hand riches and glory. You see eternal time and perpetual life placed in Wisdom’s right hand; but the carnal things which pass away, which flee off while they are thought to be held—that is, riches and glory—placed in her left hand, according to that, that on the day of judgment some will stand at the right, and others at the left:

the lambs, that is, and the saints at his right, but the goats and the sinners at his left. But perhaps an inquisitive reader will object this too: how we can assert that God stands at the right of the just man, and the devil at the left of the sinner, when concerning our Lord it is read in Zechariah, ”And the devil was standing at his right hand to oppose him. Let him, then, who objects this read also what follows: that when the devil was standing at his right hand, Jesus had filthy garments. Rightly did he who had taken up our sins and was bearing our offenses have the devil at his right hand, not so much for himself as for the filthy garments. And at the same time let him consider that it is not said, ”The devil was standing as victor and triumphing,” but as still set in the contest and in the battle-line and in doubt—

indeed, when he had not yet begun to fight. For it follows, ”That he might oppose him. But the devil was opposing him, as we said, because he had filthy garments from our sins.

But after he heard, ”May the Lord who chose Jerusalem rebuke you,” he did not stand at the right, but went behind his back and under his feet, and at once Jesus the great priest receives the ankle-length robe (poderis), and is clothed in white vesture, and, royal dignity being joined to him—that is, Zerubbabel being coupled with him—builds the Church, and constructs the spiritual Jerusalem.

Because of this my heart has been glad and my tongue has rejoiced. This that he says, ”Because of this,” must be joined to what precedes, so that he says the cause of his gladness, or exultation, was this, that he always had God before his eyes, and, with him standing at his right hand, was never moved; and so let the order be: My heart has been glad and my tongue has rejoiced, rendering a hymn to the Father for the salvation of men, because, while I stood and endured the death of the cross, the Lord was set at my right hand. This passage also tells against those who reckon that the members which are set forth in the Scriptures must always be understood bodily. For let them answer how a tongue by itself can rejoice, or how a tongue, as if perceiving and understanding, can have its own gladness. Since indeed he does not say, ”the tongue rejoiced,” but ”my tongue rejoiced. Understand, then, of the tongue as of the other members too, namely that it has all its effects, according to that saying of Solomon: ”In the hand of the tongue are death and life. But in place of what is read in the Acts of the Apostles and in the common edition, ”My tongue rejoiced,” it must be known that in the other editions, and among the Seventy themselves too, it is not ”tongue” that is put, but ”glory,” which in Hebrew is called CHABOD. For ”tongue” is called LASON.

And I think that, because the glory of the orator is in the praise of his speech, just as the glory of the physician is in the industry of the medical art, and the athlete’s glory is his strength, and the glory of the other arts is to fulfill what they know: therefore the tongue, through which what is felt is uttered, has been put for ”glory. Or at least the glory of that man who was assumed by Christ must be understood, the one concerning whom it is said elsewhere, ”My glory, and the lifter-up of my head. Or his glory must be understood as the apostles, because they glorified him in the whole world: just as we call an ample flock the glory of the shepherd, and learned disciples the glory of the master, and strong armies the glory of the general. Further, as to what John says, ”We saw his glory, glory as of the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth,” and what is written in another place, ”Arise, my glory, arise”: let us understand that to be the Savior’s glory which the apostles saw in the humility of his flesh, so that they gazed with keener eyes not on what appeared, but on what lay hidden in the body.

Moreover my flesh too shall rest in hope. For you will not leave my soul in hell, nor will you give your holy one to see corruption. It is superfluous to wish to treat of those things which have been explained by the apostles. We therefore say these things, which were passed over by them as being, as it were, of lesser importance: that he said, ”My flesh shall dwell in hope,” for this reason, that the Savior descended to the dead with the hope of rising again at once. And he did not say ”shall dwell,” or ”shall rest,” as is read in the Latin manuscripts, but ”kataskēnōsei,” that is, ”shall sojourn,” so that the meaning is: It will tarry there a little while, and will see the underworld in passing, and his soul too will not be left in hell. ”For I have power to lay down my soul, and I have power to take it up again. Nor will it be granted by the Father to see corruption. But he said ”to see” for ”to suffer,” according to that idiom (idiōma) of the Scriptures: ”Who is the man that lives, and shall not see death? And elsewhere: ”He who, though he had not known sin, was made sin for us. And at the same time note that the Lord had both flesh and soul: the flesh which was laid in the tomb, and the soul which descended to the underworld.

And as the flesh without the soul was perfect flesh, so also the soul without the flesh was a perfect soul, and lacked no function of its own nature which the human soul is wont to have apart from sin. This is against the new heresy. And at the same time, because some argue variously, from the fact that the Lord entered with the doors shut, that the same flesh did not rise which had died, let them hear what the Lord himself here recalls. Moreover my flesh too shall rest in hope. Surely, when the Savior had died and suffered, that flesh was laid in the tomb which had also been alive; that flesh, then, also rose again, which had lain lifeless and dead in the tomb. But if the same flesh rose, how do some argue that a certain spiritual and great flesh, and not our own, rose in the Lord? Nor do we say this in such a way as to deny that the body of Christ took on that glory which we believe that we saints too shall receive. For then this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. But as, before he suffered, when transformed and glorified on the mountain he had assuredly the same flesh which he had also had down below, though of another glory;

so also after the resurrection there was in him flesh of the same nature which had been before the passion, but of a more glorified and more august appearance, that being fulfilled which Paul says: ”And so from now on we know no one according to the flesh; and even if we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we no longer know him so. I am compelled in this place to say that word of the apostle: ”O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God: how unsearchable are his judgments and untraceable his ways! God the Son, God the Word, so long as he was in the heavens, and men had not so sinned that he himself should descend to them, dwelt simple and uncompounded with the angels, thrones, dominions, and the other powers. But when he descended to men, namely those who were framed

of soul and body, he too came compounded, lest the compounded ones should be unable to bear the simple. Again, because souls without bodies were being held in the underworld, souls which in their nature are simple, so, the flesh itself being left behind, it was not God the Word, not the compounded man, but the soul that descended to the underworld: so that, just as each place had need of him, he might so be perceived by the inhabitants of that region.

I know that many, since the body of Christ is the Church, and we are its members, according to anagogy (anagōgēn) understand as the flesh of Christ those who are lower, and as the soul those who are more perfect; or at least as the flesh those who follow the literal history, as the soul those who ascend to spiritual understanding.

You have made known to me the ways of life; you will fill me with gladness with your countenance: delights are at your right hand unto the end. Because his flesh did not see corruption, and his soul was not left in hell, now after the resurrection, ascending to the heavens as victor, in the person of that man who had risen, he says, ”You have made known to me the ways of life”: that is, I have learned how men are freed from the underworld, by what means they may attain eternal life. And at the same time consider that he who is the Way and the Life said that he had learned the ways of life, that is, how men may attain to him who said that he is the Way and the Life. And I think that, just as he himself is the Truth, and, speaking to the Jews, ”If you abide in my word, you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free,” he speaks as it were of another truth; so, since he himself is the Life, he speaks as it were of another life, and since he himself is the Way, he says that other ways were shown to him—or, as it is read in the Hebrew, ”the way”: namely, that the flesh which he had taken, and in his flesh the whole race of men, might rejoice that those things which belonged to the divinity of the Son were made known to it.

For which reason he says that he rejoices, and has exultation with the Father (for this is what ”with your countenance” means, according to that, ”You will make him glad with joy with your countenance”), and full and perfect gladness and ineffable delight, when he shall sit at the Father’s right hand, and shall have fulfilled, ”The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet. The Son sits at the Father’s right hand in the majesty of one reigning; and because he had seen his first martyr Stephen battling against the Jews, he rose from his throne and stood at the Father’s right hand, as if he too were fighting for the martyr. This is the delight, this the pleasure at the end of the dispensation, or of the victory: for in place of ”end” Aquila and Theodotion and all the editions, except Symmachus and the Seventy, translated ”victory”; because he suffered, and rose again, and as victor pierced through to the heavens, for this reason: that he might set man at the right hand of the Lord. It must also be noted that in this place where we read, ”You will fill me with gladness,” Theodotion said ”Seven gladnesses,” and ”With your countenance is delight at your right hand. To the

victor”; and Aquila and Symmachus translated ”A fullness of gladnesses with your face,” or ”in your presence,” and the rest. It is asked, then, why Theodotion said ”seven” for ”fullness.

This indeed he will easily know who has at least a small acquaintance with the Hebrew tongue. For the word SABA, as we have also said in the book of Hebrew Questions, signifies four things: fullness and satiety, an oath, and seven. Since, therefore, it is ambiguous, Theodotion, knowing that there are diverse graces of the Spirit with God, thought that, for the fitness of the passage, ”seven” ought rather to be translated than ”fullness,” ”satiety,” and ”oath”; so as to show that with God there are the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the Spirit of knowledge and of piety, the Spirit of the fear of the Lord: which are truly the seven full gladnesses—not for others, but for him who has deserved to be delighted forever at the right hand of the Lord. For this reason some suppose that seven heavens were named by the philosophers, and seven wandering stars called. Further, Symmachus, where we read, ”Delight is at your right hand unto the end,” says, ”Strength is at your right hand forever”: showing that he who is full of virtues will remain continually with God.

Homily 62, on Psalm 82 (Alternate Series)

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos quattuordecim (alternate series), Anecdota Maredsolana III, Pars III (Maredsoli, 1903) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). O God, who shall be like you? None shall be like you. Do not keep silent, nor be restrained, O God. It is a man of the Church who speaks, from whose belly flow rivers of living water. For he sees that the harvest is great and the laborers few: a vast multitude of believers, and only a modest teaching from the masters; many heretics, many adversaries, and few warriors to do battle for Christ. Do not keep silent, nor be restrained, O God. Why this? For behold, your enemies have made a din. The heretics speak out, and the men of the Church keep silent; they make a noise, and we are quiet; they blaspheme, and we do not bark back. For behold, your enemies have made a din. Beautifully did he say, they have made a din: for it is not speech adorned for building up, but only a disordered clamor for tearing down. And those who hate you have lifted up their head. So great is the multitude of the heretics, and so small the number of those who believe in you.

Against your people they have devised a malicious plan. This they speak, that they may snatch away from your Church. They have plotted against your holy ones. Each day they think of nothing else, save how they may deceive the men of the Church and trip them up. They have said, Come, let us destroy them out of the nation. I see a strange thing. So great is the multitude of the heretics, and such the diversity of their teachings, that their opinions differ among themselves, and yet they agree in this alone — in their hatred of us. For just as Herod and Pilate were enemies, and, acting against Christ, they made peace, and their concord was worse than their enmity had been; so these too fall out wickedly and league together yet more wickedly. Against your covenant they have made their arrangements. You spoke through the prophets; and they through Manichaeus, Marcion, Arius, and Valentinus. The tents of the Edomites and the Ishmaelites. Since once we have begun, leaving behind the lowliness of the literal history, to raise our understanding

to a higher manner of the spiritual meaning's exposition... For the history is a simple one, in which the Jewish people speaks against the other nations that were fighting against it. But whatever was done, was done as a type of us. Israel was attacked, and its victory profited us. Let us see, then, who they are that fight against the Church. The tents of the Edomites. The Edomites are interpreted as "earthly." Beautifully did he say, tents: for they have no foundations nor houses, but tents, seats forever unstable. And of the Edomites and the Ishmaelites. The Ishmaelites are interpreted as "as if hearing." Beautifully did he say, as if hearing: for they do not hear God, but pass on by.

Moab and the Hagarenes, Gebal and Ammon. Each single name holds its single sacred meaning: for as many words, so many mysteries. Moab, which is interpreted, "from the father": for they are not in the father, but from the father, because they have forsaken their former father. And the Hagarenes, who are interpreted "proselytes" and "newcomers," who were formerly citizens and afterward became strangers: for they are not of the household, but are aliens, seeing that they assail the house of the father. Gebal, which is interpreted "empty valley." They are not of the mountains, but of the valley: for they have no taste for the things above, but for the things below; they are not of heaven, but wholly of the earth. Therefore he said, empty valley, because there is also a valley that is not empty: for whoever is humble, and casts himself down for Christ's sake, that one is a valley and a plain — not empty, but good. Ammon, and Amalek. Ammon indeed is interpreted "a false people." Therefore it is said of the heretics, a false people: for they do not follow him who says "I am the truth," but they follow him who is the prince of lying. And Amalek, who is interpreted "licking": for they suffer nothing to remain standing in the Church, but lick up all its foundations. They do not eat the words of the Scriptures, but lick the earth like a serpent.

And the foreigners with those who dwell in Tyre. In place of what we have as "foreigners," in the Hebrew is written Philistim, which is interpreted "the cup of the draught," because they are made drunk from the cup of Babylon, as Jeremiah says: "The golden cup of Babylon, making all the earth drunk." See what he says, the golden cup of Babylon. Babylon is interpreted "confusion"; but the golden cup is the doctrines of the philosophers and the eloquence of the orators. For who has not been led astray by the philosophers? Who has not been seduced by the orators of this world? A golden cup they have — outwardly the splendor of eloquence; and inwardly poisons are stored, which could not be hidden unless they were concealed under the appearance of gold. You see indeed the honey of eloquence, and you do not suspect the deadly poisons. The foreigners with those who dwell in Tyre. Tyre is interpreted "narrowness." For truly there is narrowness there, and not the breadth which is Christ, as the Apostle also says to the Corinthians: "You are not straitened in us, but you are straitened in your own bowels."

For Assur also came with them. They went before, and he follows. Let us see who this is that follows. Assur indeed is interpreted ”the devil”: truly so, because he is both the enemy and the avenger, as is written in the eighth psalm, ”That you may destroy the enemy and the defender.” He himself makes us sin, and he himself accuses us for punishment. For Assur came together with them. They have the devil as their prince, they have him as their emperor: not Josiah the righteous king rules over them, but the Assyrian. They became a help to the sons of Lot. Lot is interpreted ”turning aside,” which is understood, from God, like the Jewish people: because all the heretics agree with the Jews in blasphemies. There are many things that might be said, but the hour shuts us out: for it is a long task to run through them one by one. For who could easily say, Do to them as to Midian and Sisera, as to Jabin at the torrent of Kishon. They perished at Endor, they became like the dung of the earth. Make their princes like Oreb and Zeb and Zebee and Salmana: all their princes who said, Let us possess for ourselves as an inheritance the sanctuary of God? They thought themselves to be men of the Church, and claimed the Church for themselves.

My God, set them like a wheel. Let them not be stable, but forever uncertain: that they may have no seat, and be forever rolled about unstably. For just as a wheel is not of itself stable, so also the heretics do not stand firm in their opinion, but forever change their doctrines. Like stubble before the face of the wind. Eleven punishments he asks against them, because they have denied the mysteries of the eleven apostles. But let the prudent reader say: How will you divide one verse into two? And you do violence to the Scripture: you say eleven apostles, when we know that the Lord and Savior had twelve disciples. For this reason, then, we set down the number eleven, because Judas the traitor, who had been the twelfth, departed from the number. My God, set them like a wheel. You have one plague: count therefore more carefully the rest that follow. Like stubble before the face of the wind: behold the second. Like fire which burns a forest: behold the third. Like a flame burning the mountains: the fourth. So will you pursue them in your tempest: the fifth. And in your anger you will confound them: the sixth. Fill their faces with shame: the seventh. And let them seek your name, O Lord: the eighth. Let them be ashamed and troubled forever and ever: the ninth. And let them be confounded and perish: the tenth. And let them know that your name is Lord: the eleventh. You alone are the Most High over all the earth.

Thus far it is wrath: what follows is now mercy. And in your anger you will trouble them. He did not say, kill, but, trouble them, that they may return to you: behold the sixth. Fill their faces with shame: not with punishment, lest, shut out by death, they be unable to return to the Lord. Fill their faces with shame, not with punishment. Why then do you not kill them? The divine word explains: That they may seek your name, O Lord. For if they seek, they will also find. Those who have been led astray by the heretics will be turned back to the Lord: behold the seventh.

Let them be confounded and perish. He who blushes for his sins is next to being without sin: behold the eighth. Let the prudent reader say: This is contrary to the interpretation you have given. And let them perish. For those who are confounded to this end, that they may be saved — how shall they perish? Let them perish, let them perish, he says, the heretics, and let the men of the Church be saved. It is as if you were to say, Let this adulterer perish — not that you wish the adulterer to perish, but that the adultery may perish in him; nor, when the adulterer is saved, is the adulterer saved, but the righteous and chaste man. That you may know this to be the meaning we have stated, the Holy Spirit himself speaks thus: Let them be confounded and perish. How let them perish?

That they may know that your name is Lord. Let them perish in error, let them be saved in the truth. You alone are the Most High in all the earth. Not the conventicles of the heretics, not the aeons of Valentinus and his innumerable days, not Basilides who asserts three hundred and sixty-five gods; not, he says, the innumerable multitude of false gods, but you alone are the Most High in all the earth. To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Homily 63, on Psalm 83 (Alternate Series)

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos quattuordecim (alternate series), Anecdota Maredsolana III, Pars III (Maredsoli, 1903) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Long ago, when we spoke about the eightieth psalm, we said that the title of the eighth psalm, and of the eightieth, and of the eighty-third psalm — that is, of this one — is inscribed ”for the winepresses.” So we said that winepresses are like granaries, in which the crops are stored away. So let us see what he says. How beloved are your tabernacles, O Lord of hosts. These, then, are the winepresses in which the spiritual grain is to be stored. ”Make for yourselves friends out of the mammon of iniquity, that they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.” How beloved are your tabernacles, O Lord of hosts. How beloved are the tabernacles through which a man is carried over from earth to heaven. My soul longs and faints for the courts of the Lord. Happy is that thought which by day and by night desires the tabernacles of the Lord. He who is a sinner, when death comes, does not think about these tabernacles, but about punishments: he does not consider the kingdom of heaven, but dreads the flames of hell. My soul longs and faints for the courts of the Lord. See with what love, or with what longing, the mind of the holy man is wounded for the courts of the Lord. Beautifully has he said: I gaze upon the doors, and what the house is like inside I do not know.

My heart and my flesh have exulted in the living God. Listen, heretic, to what he says. How beloved are your tabernacles, O Lord of hosts: he is speaking of the kingdom of heaven. ”There are many dwelling-places with my Father,” the Lord says in the Gospel. My soul longs and faints for the courts of the Lord: these are the courts in which the saints will dwell for eternity, which the prophet desires. My heart and my flesh. You see, then, that both the soul and the flesh alike desire the kingdom of heaven. But if the flesh is dissolved into the air, if it will not rise again, as the heretics suppose, how does the flesh of the prophet desire the kingdom of heaven? My heart and my flesh: because they have labored together, together they await the recompense. If the labor is shared, why should the reward not be shared?

I beg you to hear me with indulgence. The flesh labors more in the present age than the soul: because the soul commands, the flesh serves. One thing is the labor of the servant, another the delights of the one who commands. The soul desires the Lord: the flesh fasts, the flesh lies on the ground in the cold, in prison it is scourged in martyrdom, it is beaten, it is condemned — the injury is the flesh's. The soul indeed grieves: but grief does not reach it except through the flesh. But someone may say:

How does the apostle say that "flesh and blood shall not obtain the kingdom of God"? Do you wish to know how it is written? Listen to the Lord speaking in Genesis: "My spirit shall not remain in man forever, because he is flesh. Why? For what is this? You made the flesh, and do you accuse and condemn the flesh? But what God says is this: my spirit shall not remain in these men, because they do not live according to the spirit, but according to the vices and will of the flesh. Let the apostle too give his testimony: "Whoever are in the flesh cannot please God. If all who are in the flesh cannot please God, how did Paul himself, who is speaking, please God? How did Peter or the rest of the apostles and the saints please him, whom we cannot deny to have been in the flesh? Just as the same apostle again says: "But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit. They were in the flesh: and how does he say, You are not in the flesh? Because you do not live according to the flesh, because "our citizenship is in heaven. For we who in this age "are pilgrims away from the Lord" do indeed walk on the earth, but we hasten toward the things of heaven: because here we have no home of our own, but are strangers and pilgrims, just as all our fathers were.

For indeed the sparrow has found itself a house, and the turtledove a nest where she may lay her young. This is what the Lord says in the Gospel: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests." For indeed the sparrow has found itself a house. He gave a comparison from an everyday example. Because he had said, How beloved are your tabernacles, which my soul longs for, and my flesh desires the kingdom of heaven; he gives a comparison, and says: The birds are free, and although they wander through the air, yet they remember their nests, and return to them. If, then, sparrows seek out their nests, why should the human soul not seek the dwellings prepared for it by the Lord? Your altars, O Lord of hosts. What is to be understood by, For indeed the sparrow has found itself a house, and the turtledove a nest where she may lay her young: your altars, O Lord of hosts? What is the connection? It hangs upon what came before. My soul longs and faints for the courts of the Lord: your altars, O Lord of hosts. John in the Apocalypse saw the altar of the Lord, beneath which were the souls of the righteous. For he says thus: "I saw beneath the altar of the Lord the souls of those slain for the word of the Lord and the testimony of Jesus." They were beneath the altar of God, because they had been offered up in martyrdom for Christ; for the victim of the Lord and Savior deserved to be beneath the altar in heaven.

Blessed are they who dwell in your house, O Lord: that is, in the Church, whether the present one, or "the church of the firstborn." Forever and ever they will praise you. See what kind of office the martyrs have: it is that of the angels too. What they do in heaven, then, this we imitate on earth. So when we are called to the psalms and neglect them, we despise the praises of God.

Blessed is the man whose help is from you. To begin is ours, to help is God's. He has arranged ascents in his heart. Daily he thinks how he may ascend, not how he may descend. Whoever is a sinner puts not ascents, but descents, in his heart. That is why Jacob too saw the angels ascending and descending. He has arranged ascents in his heart: what is his own — he thinks the good, but the accomplishment he leaves to God. It is ours to arrange, his to bring to completion. Let us see where he arranged the ascents. Listen to what he says: In the valley of tears, in the place which he has set. We read in the book of Judges, when the angel came and preached repentance to the people, saying, You have forsaken the Lord, and the Lord will forsake you; and when the people heard this they wept, and that place was called the Valley of Tears. We have recalled the old history, so that we might flee heresy. But by the valley of tears we can understand, spiritually, this present age. For we are not on the mountain, that is, in the kingdom of heaven, but in the valley, that is, in the darkness of this world; and by our error we have been cast out of paradise with Adam into the valley of tears, where there is repentance, where there are tears. In the valley of tears, in the place which he has set. What did he say?

The place which God has set for the contest: so that here we may contend against the devil, against sins, that in the heavens we may be crowned. Why, then, did he give a contest of fighting? Could God not have given us life without a contest? But he gave it as a president of the games; he gave a stadium, where we might wrestle against the vices: so that afterward he might deservedly crown us, not sleeping, but laboring. What follows?

For indeed he who gave the law will give a blessing: therefore he gave a place for contending, so that afterward he might give a blessing, he who had given us the law of the contest. They will go from strength to strength. You see that the sense fits together. They will go from strength to strength: therefore they fight here, so that there afterward they may be crowned. They go from strength to strength. He did not say, they will go from weakness to strength: for unless they have been strong here, they will not be stronger afterward. But someone may say, God is merciful. But see what follows: The Lord loves mercy and truth. He is indeed merciful, but also truthful. When you hear "merciful," you ought not to be careless, because there follows, "and truthful." Again, when you hear "truth," do not despair, do not think God to be only cruel: because mercy tempers truth. For "the cup in the hand of the Lord is full of mixed wine, and he has poured out from this into that": that

is, from mercy he has tempered truth, and from truth mercy. The God of gods will be seen in Zion. When they have gone from strength to strength, then the God of gods will be seen in Zion. To whom is glory forever and ever. Amen.

Homily 64, on Psalm 84 (Alternate Series)

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos quattuordecim (alternate series), Anecdota Maredsolana III, Pars III (Maredsoli, 1903) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). To the end, a psalm for the sons of Korah. Korah is interpreted as ”Skull,” the place of the Lord’s passion. We are all sons of Korah, we who believe in his resurrection. What then do we say, and what do we sing with harmonious voice? You have blessed, O Lord, your land. It is better said in Greek, Εὐδόκησας Κύριε, that is, ”It has well pleased you, O Lord, in regard to your land”; it has pleased you, this has seemed good to you, this you have decreed, that through your mercy you might fulfill what is said in the following verse: You have turned away the captivity of Jacob, you have forgiven the iniquity of your people, you have covered all their sins. But we can also understand it according to the Latin sense. You have blessed, O Lord, your land. The land, which before had been cursed, has been blessed by your coming. That which before had heard, ”Thorns and thistles shall you bring forth,” now is called, as is written in the Song of Songs, ”the flower of the field and the lily of the valleys.” The land, which before brought forth thorns, hears in Isaiah: ”There shall come forth a rod from the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up from his root.” You have turned away the captivity of Jacob. The Lord therefore came to preach release to the captives. This is what is said in another place, ”He led captivity captive”: that is, we who before had been taken captive by the devil unto perdition, are now taken captive by the Savior unto salvation.

You have forgiven the iniquity of your people. This we believe was accomplished in baptism. You have covered all their sins. This in penance, as is said in the thirty-first psalm: ”Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.” In baptism our iniquities are forgiven us, but in penance the sins that had been committed are covered over: they are not dismissed, but covered over. Let us carefully consider the force of the word. For when the Lord and Savior comes, all our iniquities are utterly forgiven us in baptism. For when we were living

without law, we were sinning without law — ἀνομία it is called in Greek, that is, sin without law; but when we have received baptism, it is by no means called ἀνομία, but sin is called sin. For sin is not imputed except to him who knows it to be sin: where there is transgression of a commandment, there is true sin. Do you wish to know how sins are covered over by virtues? Yesterday I was dissolute, today I am chaste: chastity covers over lust. Yesterday I was imprudent, today I am prudent, I repent of my error: prudence covers over imprudence. Yesterday I was seizing what belonged to others, today I distribute what is my own: almsgiving covers over greed. Blessed is he whose iniquities are forgiven in baptism: but the second is penance, which is like a plank after shipwreck. Therefore that man too can be called blessed: though he be delivered amid peril, yet because he is delivered in penance, he is to be called blessed.

You have mitigated all your wrath, you have turned away from the wrath of your indignation. See what penance avails: it holds off the imminent wrath of God. Convert us, O God of our salvations. He did not say, ”of our salvation”: because we have sinned much, we have need of many salvations. Will you be angry with us forever? or will you extend your wrath from generation to generation? Your wrath has profited unto salvation: for this reason you were angry with the former people, that you might have mercy on ours. You, being turned, will give us life, and your people will rejoice in you. Show us, O Lord, your mercy, and give us your salvation. What in Latin is called ”salvation” (salutare), in Hebrew is called ”Jesus.” Therefore in Hebrew it is said thus: Show us, O Lord, your mercy, and give us your salvation: Unless you first be merciful toward the human race, your Jesus will not be given to us.

I will hear what the Lord God speaks within me. The prophet prays on behalf of the people, and he who speaks within himself while God speaks, and he says, I will hear what the Lord God speaks within me. You see that God speaks not in the ears but in the heart; just as Zechariah too says: ”And the angel who spoke within me said to me.” There the angel is understood to be our Lord, who announces the will of the Father, who in Isaiah is called the ”angel of great counsel.” I will hear what the Lord God speaks within me: I will incline the ear of my heart, that I may hear what the Lord God speaks within me.

For he will speak peace unto his people, and upon his saints, and unto those who are converted to the heart. I see three kinds of people: the common people, the saints, and those who are converted to the heart. He speaks peace with his people: not with the people of the Jews, of whom he says in Hosea, ”You are not my people,” but concerning all Christians who have believed in him. For all whosoever are in the Church are together called the people of the Lord. But those who are already foremost among them, and advance in spiritual deeds, are called saints of God, just as Paul writes in his epistles to the churches and to the saints who are in them. This

third follows, And unto those who are converted to the heart. These are they who had been tripped up by the devil, and afterward, doing penance, are converted to the virtues. For at the time when they sinned, they lost their heart — that is, the prudence of the heart, which, being converted to better things, they receive again. Hear, O Montanus; hear, O Novatus; hear, O Maximilla and the rest among the Phrygians, you who say that there is no penance. The Lord speaks to his people, that is, to all Christians without exception, and to his saints who are foremost in the Church, and to those who are converted to the heart, that is, who do penance. Blessed indeed is he whom no sin has ever stained, in whom no wound has ever been fixed: yet the second blessedness is, after a wound, to heal the scar.

Nevertheless his salvation is near to those who fear him. See what he says. Those who fear the Lord have the Lord near, since fear does not yet possess perfection: ”For perfect love casts out fear.” Therefore we who love the Lord have him not nearby, but within. ”For I will dwell in them, and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” That glory may dwell in our land. This is the land of which he says in another place, ”The earth has given its fruit.” The fruit of our land is the bread of life, which was born for us in Bethlehem; for Bethlehem is interpreted ”house of bread.” And this bread, which arose in Bethlehem, was made for us descending from heaven, into whose mysteries the angels desire to look. Truth has arisen from the earth, and justice has looked down from heaven. The truth of the promise has arisen from the earth, and the sun of justice has looked down from heaven: that he might lavish his light upon men set in darkness and in the shadow of death.

Mercy and truth have met each other: justice and peace have kissed. Mercy and truth have met. I see two things, which by coming together and meeting become one. Justice and peace have kissed. All this is fitted to the mystery of the Lord and Savior: this is the Son of God and of man, who is for us truth, mercy, peace, and justice, in whom the justice of the former people and the mercy of the latter are joined together into one peace. ”For he himself,” says the Apostle, ”is our peace, who has made both one.” This is the mystery which the Church desires, and cries out in the Song of Songs, saying, ”Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth.” This is the kiss of which the Apostle Paul says, ”Greet one another with the kiss of peace.” For indeed the Lord will give kindness. For this reason these kisses were given, that the Lord might give kindness. And our land will give its fruit. What was promised at that time, we now see fulfilled. Our land gives its fruit, when it is tilled with the plow of justice, when by fastings, when by abstinence and the other virtues it is uprooted from its old vices, so that it may render the grain of the gospel seed which it received into a hundredfold fruit. Peter and the rest of the apostles, because they cultivated their land with diverse labors, can confidently say, Our land has given its fruit. The martyrs too, when they are cut down, when they are crucified, their land will render its fruit.

There are many things which might be said, but the hour compels the sermon to reach its end. Let us together pray to the Lord, that both my speech and your hearing may be turned into work. ”For not the hearers only are just before God, but the doers.” For he who speaks or hears, and does not do, either listens or speaks unto his own condemnation. For what does he say in the gospel? ”If you were blind, you would not have sin.” Let us turn that around in another way: If you were deaf, and did not hear, you would not have sin. But because both to speak and to hear without work are each of them sin, let us ask the Lord to set his steps upon the way — that is, that he may accompany us in the perils of this life, and, walking in our heart without the offense of our sin, may delight to dwell in us always. To whom is glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Homily 65, on Psalm 87 (Alternate Series)

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos quattuordecim (alternate series), Anecdota Maredsolana III, Pars III (Maredsoli, 1903) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin).

At the very outset the title is most difficult, and although we have not yet begun the harbor of exposition, nevertheless the most obscure questions press upon us. ”A song of a psalm, for the sons of Chore, unto the end, for meleth, to be answered, of the understanding of Eman the Ezraite. You see that in the individual words there are individual questions. ”A song of a psalm”: there is no great difficulty. ”For the sons of Chore”: the sons of Caath, of the tribe of Levi. ”Unto the end. Attend carefully to what he said: ”unto the end,” not at the beginning, not in the middle, but at the end is it promised: not at the beginning to the patriarchs, not in the middle to the prophets, but at the end to the apostles and to us is the joy of the song promised. ”For meleth. Meleth is a Hebrew word, and it is translated ”choir. Now it is called a choir when many sing together into one, and just as the strings of a lyre are indeed different strings, yet produce a single sound. Therefore, that you may know that meleth is translated ”choir,” there immediately follows ”To be answered”: so that, as the prophet sings, the whole multitude of the choir may answer in the praise of God. For the mystery is prefigured of the Church gathered together from diverse nations, so that from diverse places and from diverse regions and manners one choir of the praises of God may be made.

”Of the understanding of Eman the Ezraite. Eman was one of the choir-masters, just as Asaph or the others were. But that he is called ”Ezraite,” this is translated ”having obtained the help of the Lord” (since indeed Ezras is translated ”helper”), that is, having obtained aid from the Lord. Therefore this choir too, which sings together in praises, is upheld by the help of God. Let us run through the individual little verses, and because we are constrained within a brief span, let us fit the individual little sentences to the individual verses.

”O Lord, the God of my salvation.” This psalm is spoken in the person of the Savior, that is, in the person of that servant whom He deigned to take upon Himself. Whatever, therefore, is spoken humbly is narrated in the human person, because it profits human salvation. ”I have cried in the day, and in the night before thee.” Though I cried by night, yet the awareness of virtues was light to me. ”Let my prayer come in before thee.” ”Into thy hands, Father, I commend my spirit.” ”Let my prayer come in before thee. Incline thine ear to my petition.” Where are the anthropomorphites, who suppose that God has bodily members? ”Incline thine ear, O God.” It is the voice of the Son to the Father, speaking in our person. ”Incline thine ear.” It is a mark of great weakness, if, when He wishes to hear, He needs to incline His ear, so as to hear more closely. See how wretched it is to say that the Father cannot hear the Son unless with head inclined. Scripture speaks with human frailty, so that we may more easily understand what is said.

”For my soul is filled with evils.” I bear the sins of many, therefore I grieve for all. ”My soul is filled with evils.” I bear evils, that I may lay them down upon the cross. ”And my life hath drawn near to hell.” Beautifully he said ”hath drawn near”: for He was not held fast by hell, but for our sake He drew near into hell. Finally, in another psalm it is said in the person of the Lord, ”For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor wilt thou give thy holy one to see corruption.” ”I am counted among them that go down into the pit.” This my murderers supposed: that I, going down like the rest of men into the prison of the underworld, was to be held back in the lower pit; not knowing that I had gone down for this reason, that I might rather draw out with me those who were held fast in that very place. ”I am become as a man without help, free among the dead.” He did not say, ”I am become without help,” but ”I am become as though without help,” because He had the Father as helper. ”Free among the dead.” Other men are held in hell by the bonds of sins: ”There is no man without sin, not even if his life be of one day.” For we are all held in transgression: and therefore whoever goes down into hell is held by the law of hell. ”For everyone is bound by the bonds of his own sins.” I therefore was free by nature, but for a little while I became as it were a debtor because of the sins of men.

”Like the slain that sleep in the sepulchres.” Beautifully he said ”like the slain”: for He had no wound, but for the salvation of men He received a wound, as Isaiah says, ”He himself bore our wounds, and grieves for us.” ”They have laid me in the lower pit.” I went down to the depths of hell, that I might free all from the bonds of hell. ”In the dark places, and in the shadow of death.” He did not say ”in death,” but ”in the shadow of death.” Death was not inflicted on me by the Jews, but the shadow of death: because for the salvation of men I went down of my own will. Therefore I went down as light into the lower regions, that I might free the souls from the darkness of hell. ”Thy fury is confirmed upon me.” For this reason all thy fury came upon me, that it might depart from others. ”And all thy waves thou hast brought

in upon me." Upon me the whole tempest thundered down, that calm might come to the world.

"Thou hast put my acquaintances far from me." In the passion of the cross even the apostles fled from me, so much so that Peter himself said, "I know not the man." You see that we run with brief sentences rather than with expositions, because the hour so compels. "They have made me an abomination to themselves." The Jews, namely, saying, "Crucify, crucify such a one: we have no king but Caesar."

"I was delivered up, and came not forth." What is this that he said, "I was delivered up, and came not forth"? The Jews delivered me up, and yet on account of my clemency I did not forsake them, but I dwelt among them with affection. I was delivered up to Pilate by them, and I came not forth from them, saying on the cross, "Father, spare them, they know not what they do." Let us say it also otherwise. "I was delivered up, and came not forth." In the Gospel it is written that, when they sought to cast Him down from the brow of the mountain, He escaped safe and free from their midst. This, then, is what He says: Could I not even then, when I was delivered up, have escaped the snares of men and the perils of death by my divinity? But because I had come for this, that I might suffer, therefore I willed nothing except that I might suffer. That I was delivered up was of my will, and that I came not forth was of my will. Let us say it also otherwise. I was delivered up as a man, and I came not forth from the majesty of my divinity. Let us say it also otherwise. I was delivered up by men, and I came not forth from the bosom of the Father. Let us say it also otherwise. I was delivered up as a man upon the earth, and as God I had not left heaven. "My eyes languished through poverty." I who was whole in my majesty was made weak for the sins of men.

"I have cried to thee, O Lord." Not only with the voice, but with the heart: for thus indeed we cry to the Father. "Crying in our hearts, Abba, Father." "All the day I stretched out my hands to thee." This is the testimony which the apostle in the Epistle to the Romans applied in the person of the Savior. You see that we do no violence to the psalm, but follow the authority of the apostle. For if he applied the testimony of a single verse in the person of the Lord, why should we not wish to expound the whole psalm in this way? And if we should wish to interpret it otherwise, the sense of our exposition is dissolved by this evident sentence of the apostle. If we should wish to expound the whole psalm, we seem to be making delay for ourselves, whom now the hour compels to approach with pure and unstained conscience, in the unity of peace, to the flesh of the Savior, the true Lamb, that we may be worthily filled with the heavenly bread, through Christ Jesus our Lord. To whom is glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

"Wilt thou show wonders to the dead?" Not to those who, living, are dead, but to me who live in thee. "Or shall physicians raise them up?" and the rest. Not the spices of physicians, but thou, Father, raisest me up; nor they, but I will confess

among the peoples. ”Shall anyone declare in the sepulchre,” and so forth. He shall not praise thee who is buried in the riches of the world, nor he who dwells in the ruin of sin. ”Shall thy wonders be known in the dark, and thy justice in the land of forgetfulness? And I have cried to thee, O Lord, and in the morning my prayer shall come before thee.” That is, because thou wilt glorify me by a morning resurrection. ”Why, O Lord, dost thou repel my prayer,” that this cup should not pass from me? ”I am poor, and in labors from my youth”: from the time of the flesh assumed. ”Being exalted”: that is, upon the cross. ”I have been humbled”: that is, in the sepulchre.

”Thy wraths have passed over me.” They passed, and did not remain. ”They have surrounded me like water all the day.” The Jews in the waves of persecutions. ”They surrounded me together.” The Pharisees with the priests. Pilate with the princes and the peoples. ”Thou hast put far from me friend and neighbor, and my acquaintances because of misery.” Because of the confusion of the passion, even the apostles themselves were put far from him.

Homily 66, on Psalm 88 (Alternate Series)

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos quattuordecim (alternate series), Anecdota Maredsolana III, Pars III (Maredsoli, 1903) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). The eighty-eighth psalm is prefaced with this title: The Understanding of Ethan the Ezrahite. Wherever ”understanding” is placed first, what follows is mystical and obscure. Ethan is interpreted as ”strong,” or ”robust”; and Ezrahite as ”one helped,” or ”one who has obtained help.” I say this because we are dealing with the literal history. Rightly, therefore, is ”understanding” placed first, so that this strong or robust man may obtain help from the Lord, and may be able to recognize the things that follow. But the Ezrahite either took his name from a place, or was of the tribe of Merari. Read the books of Numbers and Leviticus, and there you will find everything more fully.

The Understanding of Ethan. ”Understanding” is placed first, so that the reader may be summoned to knowledge. For if the history were plain, and had nothing mystical about it, what need would there be for the reader to be reminded of ”understanding” in the title? And so that Ethan, as we have said, ”strong” or ”robust,” and the Ezrahite, ”one helped” or ”one who has obtained aid,” is rightly summoned to understanding, so that he may be able to know the things that are to be said. For it follows in the psalm, The Lord has sworn to David his servant, unto eternity I will prepare your seed. The Jews say that the Lord promised with an oath that from the seed of David there would not fail among them a leader or prince, which even now their patriarchs also say: Behold, to this day the Lord keeps his oath to us. But if they truly think this, how is it that we see them subject to the Roman power, and serving the commands of emperors? But mystically it is promised to us concerning Christ. And I will build up your throne unto generation. Did God, then, lie, in that he promised with an oath and did not do it (since surely what God promised ought to be firm), if indeed to this day we see that this does not stand in the race of the Jews? But here understanding is necessary. Rightly, therefore, does that strong or robust man have necessary understanding as an aid or help, so

that he may be able to perceive the mysteries of this psalm. Let us return, then, to the beginning of the psalm.

Your mercies, O Lord, I will sing forever. He did not say ”mercy,” but ”mercies.” If there were one sin, there would be need of one mercy: since therefore the sins are many, the mercies too are very many. Your mercies, O Lord, I will sing forever. Since I have obtained mercy forever, I ought to sing forever, because my cause for praising is eternal. He who sings has let go of grief, has let go of fear, and has crossed over to joys, because he has obtained mercy. And what he says is this: Because my sins have been forgiven me through the mercy of God, therefore I will sing his mercy. And when he says ”forever,” this is the meaning: because you have had mercy on me not for a short time, but forever, I too will praise you forever without ceasing, because you have set me free forever.

From generation to generation I will proclaim your truth with my mouth. O the excellent order of the psalm! He did not begin first from truth, and afterward come to mercy: but first he obtained mercy, and so came to truth, when he had received the forgiveness of sins. For first, while I was a sinner, I did not dare to approach the truth; but when I obtained mercy, now secure I dared to preach the truth. And when he says ”from generation to generation,” he said it beautifully: for he did not say ”in generations and generations,” but ”from generation to generation.” He does not, then, commemorate many generations, but only two, one in the circumcision, the other among the Gentiles: to the one Peter is sent, and to the other Paul is sent. And what I forgot to say at the beginning, I will now say: here the person of the Lord and Savior must be established. From generation to generation I will proclaim your truth with my mouth. He who spoke earlier through the patriarchs and prophets, afterward himself speaks in person, as it is said in the Song of Songs: ”Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth.” So then what he says is this: he of whom I spoke through the prophets, from that same source I now also speak through my very self. So that he whom the world could not hear when he thundered, it might hear at least when he wailed as an infant.

For you have said, Mercy shall be built up forever. I myself, who then spoke in the Old Testament through the patriarchs and through the prophets, now myself speak through my own self; for I have not come to loose the commandments of mercy which the law had built up, but to build upon them. As he himself says in the Gospel: ”I have not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. What then does Moses say? ”Give heed, O heaven, and I will speak, and let the earth hear the words from my mouth. Jeremiah too speaks thus: ”Thus says the Lord”; and the rest of the prophets speak thus: because what they speak are the words of the Lord, and not their own, and what he says through their mouth, it is as though the Lord had spoken through an instrument. What then is the meaning of what is said, ”shall be built up,” as if some great house or city were being built? Let us

see where else something of this sort is written about building. Let us search in Genesis, what this saying means. ”And God took,” it says, ”a rib from Adam’s side, and built it into a woman. See what he said: ”he built. For building, as we said above, is not usually spoken of except in the construction of a great house. Since therefore that rib of Adam was fashioned into a woman, according to the apostle’s authority, it signifies Christ and the Church;

therefore he said, ”He built the woman from the rib. We have heard of the first Adam; let us come to the second, and let us see how the Church is built from his side. For the side of the Lord and Savior, hanging on the cross, is pierced by a lance, and from it came forth blood and water. Do you wish to know how the Church is built from water and blood? First through baptism, by water, sins are forgiven, then it is crowned in the blood of martyrdom. Since therefore it is clear that the Church of God is built by mercy, therefore it follows, In the heavens your truth shall be prepared. On earth is mercy, and in heaven is truth. Hear, O heretic, what is said. In the heavens the truth of God shall be prepared. If souls fell down from heaven on account of the sins they had committed, how then is the truth prepared in the heavens? If daily souls are cast down to earth, how does the Lord teach in the Lord’s Prayer and say, ”Your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth”? Do we then ask, on the authority of the Lord and Savior, that just as the soul without a body sinned in heaven, so in the body it might sin on earth; and that the soul which, free and in the heavens, could not keep righteousness, should now, confined by the straits of the body, keep it on earth? A strange thing I see:

the soul sinned in heaven, and was thrust down to earth, so that what it lost in heaven, it might find on earth. It sinned without a body: how can it be that with a body it might more easily deserve God? Since indeed ”the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.”

I have appointed a covenant to my chosen ones. Do you wish to know how to this day the Lord appoints his covenant? Let us act well, and we shall deserve to be sharers in the Lord’s appointment of the chosen ones. I have sworn to David my servant. Let us see what it is that the Lord swore. This surely, which follows. Unto eternity I will prepare your seed. Come to our aid, O apostle, and interpret this little verse. For what does the apostle say? ”He did not say ‘in seeds,’ but ‘in the seed which is Christ.’” This is what is said in the Apocalypse of John: ”He who has the key of David, who shuts and no one opens, opens and no one shuts.” This key the scribes and Pharisees held in the law, to whom the Lord says in the Gospel: ”Woe to you scribes, who hold the key of the kingdom of heaven,” and the rest. O Pharisees, who hold the keys of the kingdom, and yet do not believe in Christ, who is the door and gate of the kingdom: to you indeed it is promised, but to us it is delivered: you have the flesh, but we have the spirit: nay rather, because you denied the spirit, you have lost the flesh too along with the spirit.

And I will build up your throne from generation to generation. In two generations, as we have said, the throne of God is set, namely in the circumcision and among the Gentiles.

And the heavens shall confess your wonders, O Lord. This is what is said in the eighteenth psalm: ”The heavens declare the glory of God. According to the mystical understanding, he calls the apostles ”heavens. For if it is said to the sinner, ”Earth you are, and to earth you shall go,” why should it not be said to the holy or righteous man, ”Heaven you are, and to heaven you shall go”? For of the saints, according to the apostle, ”the conversation is in the heavens. And when he says, The heavens shall confess your wonders, it is a sign of the repentance to be preached, which we have received, at the apostles’ proclamation, in the confession of the Lord Jesus Christ; and if we follow their admonitions and examples, we too can be called heavens, when we imitate those whose conversation is in the heavens. For the prophet says in another place: ”I am a sojourner on earth and a pilgrim, like all my fathers. And this he was saying in Judea, that is, in his own homeland: and how does he say he is a pilgrim? But it is because the saints in the present age are pilgrims on earth, desiring to possess nothing earthly, whose whole possession is in heaven, where one has dwellings, where one has ”the city whose maker and founder is God.

And therefore the prophet too, who is not of this world, says he is a pilgrim here, and by the will of his mind he hastens to his homeland, that is, to paradise, to the kingdoms of the heavens. Do not say, O heretic, because I have said that paradise is the homeland of the saints, that I am asserting that souls existed before they came here into bodies. Nor do I say this, but I say it according to the apostle, who affirms that we were all, in the transgression of Adam, cast down from paradise through sin. This the apostle says, that Adam fell even in us, who were afterward to be. Therefore now in Christ, that is, the heavenly Adam, we believe, so that we who through the sin of the first Adam fell from paradise, may now through the righteousness of the second Adam return to paradise. The heavens shall confess your wonders, O Lord. What wonders? That you made heaven? Or that you founded the earth? Or that you gathered the seas into one? For what is this that is great in God, for whom to have spoken all things is to have made them?

These, then, are the great things in God, the wonders in God, that God became man, that he lay hidden in the womb of a virgin, that born of a virgin he lay in a manger, that he was wounded by men, he who healed the wounds of men, that he was struck with blows, that he was crucified, that he, immortal, suffered to die, and endured so great a punishment unjustly inflicted by men, he who suffers these things so that men might not have to endure punishment. The sun could not bear to see its Lord hanging on the cross, but hid itself, lest it be mingled with the sacrilege of the Jews. The earth too trembled, the rocks are split, all creation is troubled, because

its Creator is slain. The veil of the temple is torn, because what had been shut in Judea is opened among all nations; the veil is torn, and the mysteries of the law are shown to the faithful: for to the unbelieving they are covered to this day. For when Moses is read, and the Old Testament is recited by the Jews every Sabbath, according to the apostle ”a veil is placed over their heart. For they read the law, but do not understand, because their eyes are darkened that they should not see. For they are like those of whom it is said: ”They have eyes and shall not see, they have ears and shall not hear.”

For who among the clouds shall be equal to the Lord? The clouds are the prophets, the clouds are the apostles, who pour showers of teachings upon the dry hearts of men. Who shall be like the Lord among the sons of God? All the saints are named with the appellation and title ”sons of God,” because they are sons by adoption; but the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, is alone the Son properly by nature. Of whom it is said, Who among the clouds or among the sons of God shall be like the Lord? That is, who of the angels or of the saints shall be able to be made equal to the Creator in glory or in power, since he himself gives glory to all, so that his praises may be without end: he whom every creature dreads and trembles at, whom the cherubim and seraphim, whom the four living creatures praise without ceasing, whom the dominions and principalities adore, whom all the earth venerates? To whom is glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen.

Homily 67, on Psalm 89 (Alternate Series)

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos quattuordecim (alternate series), Anecdota Maredsolana III, Pars III (Maredsoli, 1903) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). The eighty-ninth psalm has been read, whose title is this: A Prayer of Moses, the man of God. It is the beginning of the fourth book, for we ought to know that the psalter is divided into five books. From the first up to the fortieth is the first book; from the fortieth up to the seventy-first is the second book; from the seventy-first up to the eighty-eighth is the third book; from the eighty-eighth up to the hundred and fifth is the fourth book; from the hundred and fifth to the end is the fifth book. And therefore this is the opening of the fourth book: A Prayer of Moses, the man of God. The Hebrews think that not only this psalm, but also the other ten that follow, since they bear no title, were composed by Moses. And for that reason they think that those which are without a title belong to the same author as the one that has a title, because they seem to lie adjacent to the one that is inscribed with a title.

A Prayer of Moses, the man of God. If all men were men of God, it would never have been added, A Prayer of Moses, the man of God. Do you wish to know that not all men are men of God? ”Man, when he was in honor, did not understand: he was compared to the senseless beasts of burden, and was made like unto them.” It is a great thing, therefore, to be called men of God or servants of God. For when this is said of someone, it is a token not of lowliness but of dignity; nor is the condition of servitude shown, but the dignity of one who serves well is displayed. A Prayer of Moses, the man of God. By Moses the law was written down, by Moses the nature of the world is shown, by Moses it was told how man was fashioned in the image of God. What, then, is this that he says, A Prayer of Moses, the man of God? Moses indeed writes how man was made; he himself also writes how man fell. Now, therefore, he prays that the one who fell into death may be lifted up to life, and that the one who fell through sin by the devil’s doing may again rise through Christ to glory. For this reason, then, Moses makes a prayer to God, and says:

Lord, you have become a refuge for us. A refuge is never spoken of unless there has been persecution: for unless someone else persecutes us, we have no need to flee to another for refuge. Lord, you have become a refuge for us. Since a great swelter of tribulations and heat wearies us, we take refuge under the shadow of your wings. Lord, you have become a refuge for us. Therefore we flee to your help, because a great beast persecutes us; and since we have many adversaries and enemies, be you at least our one refuge. From generation to generation. In this place the serpent hisses. For those who say that souls were made before the world and before they were put into bodies, say this: Lord, you have become a refuge for us from generation to generation, before the mountains were made or the world was formed — that is, before this world was created, you were our refuge — punctuating badly, understanding badly. For we ought to say it thus: Lord, you have become a refuge for us from generation to generation. And the pause of the sentence goes this far. Then, what follows, thus: Before the mountains were made, and the world was formed, from age to age you are God. This, then, is said, not that man's soul existed before the age, but that the Lord God is shown to have always existed and to be before the ages. Finally the following verse too speaks fittingly, And from age to age you are God. From eternity to eternity you abide, having neither beginning nor end.

Turn not man away into lowliness. Moses prays on behalf of man, and what does he say? Do not suffer to perish him whom you fashioned in your image. Turn not man away into lowliness. Consider not the vileness of the body, but the dignity of the soul. Let it suffice us that we once heard, "You are earth, and into earth you shall go," and that because of the consciousness of sin we are brought low. Turn not man away into lowliness. Turn him not away, but turn him back: for you have said through all the prophets, Turn back, you sons of men. Let it suffice that you have sinned: do penance, that you may be able to have salvation. Turn not man away into lowliness. Send your Son, that he may lift the body of our lowliness on high, and, freed from the burdens of the earth, raise it through a new manner of life to heaven.

For a thousand years before your eyes are as yesterday's day, which has passed. Compared to the eternity of God, all the time of man is short: although it seems long to us, yet in comparison with eternity, because it is bounded by an end, it is reckoned as nothing.

And as a watch in the night. The night has four watches, marked off in periods of three hours each, as it is said in the Gospel, "In the fourth watch of the night" Jesus "came to them," which is understood to be about cockcrow. This, then, is what he says: a thousand years with you are to be compared not only to the shortness of a day, but to the span of three hours. Their years shall be counted as nothing. What he says is this: since man from the beginning of the world lived nearly a thousand

years, and a thousand years before God are as a watch in the night. Nay, I have said enough: the ages of men are as nothing in comparison with the divine eternity. Do you wish to know more fully how human life is nothing? Hear what follows. In the morning let it pass like grass. As the morning dew passes swiftly, so is the life of men. Our morning is youth. In the morning let it flower and pass. In youth and full age we flowered, but in old age we fall down, and the flower of our strength has withered. For which of us knows how our age passes by? While we scarcely know it, old age steals up on us from behind. In the evening let it fall, harden, and grow dry. Our evening is old age, which, when the flower of youth has been shaken off, is hardened by the manifold horror of diseases. ”For all flesh indeed is grass, and its glory is as the flower of grass: it withered and fell; but the word of the Lord abides forever.” We still live, and part of us has already perished in old age: though the mind is the same, yet we who feel that we have lost the vigor of our former youth are in a manner become other men.

In your anger we have failed. Because through our sins we have earned your anger, we have lost in Adam the immortality you had given, from whom sin has been handed down to us, as it were naturally, by hereditary right. And in your fury we have been troubled. Beautifully he said, troubled: for one who is troubled does not perish, but is shaken with terror, so that he may feel the power of him whom by sinning he had scorned, and may flee, humble and submissive, to repentance. And in your fury we have been troubled. Because we have given offense, we are thrown into confusion; but because, believing, we have received your Christ, we are consoled. You have set our iniquities in your sight. Nothing of our sins has been hidden from you: all the evils we have committed are manifest before you. Our age in the light of your countenance. All that we live, or that we do, is not hidden from your eyes: the very darkness is not concealed from you.

For all our days have failed. So do the days pass and death draw near, that in a manner, while we know it not, our whole age and life itself is stolen away, scanty as it is. This very thing, which I now speak and you hear, is cut away from a part of our life; and although we believe there to be in it some advancing of the soul, yet because it uses up the span of hours, it is a loss of time and of age. And thus it comes about that where we think we have gain, there rather loss is brought upon us. Our years shall be pondered like a spider. He could have said nothing more beautiful than to describe human life and all our anxiety and pursuits, in which we run this way and that and lay up wealth, seek riches, build houses, beget children: and see to what a thing they are compared. Our years shall be pondered like a spider. For just as we see the spider draw out its threads on the walls and weave its webs, which are undone by a sudden wind; so every act of our life is scattered by the sudden onset of tribulation or of death. The days of our years in themselves are seventy years. See how gradually human life has been reduced. First in paradise we had received eternity, which we lost through disobedience: afterward the life

of the ancients was extended to a thousand years: now, in the dregs of our time, one scarcely reaches seventy.

The days of our years in themselves are seventy years: but if in strength, eighty years: and more than these is labor and sorrow. See what he says, More than these is labor and sorrow. This is what we said above, that where we think there is gain in our life, there we find loss and disadvantage. Where there is increase of years, there is old age: where old age, there diseases: where diseases, there torments: where torment, there the longing for death. For mildness has come upon us, and we shall be chastened. What is this mildness, through which we are chastened? ”Remember, Lord, David and all his mildness.” What is this mildness? ”Learn that I am mild and humble of heart.” Mildness has come upon us. He did not say, the mild one has come, but mildness has come, which is our Lord Jesus Christ; who, just as in another place he is called not wise but wisdom, so here too he is named not mild but mildness itself.

Make your right hand thus known, and those fettered in heart in wisdom. Your right hand, with which you made the world, enlighten the world. ”For the arm of the Lord, to whom has it been revealed?” Your right hand, with which you made man, let it itself take up and save the human body. And those fettered in heart in wisdom. It can be understood thus: those who before wandered freely, let them be fettered by your wisdom. For it is better to be well fettered than to have feet ill at liberty; it is better to stand well than to run badly. Just as that colt in the Gospel, which before was free, and unbridled went along over the precipices, afterward, when sat upon by the Lord, is reined in and is taught to walk well: so we pray you, that you make your right hand known to the world, so that the wandering and unstable may be fettered by your wisdom.

Turn back, Lord, how long? Turn back, Lord, and look upon your image: do not show us your back, but your face. Turn back, how long? He who says how long shows that he desires, and cannot bear the delays of his desire. We have been filled in the morning with your mercy. There are mysteries in what is said in the psalms, and all things are full of figures. Moses prays in the person of the human race, that the Son of God may deign to come to the lands of earth. And because he had said, Make your right hand thus known, now, because he feels himself heard, he adds and says, We have been filled in the morning with your mercy, when your Son on the third day rose again from the dead. And because in the evening he descended for our life into the darkness of death, that he might draw us out to the light of morning, in that hour we come to know the fullness of your mercy. Whence the twenty-first psalm is entitled with this heading: ”For the morning taking up.” Your mercy indeed always appeared to the saints; but never was it so manifestly and so fully poured out as when the Redeemer of all rose again for the common salvation.

And we have exulted and been delighted. After the joy of the resurrection of our Lord, by which we now believe both that we have been redeemed and that we shall rise again, for the remaining days of our life, rejoicing in this confidence, we exult, and with hymns and spiritual songs we render praise to God through Jesus Christ our Lord: to whom is glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Homily 68, on Psalm 90 (Alternate Series)

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos quattuordecim (alternate series), Anecdota Maredsolana III, Pars III (Maredsoli, 1903) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). The praise of a song, by David himself. First we ought to know this: that from the eighty-eighth psalm up to the hundredth—that is, eleven psalms—have no title in the Hebrew; and that they belong, as we treated most recently in the previous psalm, to the same person to whom that one belongs as well which is headed with this title: ”A prayer of Moses, the man of God.” He who dwells in the help of the Most High. Ours it is to begin, God’s it is to help; for He does not crown those who sleep, but those who labor. He shall abide in the protection of the God of heaven. In place of what we read, ”of the God of heaven,” the Hebrew has saddai. Hence that which is said in Ezekiel, ”And I heard the voice of the Lord Saddai speaking,” can be understood thus: that he heard the voice of the Lord, the God of heaven, speaking; for Saddai is interpreted ”God of heaven.”

My refuge is my God. Beautifully he said, ”refuge,” for there are many persecutors, and you alone are a refuge. Many are the wounds, but you alone are the physician. I will hope in Him, for He Himself shall deliver me from the snare of the hunters. In this world there are many hunters who long to capture our souls, just as is said by the prophet: ”Our soul has been snatched away like a sparrow from the snare of the hunters.” Now that hunters are taken in a sinister sense in the holy Scriptures, we have already said often. For that Nimrod, the giant, always a rebel against God, was a hunter. Esau too was a hunter. For He Himself shall deliver me from the snare of the hunters. We read in Proverbs: ”The eye of the harlot is the snare of the sinner.” ”For whoever shall look upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” As many as are the sins, so many are the snares; as many as the snares, so many the hunters. The doctrines of the heretics are the snares of death. Finally there follows: and from the harsh word. You see that it is spoken concerning the heretics. In place of what we have, ”harsh,” the

Hebrew has ”hidden.” For heretics always promise certain secret and great things, so that they may snatch away those things which are true and manifest.

With His shoulders He shall overshadow you. Who shall overshadow? Surely the God of heaven, as a hen her chicks, and as an eagle its nest. Hence also in the song of Deuteronomy it is said that He carried the people of Israel upon His shoulders, and protected them as an eagle. It can also be understood of the Savior, that upon His cross He protected us with His wings. And under His feathers you shall hope. ”All the day long I have stretched forth my hands to a people that did not believe and that contradicted me.” The hands of the Lord raised to heaven did not ask for help, but were protecting us wretches. His truth shall surround you with a shield: that is, you shall be encircled round about with truth. And what follows? You shall not fear from the terror of the night. The just man has no terror of the night, but of the day. ”Come, children, hear me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord.” Those who are the children of the prophets have no terror of the night, nor of the darkness, but of the light and of the day. ”That they may shoot in secret at the upright of heart.” The devil does not send his arrows in the day, lest he be seen. For everything that is done in the light is made manifest by the light.

But someone may say: If the devil does not shoot in the day, how then in the following little verse does the psalmist say, From the arrow that flies by day? What is this arrow that flies by day? It is the teaching of the heretics: which, as it were through the day—that is, the law of God—flies here and there, while they anxiously gather up testimonies searched out against us, which by their own interpretations they corrupt away from the truth. And from the business that walks about in the darkness. He did not say, ”standing,” but ”walking about”; because heretics are never stable in their opinions, but are always changing and walking about. From the onslaught and the noonday demon. We read in Genesis that Joseph fed his brothers at noon; and in the Song of Songs it is written: ”Where do you lie down, where do you feed? At noon.” Therefore, just as the saints have a noon and a light where they may feed and lie down, so too the devil, transfigured into an angel of light, has his ministers transfigured, as it were ministers of righteousness. Therefore when you see a heretic preaching, and saying, ”This says Moses, this is written in the prophets, this in the Gospels,” does it not seem to you—if you are ignorant of the treachery of his mind—that you are hearing an angel of the Savior speaking? But the simple think there is a certain noonday demon who at noon can more readily assail men. We, however, shall interpret the chiefs of the heretics as the noonday demons, who, feigning themselves angels of light, preach the doctrines of darkness. Do you wish us to say something elegantly? Arius, or the rest of the heretics who came forth from Alexandria, are called noonday demons.

A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand. ”At your side” and ”at your right hand.” He did not say, ”at your left,” because the just man

has no left, just as it is written in the Gospel: ”Whoever shall strike you on the right cheek, offer him the other also.” He did not say, ”offer the left”; since indeed the lambs shall stand at the right, and the kids at the left. A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand. By the ”side” of the just man we can understand the weaknesses of the body; but by the ”right hand,” the integrity of the soul. By the labors of the body—that is, by fastings and chastity—a thousand shall fall; but at the right hand, where through the freedom of the soul there is pure and holy doctrine, there shall fall the very great multitude of the enemy. But to you they shall not draw near. Imagine the fortified wedges of the enemy coming against the just man, concerning whom it is said, But to you they shall not draw near: that is, they shall collapse before they can reach as far as you.

Nevertheless with your eyes you shall consider, and you shall see the retribution of sinners. You shall see the corpses of the dead, and you shall marvel at the majesty of the Lord and Savior. And you shall see the retribution of sinners. The ruin of sinners is their destruction. What he says is this: You who have made the Lord your refuge look with your eyes, secure, upon the retribution of the heretics, since you have guarded yourself from their traditions. These things have been said in the person of the Lord to the just man; but now the person is changed, and out of the contemplation of the just man an answer is made to the Lord: For you, O Lord, are my hope. For he who says these things is the just man. You have made the Most High your refuge. Again the person is changed: and for this reason the psalms are obscure, because very often the persons are changed. For while the just man calls upon the Lord and says, For you, O Lord, are my hope, he hears from the Lord, You have made the Most High your refuge. And therefore the following verse is fitting for you:

Evils shall not come to you, and the scourge shall not draw near to your tabernacle. He did not say, ”shall not sound,” but, ”shall not draw near to your tabernacle”: for it cannot come to pass that the scourge of the devil should not sound for the just man. For if the Lord Himself was scourged, and was vexed with tribulations and temptations, which of the just shall not be scourged? But let us see what this is, ”shall not draw near to your tabernacle.” This is it: it sounded indeed from without, and by fleshly passions it tried to disturb; but the tabernacle of the soul, or the mind, which is the tabernacle of faith, it did not overthrow.

For He has given His angels charge concerning you, that they may keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall carry you, lest ever you dash your foot against a stone. If ever the heretics interpret certain things from the Scriptures against us, we ought not to be disturbed: because the devil too used this testimony against the Lord and Savior, saying, ”If you are the Son of God, cast yourself down; for it is written that He has given His angels charge concerning you,” and the rest. The devil interprets the Scriptures like a devil: for he was applying this psalm to the

person of the Lord, which is spoken not of the Lord, but of any just man. But I grant you, O devil, that it be written concerning the Lord Himself, ”in their hands the angels shall carry you”: why did you not say what follows, ”Upon the asp and the basilisk you shall tread”? O the cunning of the crafty, shape-shifting enemy! What seemed to pertain to the frailty of the Savior and to the temptation of the man, he spoke; but what he understood to be against himself, with his ancient craftiness he kept silent. You err, O devil, and by your deceit you ensnare your very self. In this place your lie profits the Church: although you did this in order to tempt, you have shown that the children of God, all the just, are carried by the hands of the angels—that is, by their help—at the command and bidding of the Lord.

The rest of what follows pertains to the same exposition. But that the just and those dear to God have the power to trample upon the ancient and twisted serpent, and to press down his whole army with the heel of the foot, we find most evidently in the Gospel. For thus the Lord says to the apostles: ”Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions.” Which power we too shall be able to understand as given to us, when we know ourselves to be girded against them by an apostolic way of life. Let us therefore ask the Lord that He who gave power to the just may give also to us, still little ones, the help of righteousness: that we may be imitators of the apostles, and may be aided by their merits, in Christ Jesus our Lord. To whom is glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Homily 69, on Psalm 91 (Alternate Series)

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos quattuordecim (alternate series), Anecdota Maredsolana III, Pars III (Maredsoli, 1903) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). It is good to give praise to the Lord, and to sing psalms to your name, O Most High. Why did he not say first, ”It is good to sing psalms,” and afterward ”to give praise”? But because this was the order of true confession, therefore he spoke thus: it is good first to do penance, and for a person to confess his sins to the Lord; and when he has confessed his sins, then to sing psalms to him, when by doing penance he has earned the free voice with which he can burst forth in the praise of God without the confession of sin.

To announce your mercy in the morning, and your truth throughout the night. Why is mercy sung in the morning, and truth in the night? Pay careful attention, for the things that are being said are obscure. First he said, ”It is good to give praise to the Lord”; then praise follows upon confession; and thus the one who after penance earns the right to praise will also begin to announce the one whom he praises. But what does it mean that he said mercy is announced in the morning, and truth is sung in the night? Wherever the mercy of the Lord is, there is light, there is morning, there is the hour in which the sun rises and the darkness of blind night will perish. And your truth throughout the night. Where there is truth, there is justice; where there is justice, there is judgment; [where there is judgment,] there is no mercy; where there is no mercy, there is the peril of sinners, there is night and not day, as the prophet says, ”What good is the day of the Lord to you? For this is darkness, and not light” — on which day the examination is to be conducted according to the merit of each one. Whence in another little verse the prophet says that the day is to be feared even by himself… ”…will endure it?”

On the ten-stringed psaltery [with a song] upon the harp. For you have delighted me, O Lord, in your making, and in the works of your hands I will exult. This cannot be said except by a learned man, one who knows that by the providence of God each

single thing has been created; who is not scandalized by the work of creation, but understanding the reason of each individual thing, glorifies the Creator and says, ”For you have delighted me, O Lord, in your making, and in the works of your hands I will exult.” Hear, O Manichaean, hear, O Marcion, Valentinus, and the rest of you heretics, who dare to disparage the Creator, and see that in the very thing over which you will suffer scandal, the prophet is delighted and exults in the works of the Creator, knowing that if anything should seem to be flawed, it has come not from nature, but from the will.

How magnified are your works, O Lord: your thoughts have been made exceedingly deep. Whence the apostle too says, ”O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! Therefore, then, because your thoughts have been made exceedingly deep, and his works, which neither human sense nor reason can attain, in another place it is said, ”All your works are in faith. See what he says, ”Your works are in faith. If the creature stands firm in faith and not in reason, how much more the Creator himself and the Founder of all things? When therefore it is said, ”And all your works are in faith,” I too, who am speaking, am in faith — since indeed I am a part of his works. I too stand firm in faith and not in reason: for I cannot know by reason how I move my steps, how the tongue makes its sound, how thought arranges itself, the will commands, and the body serves the will, how the soul, which is immortal, is joined to this body which is mortal, how my soul runs to and fro here and there, and that vast breadth of the world does not contain a thing which is comprehended by the body. Why do I say all this? Because I heard that among the brothers there was a contention — nay rather, a disputation — over the faith. I say a disputation, not a contention: for where there is contention, there is sin;

but where there is disputation, there is a pious desire for knowledge. For each one was not seeking to prove the things he did not know, but they brought their ignorance to my knowledge: for they did not wish to teach what they did not know, but to know what they were ignorant of. Therefore their question is not foreign, which was raised concerning the mercy of the Lord. It is said in Isaiah concerning the Lord Savior, ”Who shall declare his generation? When it is said, ”Who? every creature is excluded. For he did not say, ”Which of men shall declare his generation? but generally, ”Who?” — that is, not an angel, not an archangel, not a cherub, not a seraph. For if that which is spoken of was hidden in God from the heavenly creatures, what wonder if it seems unknown to us who were made from clay? It was reported to me, brothers, that certain brothers among themselves in disputing had asked how the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are both three and are one. You see from the question how perilous disputation is: mud and an earthen vessel disputes about the Creator, and cannot arrive at the reason of its own nature; and it curiously seeks to know about the mystery of the Trinity, which

the angels in heaven cannot know. For what do the angels say? ”Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.

Likewise in Isaiah it is said, ”Who is this who ascends from Edom, his garments white? See what they say: they proclaim his beauty, and about his nature they are silent. Therefore let us too speak simply. Do you wish to know the nature of God? Do you wish to know what God is? Know this: that you do not know. And do not be saddened in this, that you do not know: because the angels too did not know, and likewise every creature. But someone may say: Do I then believe what I do not know? How am I a Christian, who do not know how I am a Christian? I will speak simply, before we bring forward anything from the Scriptures. O Christian, why do you think you know nothing? If you know this very thing, that you do not know, do you not rather seem to yourself to know more? The pagan man sees a stone, and thinks it a god; the philosophers see the sky, and think it a god; others see the sun, and think it a god. But you — see how much greater knowledge you have over these, you who say: A stone cannot be a god, the sun cannot be a god, which runs at the command of another. See that in the very thing in which you say you know nothing, you know more; but the pagans, in that which they say they know, do not know, because the things they have come to know are false.

And at the same time consider what you are called: faithful indeed, not rational. In short, when baptism has been received, we say this: He has become faithful, or, I have become faithful. I believe what I do not know: and therefore I know, because I know myself not to know what I do not know. But someone may say: This is not to explain, but to flee the explanation; and we knew that we knew what we did not know — you, teach us to know what we are ignorant of. Is it not better piously to profess ignorance than rashly to lay claim to knowledge for oneself? On the day of judgment I am not condemned because I say, ”I did not know the nature of my Creator,” but if I should say something rashly: rashness has punishment, ignorance earns pardon. Let us say something from the Scriptures, not following reason, but the authority of the Lord Savior. For what does he say, about to ascend to heaven, speaking to the apostles, to whom he preaches as master and Lord? No one knows how to speak about his own nature as does he who is himself God: let it suffice for us to know about the Trinity what the Lord has deigned to explain. For what does he say to the apostles? ”Go, baptize all nations in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. I hear three names, and one is spoken:

for he did not say, ”in the names,” but ”in the name. He says three names: and how does he say one, ”In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”? The name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one: but it is the name of the Trinity. For what is said is, in the name of the Father who is God, in the name of the Son who is God, in the name of the Holy Spirit who is God: the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are one name of divinity. But you ask of

me how three are called by one name? I do not know, and I freely profess that I do not know, what Christ did not wish to make known. This alone I know, that in this I am a Christian, that I confess one God in Trinity. But if I should say that there is one person of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, I shall be called a Sabellian, and I begin to be not a Christian but a Jew: because the Jew too says there is one God, but because he does not know the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Therefore he does not hold the mystery of the Trinity. Therefore if we so say ”one God” that we exclude the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit from the mystery of the Trinity, we become Jews.

I speak freely, not from myself, but from the judgment of the Savior, of the scandal that arises in the mind of the hearer: How are three one? How are the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit not divided in divinity? Whenever I say ”persons,” I beg you, do not think that I am speaking of persons of men: I do not speak of persons in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit as though persons of men, but according to distinctive properties. I speak of the person of the Father, because he is the Father, and of the Son, because he is the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, because he is the Holy Spirit. The Father is not the Son, nor is the Son the Father, nor is the Holy Spirit the Father or the Son: for they are divided by properties, but united by nature. See, this very scandal the apostle Philip once bore, when he said to the Lord, ”Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us. To whom the Lord in answer said, ”Philip, so long a time I am with you, and do you not know the Father? He who sees me, sees the Father also. That the Father himself is the Son, this is impious to say. In that you see the Son, understand the Father: for he cannot be called Son, unless he has had a Father. When Father is said, it is not said unless he has had a Son.

There are many things that might be said: but let it suffice for the faithful to have heard a few things about the mystery of the Trinity. I beg you, let there rather be a contest among us in the monastery over how we may seek to triumph over the adversary, how we may fast, how we may bewail our sins, how our thought may not drag us captive into lust, how we may have patience against every injury, how we may not resist a brother doing us an injury, but may conquer him in the humility which we have learned from Christ, ”who, when he suffered, did not threaten.” If ever a thought should come and add, ”What is God? and what is the reason of the Trinity?”, let it suffice for us to believe that he is. And we ought not rashly to seek the reason, but to fear, and always to pray to the Lord; and in this matter let us show him our knowledge alone, that day and night we may sing praises to him. To whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Homily 70, on Psalm 92 (Alternate Series)

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos quattuordecim (alternate series), Anecdota Maredsolana III, Pars III (Maredsoli, 1903) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). The title of the present psalm is this: A psalm of praise of David, on the day of the sabbath, when the earth was inhabited. On the sabbath day is our rest, and the inhabiting of the earth is ours. ’And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.’ Our earth, therefore, has been inhabited. Let us see, then, what this dwelling accomplishes, and with what praises it is extolled.

The Lord hath reigned, he is clothed with beauty: the Lord is clothed with strength, and hath girded himself. For he hath established the round world, which shall not be moved. These three little verses are spoken by the prophet concerning the Lord and Savior; but the rest that follow are directed to the Lord himself. The Lord hath reigned, he is clothed with beauty. The Lord hath reigned, he who before had served. He is clothed with beauty. What does Isaiah say? ’We saw him, and he had no comeliness of his own: a man laid under a stroke, and knowing how to bear infirmity.’ The Lord hath reigned, he is clothed with beauty. What he says is this: He who before had been an object of horror in the lowliness of the flesh, now shines resplendent in the majesty of the Godhead. For whatever in him is unshapely, let it be reckoned to our condition; but whatever there is of beauty will be fittingly applied to his own majesty. And he hath girded himself. This that he says, he hath girded himself, must signify some mystery. When we are ungirt, our tunic is let down all the way to the feet: unless it has been drawn up by a belt, the whole garment hangs down. So then, we too, because we could not bear the full strength of the Lord, he girded his majesty with flesh. This is what is said in another place: ’Thou shalt not be able to see my face;

thou shalt see my back parts.’ It is also said of Elijah in the book of Kings that he stood on Mount Sinai in a cleft, and thus saw the Lord passing by. See how, set in the cleft, he is said to have seen the back parts of the Lord and Savior. If the

Lord and Savior is interpreted as the rock... 'And Christ,' says the apostle, 'was the rock.' For when we are set in the cleft of the rock, we behold God through the flesh. Why have I said all this? Because we embrace the following verse also with the same exposition: he is clothed with beauty, and hath girded himself. Just as the Lord and Savior is seen through the cleft of the rock, so too through the girdle his majesty is beheld.

For he hath established the round world, which shall not be moved. If we understand this world to have been so established by God that it is disturbed by no commotion ever, how is it said elsewhere, 'Heaven and earth shall pass away'? But if heaven and earth shall pass away, how is it said here, He hath established the round world, which shall not be moved? The οἰκουμένη (oikoumenē) in this place, which in our tongue is rendered 'the inhabited world,' seems to me to be the Church, of which it is said in the Gospel: 'I and my Father will come, and will make our abode with him.' Rightly, therefore, is it called a habitation, which has as its inhabitant the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. What, then, we have understood concerning the inhabited world—that is, concerning the round earth established forever—let us understand also concerning our soul. For if we have as our inhabitant the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, our earth shall not be moved forever.

It has been said concerning the Lord's reign and concerning the beauty of his garment, it has been said concerning his strength, it has been said concerning the round world which shall not be moved: now the prophet's speech is directed to the Lord himself, reigning and thundering. And what does he say? Thy throne is prepared; from then thou art, from everlasting. This that he said, He is clothed with strength and hath girded himself, comes down from the lowliness of the flesh: but for the rest, thy kingdom has always been. Thy throne is prepared: always prepared, never beginning. From then. From when? From what time? It has no definition, because it has no beginning either. However often you say, 'from then,' the time never gives out, but you leave it in uncertainty. Because when you say 'then,' it is fitting that you be asked: When? You see, therefore, that the prophetic speech is set down without a definition, since you perceive that it admits of a question. From then thou art, from everlasting. Beautifully he said, thou art; he did not say, from everlasting thou didst begin, but, from everlasting thou art. Thou art who ever art, who saidst to Moses: 'Go, and say to the children of Israel: He who is hath sent me to you.'

The floods have lifted up, O Lord, they have lifted up their voices; from the voices of many waters, wonderful are the surgings of the sea. As many words, so many meanings: as many little verses, so many sacraments. The floods have lifted up their voices. This is what is said in another place: 'The rush of the river maketh glad the city of God.' And in another place: 'The rivers shall clap their hands together.'

The floods seem to me to be those which water the whole world, the apostolic and prophetic dignities. The floods have lifted up their voices. Proclaiming the praise and glory of the Lord, announcing his judgments through the whole world. 'Their sound went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the round world.' From the voices of many waters. The voices of many waters have furnished us with three mysteries. Let us see what those mysteries are. From the voices of many waters, wonderful are the surgings of the sea, wonderful is the Lord on high: thy testimonies are made exceedingly credible. If we understand the sea mystically as this world... for it is bitter and full of tempests, in which those who sail behold many wonders of the Lord. On account of which he says: Wonderful are the surgings of the sea. For we see many, lifted up by swelling waves, suddenly collapse; but others we see, oppressed by the billows, again raised up to the heights. For nothing in this world is found firm, nothing stable.

Where you think there is calm, there is shipwreck: where the appearance of quiet is shown, there the assault of the tempest and the whirlwinds lie hidden; and unless we cry out, 'Master, save us,' we suddenly perish. Wonderful is the Lord on high. Whoever has been able to withstand firmly the billows of this world's sea, dwelling steadfastly upon the rock, he will be able to understand how wonderful is the Lord on high. 'For the exalted one dwells in the exalted places, and the holy one in the holy'; as he also says elsewhere, 'Be ye holy, as I also am holy, the Lord your God.' But the man whom the consciousness of his sins humbles, and who cannot lift up his eyes to heaven together with Jesus, in his sight the Lord is not wonderful on high, but terrible to those beneath.

Thy testimonies are made exceedingly credible. This is what is said in the seventeenth psalm: 'The testimony of the Lord is faithful, giving wisdom to little ones.' To what little ones? 'Father, I give thee thanks, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent of the world, and hast revealed them to little ones.' Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord. See what he says. Whoever seems to himself to dwell in the house, if he has not holiness, is a stranger to the house, because the house would not have its ornaments. Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord. If, according to the apostle, we are the temple and house of God, then the holiness of our manner of life ought to be the ornament and adornment of the Church; but if sins and vices are caught in us, we are the disgrace and foulness of the Lord's house, not its beauty. Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord. The house of the Lord is the Church. And the Church, according to the mystical understandings, was already prefigured in the flood by the ark, in which the clean animals, at the Lord's command, were multiplied the more. And although, on account of the unclean and the clean, beasts of diverse kinds dwelt there, nevertheless the clean animals became the Lord's house, which by their uneven number already prefigured the sacrifices of virginity: from which Noah, delivered from the perils of the flood, offered to the Lord a worthy holocaust from the clean animals. There are

many things that might be said, but the hour shuts us out, and let it suffice to have said a few things concerning the praises of the Lord. To whom be glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Homily 71, on Psalm 93 (Alternate Series)

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos quattuordecim (alternate series), Anecdota Maredsolana III, Pars III (Maredsoli, 1903) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin). Deus ultionum Dominus, Deus ultionum libere egit — ”The God of vengeance is the Lord; the God of vengeance has acted freely.” Whether you say the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit, according to the principle of the Trinity which we set forth in the Gospel, he is both God and Lord. ”The God of vengeance has acted freely”: he who was despised in his lowliness will afterward take vengeance in his majesty.

”Be exalted, you who judge the earth.” You judge the earth, because heaven does not deserve to be judged. Listen, heretic, to how the Lord judges the earth. If there is a fall in heaven, why is there not also a judgment in heaven? If souls sinned in heaven, why is the earth alone judged? ”Render their recompense to the proud.” All sins indeed must be guarded against, because all are contrary to God; but they are so in various ways: proud sins are enemies to God. For ”the Lord resists the proud, but to the humble he gives grace.” The devil is the prince of the proud. ”Lest,” he says, ”puffed up in pride, he fall into the judgment of the devil.” For everyone who exalts his own heart is a sharer with the devil, who used to say: ”By my strength I will act, and by the wisdom of my understanding I will remove the boundaries of the nations” — and the rest, which it would be tedious to enumerate, in which the prophet describes the pride of the devil. The other vices earn the mercy of the Lord, because by their humility they are made subject to God: pride alone, which lifts itself up beyond its strength, resists God. The adulterer or the fornicator has not dared to lift his eyes up to heaven; with a downcast spirit he hopes, in supplication, for the mercy of the Lord; but the man whom his conscience makes turn away, it humbles upon the earth, yet it lifts him up to heaven. Pride and the appetite for glory, when they raise a man up, then abase him, because they make God the enemy of his sin.

”How long shall sinners, O Lord, how long shall sinners glory?” The sinner who beseeches God earns pardon; but he who glories in his wickedness is proud: and pride has God for its enemy. This which he says, ”how long?” — it is to be understood ἀπὸ κοινοῦ (”in common,” carried over), so that we may recognize it thus: ”How long shall sinners glory? How long shall they utter and speak iniquity? How long shall they speak, all who work injustice?” Human impatience therefore marvels at the patience of God, and says: I, a sinner, cannot endure sinners; how can you, who are just, bear with them? ”How long, O Lord, shall sinners glory?” He did not say, ”How long shall sinners sin?” He has a great sin who sins, and moreover glories in his sin. ”Shall they utter and speak iniquity?” All sins are cloaked with speech: but pride betrays its iniquity, while it glories in its own wickedness.

”Your people, O Lord, they have humbled, and your inheritance they have harassed.” Who? The proud. ”The widow and the stranger they have slain.” The plain sense is clear: but if we should wish to interpret according to the anagogy, every day the proud devil with his satellites oppresses and harasses the humble in the Church. ”Saying, The God of Jacob will not see, nor understand.” They took the Lord’s patience for ignorance.

”Understand, you who are foolish among the people; and you fools, at last be wise. Shall he who planted the ear not hear? Shall he who fashioned the eye not consider?” By an argument from nature he rebukes and convicts the sinners. O you who suppose that mortal things do not pertain to the Lord, you who, along with Epicurus, say that God’s care is kept apart from human affairs, listen to the argument from nature: because you are little children, I will offer you little examples. He who gave hearing to man, shall he himself not hear? And at the same time, see what he says. He did not repay like with like: for he did not say, ”Shall he who planted the ear not himself have an ear?” or ”Shall he who fashioned the eye not himself have an eye?” But because in God there are no members, therefore he speaks in such a way that we, as often as we read such things about God as are frequently found in the Scriptures, may understand that an operation is signified, not members. In Solomon we read: ”In the hand of the tongue are death and life.” Does the tongue then have a hand? But in order that we may come more easily to the understanding of the sense above, we have brought forward this testimony: for by the same reasoning by which you would give the tongue a hand, by that same reasoning you are going to give God all members.

”He who instructs the nations, shall he not reprove?” This is what he says: he who gave the law, gave it for this purpose, that he might instruct those who hear, or punish those who despise. ”He who teaches man knowledge.” He did not add, ”Shall he himself not have knowledge?” But what did he say? ”The Lord knows the thoughts of men, that they are vain.” Men marvel at the philosophers and poets who say: ”O the cares of men! O how much emptiness there is in things!” Behold, the

psalm of David, many ages before, spoke the same sentiment. ”The Lord knows the thoughts of men, that they are vain.” As long as we are men, we have vain thoughts. ”I said, You are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High.”

”Blessed is the man whom you shall instruct, O Lord, and shall teach him out of your law.” You see, then, that the law is to be learned, so that the things which are obscure may be more diligently understood. For the apostle says that ”the law is spiritual.” And David: ”Reveal my eyes, and I will consider the wondrous things of your law.” This, then, is what he says. ”Blessed is the man whom you shall instruct, O Lord, and shall teach him out of your law.” Why do you teach him? Render the reasons. ”That you may soften it for him from the evil days.” Therefore you teach him, so that in the future you may spare him: therefore in the present you rebuke him, so that in the future you may not condemn him. For the judge’s sentence is an evil to the one who endures the evils: not that the sentence is evil, but that the one suffering it, while he feels the punishment, feels a just and good sentence as evil. ”Until the pit be dug for the sinner.” Who is it that digs the pit for the sinner? Let us see what the prophet says elsewhere. ”He opened a pit and dug it out, and he fell into the trench which he made.” God, therefore, does not make the pit, but the sinner, so that he may fall into it. ”The blind,” he says, ”if he offers guidance to the blind, both fall into the pit.”

”Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? Or who will stand with me against those who work iniquity?” When he says ”Who?”, he signifies either something rare, or none at all. For the prophet speaks thus in the person of a weak man. ”Who will rise up for me against the evildoers?” Moses came, and could not make me better: the prophets came, and did not free me from the snares of sinners. Who then will rise up for me? Beautifully did he say ”will rise up”: as of one sleeping, as of one lying down. ”Arise, why do you sleep, O Lord?” ”Master, save us, we perish.” Who will rise up for me against the multitude of demons? Who will furnish help? ”Who will stand with me against those who work iniquity?” Beautifully did he say, ”Who will stand with me?” For unless the Lord stand with us, who lay in his passion, unless he rise up who slept in death, we cannot overcome our adversaries. For this reason Stephen, doing battle against the assaults of the Jews, sees Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father. He saw him standing, because he was fighting on behalf of his martyr. ”Unless the Lord had helped me.” Unless Christ had risen from hell, my soul would have descended to the netherworld.

”If I said, My foot has slipped: your mercy, O Lord, was helping me. The confession of weakness quickly earns God’s help, and by however much pride gives offense, by that much is he appeased by humility. ”If I said, My foot has slipped”: if I confess my sins, if I say that my foot has stood on slippery ground, if I do not trust in my own strength, if I acknowledge that I am not, though fallen, strong, at once ”your mercy helps me. ”According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, your

consolations have gladdened my soul. This is what he said above: he pursues the same sense, the same intention. ”According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, your consolations have gladdened my soul. As great a sorrow as you saw in my heart from the groaning of repentance, so great a measure of your mercy will you minister: for the greatness of the sorrow became the material of consolation. ”Shall the seat of iniquity cling to you? You who judge righteousness, can you have iniquity for a neighbor? ”You who fashion sorrow in a commandment? The commandments of God have the sorrow of repentance; but that sorrow itself is good, because it furnishes the medicine of sinners. For unless with sweat and toil, we shall not do the commandments of God. Let no one, then, suppose that he will be crowned amid delights. ”The widow who is in delights, while living, is dead.

What the apostle said of one person, let us apply to all: for the apostle’s care was not for widows alone, since he stood forth as the teacher of the whole Church. Now, because he did not name the virgin, nor the monk, nor the churchman, ought a man for that reason not to hold himself back from delights? For if the widow is a human being, I think the rest are human beings too: who, on account of the common frailty, can incur through delights that which the widow dreads. Listen, then, to what he says, ”You who fashion sorrow in a commandment. For it is commanded us that we fast, it is commanded us that we be sober, that to the one striking our cheek we offer the other, that to the one taking away our tunic we let go our cloak also. All these commandments are not accomplished without toil. ”For on account of the words of your lips I have kept hard ways. You see, then, that no one is crowned amid delights. ”For narrow and strait is the way that leads to life. For whatever virtues there are, they are not accomplished without difficulty. With immense toil we reach the summits of a mountain: how much more into heaven? This is what is said in the Gospel: ”The kingdom of heaven suffers violence. It suffers violence, because that which is not subject by nature is made subject to us through grace: so that from where the angels fell, men may ascend:

so that where bodies did not fall, souls together with their bodies may go. Let someone say: How then will these same bodies of ours go into heaven? If Christ reigns, we reign with Christ: what he already possesses, he promises to us after the resurrection. If the firstfruits reign, the remnant also will reign. The flesh which reigns in Christ, why should it not reign in those who believe in Christ? ”For when Christ shall appear, then we also shall appear with him in glory. If the flesh is adored by the angels in heaven, why should it not reign in men, who have merited the dignity of the kingdom? It is said elsewhere: ”And adore his footstool, for it is holy. Some suppose it was said of the earth, ”his footstool”: but to me it seems that, in comparison with the divine majesty, the incarnation of the Savior is rightly named a footstool on account of the subjection of its lowliness; but because it is Christ’s, it is adored. For nothing is lacking to the divinity: for whatever is οἰκονομία (the dispensation) in Christ is not added to him, but profits us: he is

taken up into glory, so that the grace of our future hope may be shown to us, who have reigned with him. To whom is glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Homily 72, on Psalm 95 (Alternate Series)

Latin source: Germanus Morin (ed.), Sancti Hieronymi Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos quattuordecim (alternate series), Anecdota Maredsolana III, Pars III (Maredsoli, 1903) — public domain. Psalm numbering follows the Septuagint/Vulgate (Morin).

Before we discuss the Gospel, it seems to us that a few things should be said about the title of the psalm, and after our discussion of the title let us come to a few short verses; so that the understanding which we had spoken of concerning the entrance-hall we may recognize likewise in the whole doorway of the house. This is the title: When the house was being built after the captivity, of David himself. Whose house was being built after the captivity? Which of us, do you think, has been taken captive and, in the storm of captivity, torn down, so that after the captivity he might be built up again? If God has shut up all men under sin, and all things are found in unbelief: wherever there is sin, there is captivity; where there is captivity, there is ruin, and there building is necessary. We ought therefore to consider our houses more carefully, lest perhaps they have collapsed in some part, and need to be built after the captivity; and we must come to their aid with all toil and skill, so that they do not utterly collapse, that there may be fulfilled in us what is written in Exodus: ’Because the midwives feared God, they built themselves houses.’ See what it says: Because they feared God, they built houses. Therefore a house cannot be constructed except by the fear of God. If then those women built houses by the fear of God, who had not sinned but rather acted in accord with God’s will:

what ought we, who have been taken captive, to do? Listen, sinner: we ought indeed to fear God, that we may not sin; but the second plank after shipwreck is repentance. When the house was being built after the captivity. When the house was being built: it did not say, has been built, because repentance has no end. For the righteous man, once dead, leaves repentance behind; but wherever there is sin, the conscience always gnaws. Therefore it is said, was being built, because it is not confined by time: however long you live, there you always run into it.

Sing to the Lord a new song. The old man is put off, and the new is raised up: therefore a new song is sung. Sing to the Lord, all the earth. The earth which has turned with its whole mind to the Lord sings out His praises, in the confession of the Lord, with the sweetness of a new voice. We ought not to be forgetful of our promise: we must pass on to the reading of the Gospel, since it is difficult. Let it suffice to have said once, that the psalm is spoken in the person of one repenting: and to this understanding whatever else remains will also be applied.

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”The Lord has reigned, let the earth rejoice.” Let the earth rejoice: let it have one king, which before was held by many. ”Let the many islands be glad.” It is said in a certain prophet: ”Speak to the inhabitants of this island,” that is, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. You see, then, that Jerusalem is called an island. Before David’s land was restored, therefore, only the one island of Judea rejoiced; but now, David’s land having been restored, it is said, ”Let the many islands be glad.” By the many islands we can mean the various provinces or cities of the believing peoples, or we shall interpret them as the various churches. For just as islands are beaten this way and that by the waves of the sea, so also the churches are indeed beaten by the various storms of temptations, but are not overturned.

”Cloud and darkness are round about him.” No one doubts that this is of the Lord Savior, round about whom was cloud and darkness — the flesh which he deigned to assume; although he is said to have appeared, in the Gospel of John. ”And he appeared to us.” He appeared indeed to the apostles, but from the Jews he was concealed. To those he is shown on the mountain, from these he is concealed in the valley of humility: those he builds up with beatitudes, to these he speaks

in parables, so that seeing they might not see, because of their unbelief. ”Cloud and darkness are round about him.” He appeared as he willed, not as his nature demanded. ”And he made darkness his hiding place.” If God is light, how can light dwell in darkness? There darkness signifies our knowledge and weakness: because we cannot gaze upon his majesty. For if human eyes cannot direct themselves at the rays of this sun which was created, which is our fellow-servant, how much more, in the Sun of Justice, are there darkness and gloom round about him, so that he cannot be understood or seen by us? This is what we read of holy Moses: ”And he entered into the darkness of the cloud,” that he might see God, whom he could not see without a cloud. This he says also in Isaiah: ”The Lord shall come into Egypt on a light cloud,” that is, in holy Mary. On a light cloud, because he was not weighed down by human seed.

”Justice and judgment are the correction of his throne.” When it says ”correction,” it is shown that before it was crooked. ”Justice and judgment are the correction of his throne.” Before the Lord came in the flesh, there was inequality, because God was known only in Judea. He came, and all the earth acknowledged the one and the same Creator whom Judea had known: and the correction of his throne was made. ”Fire shall go before him.” The Lord is pure, ”he dwells holy among the holy”: we cannot be joined to him, unless fire first has burned up our vices. ”For of what sort each one’s work is, fire shall prove.” ”And it shall inflame his enemies round about.” God does not inflame his enemies as enemies, but as friends: for he burns away the vices of his enemies, that out of enemies he may make friends.

”His lightnings gave light to the world. This is what is said in Jeremiah: ”The Lord who made the world in his wisdom, who brought clouds from the end of the earth, made lightnings into rain. ”His lightnings gave light to the world. The philosophers who are accustomed to dispute about the natures of things say that, unless clouds coming against each other are dashed together, fire cannot slip out of them; but when they have been driven, by a certain contest among themselves, into thunders, then lightning slips out of them. Which likeness we can also understand from fired stones. We have said this so that we may more easily see something similar to the mystery of the Savior. We have our own clouds, the prophets and the apostles; whence also elsewhere it is said, ”Your truth reaches even to the clouds. If his truth reaches even to the clouds of this air, how is it said elsewhere, ”Truth has arisen from the earth”? Therefore what it says is this: ”Your truth reaches even to the clouds. It certainly signifies the prophets and apostles: which clouds, unless they have been dashed together among themselves, cannot give their splendor; but if in one course they come to thunder together, lightnings fall in the whole world. Do you wish to know how the saints are called clouds in the Scriptures? It is said in Isaiah: ”I will command the clouds not to rain rain upon them. Moses was a cloud, and therefore he spoke: ”Let my speech be awaited like rain.

The epistles of the apostles are our spiritual rains. For what does Paul say in the epistle to the Hebrews? ”For the earth, drinking in the rain that often comes upon it,” and the rest. And again: ”I planted, Apollos watered. ”It saw, and the earth was moved. In the whole world the earth felt the lightning words of the Lord, and was moved — the earth which, before it was moved, was hard, and was not able to receive the word of the Lord. The Lord looked upon it, ”who looks upon the earth and makes it tremble. What is this, ”makes it tremble”? ”Upon whom else shall I rest, except upon the humble and quiet one, who trembles at my words?”

”The mountains flowed like wax before his face.” By ”mountains” he means the lofty powers. Those who before were raised up to heaven through pride, at the coming of the Lord were humbled; and those who were hardened by too great a boasting of vanity, afterward were softened by the heat of divine wisdom.

”The heavens announced his justice, and all peoples saw his glory.” In these two little verses two things are signified: the heavens announce the justice of the Lord, and all peoples see his glory. For unless someone has become heaven, he cannot announce the justice of the Lord. For if to the sinner it is said, ”You are earth, and into earth you shall go,” why should it not be said to the just one, ”You are heaven, and into heaven you shall go”? For we do not bear the image of the earthly, but the image of the heavenly: since ”our citizenship is in the heavens.” If anyone, therefore, walks upon the earth, although in the flesh yet not according to the flesh, that one can freely announce the justice of the Lord. For if someone less knowing should suffer a scruple, and say, ”What is it that we see the just in this life pressed down by labors and want, and sinners flourishing in riches and every comfort?” — unless the churchman has been instructed in the divine Scriptures, how can he show the justice of God in cases of this kind? But if he labors in the meditation of the law day and night, he will easily answer, that the brief lowliness of the present time is to be compensated afterward by eternal rewards. For it is much better for someone, for the sake of the Lord, in the small span of his life, to endure voluntary poverty, that he may in the future enjoy eternal riches, than here to abound in luxuries, and afterward be tortured with intolerable punishments. ”And all peoples saw his glory.” Those who before were scandalized at the cross of the Lord, because by themselves they could not recognize him, afterward, when the heavens announced the justice of God, glorify God.

”Let all be confounded who worship graven images.” If the prophet is blessed, being blessed he never knew how to curse; and therefore in that which he says, ”Let them be confounded,” it is not against them, but for them: for he prays that they may be confounded in their error, and be converted to the true and only God, the Creator.

”The daughters of Judea rejoiced because of your judgments, O Lord. What does this sense intend, ”The daughters of Judea rejoiced,” and not ”the sons”? Let us understand first what ”Judea” is interpreted to mean: and when we have known

the interpretation, let us see what are the daughters of the interpretation. ”Judea,” then, is interpreted ”confession. Whatever soul confesses God is a daughter of Judea. Therefore we call all the souls of believers the daughters of Judea, which rejoice at the judgments of God. For unless the soul has been faithful, it does not rejoice at the judgments of God. ”My house has collapsed, I have lost my riches in shipwreck, my son has died to me, my servant has fled and carried off my goods, I who before was rich am now consumed by want”: unless I am a daughter of Judea, I do not rejoice in the judgments of God. The soul of blessed Job was a daughter of Judah, which in the losses of household things thus consoled itself, saying: ”The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord: naked I came forth from my mother’s womb, naked also shall I go” — let there be understood, ”into the earth. First, made poor from rich, he lost his substance together with his sons: pressed down alike by want and bereavement, at last he came to the utmost misery, struck with the royal disease and an incurable wound: incurable to men, but curable with God.

What human medicine could not heal, patience and faith healed. He sat upon the dunghill, and in his soul he walked about in paradise. With his whole body rotting, his tongue alone was preserved to him — the tongue that was to blaspheme the Lord. See the craft of the ancient enemy. He tore away the substance of the just man by hostile plunder, crushed his sons with ruin, struck the man himself with a grievous wound and the horror of his whole body: he left him nothing except his tongue and his wife, so that the one might tempt and the other blaspheme. The devil was mindful of his former craft, by which he once deceived Adam through the woman: so also he assails this man through his wife, reckoning that he can always deceive men through the woman, not considering that one man was cast down through a woman, and now through a woman the whole world has been saved. Eve comes into your mind, but consider Mary: she cast us out of paradise, this one leads us back to heaven. Let us return to the order of the psalm.

”You who love the Lord, hate evil.” If the Lord is good… For what do we read? ”The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.” And again in another parable: ”Friend, if I am good, why is your eye evil?” ”You who love the Lord, hate evil.” Two loves cannot be contrary to each other in one man. Just as there is no consent of Christ with Belial, of justice and iniquity, so it cannot happen that one soul love both good and evil. ”You who love the Lord, hate evil”: the devil. The love and the hatred of each consists in deed. ”For he who loves me will keep my commandments.” But concerning the part of the devil, what is said? ”But through the envy of the devil death entered into the world; therefore they imitate him who are of his part.” Or certainly it is to be understood simply: You who love the things that are good, hate the things that are evil. You cannot love good, unless you hate evil.

”The Lord guards the souls of his saints.” A most beautiful order: he who loves good and hates evil, what does he deserve from the Lord, except that he be guarded by him? ”He will free them from the hand of the sinner.” Here a question arises: If the Lord guards the souls of his saints, and frees them from the hand of the sinner, how are the martyrs crushed in persecution? how did the impious Nero, with sentence given, condemn Peter and Paul to death on one day, if the Lord guards the souls of his saints? Attend diligently to what he says. ”The Lord guards the souls of his saints”: he said ”souls,” not ”bodies.” ”Do not fear those,” he says, ”who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul; but fear him who can kill both body and soul in Gehenna.” How, then, does the Lord guard the souls of his saints? In martyrdom. ”Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” In martyrdom, therefore, blood is poured out, so that the soul may be freed from temptations: so that it may leave the brief life, and migrate to the eternal: so that it may leave persecution, and go to the One who crowns us, our Lord Jesus Christ. To whom is honor and glory unto ages of ages. Amen.

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.