Concerning the Power of Demons

John Chrysostom (c. AD 349–407)

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Homily 1

That Demons Do Not Govern the World.
Against those who say that demons govern human affairs, and who are displeased at the chastisement of God, and are offended at the prosperity of the wicked and the hardships of the just.

I Indeed was hoping, that from the continuance of my discourse, you would have had a surfeit of my words: but I see that the contrary is happening: that no surfeit is taking place from this continuance, but that your desire is increased, that an addition is made not to your satiety but to your pleasure, that the same thing is happening which the winebibbers at heathen drinking-bouts experience; for they, the more they pour down unmixed wine, so much the rather they kindle their thirst, and in your case the more teaching we inculcate, so much the rather do we kindle your desire, we make your longing greater, your love for it the stronger. On this account, although I am conscious of extreme poverty, I do not cease to imitate the ostentatious among entertainers, both setting before you my table continuously, and placing on it the cup of my teaching, filled full: for I see that after having drunk it all, you retire again thirsting. And this indeed has become evident during the whole time, but especially since the last Lord's Day: For that ye partake of the divine oracles insatiably, that day particularly shewed: whereon I discoursed about the unlawfulness of speaking ill one of another, when I furnished you witha sure subject for self accusation, suggesting that you should speak ill of your own sins, but should not busy yourselves about those of other people: when I brought forward the Saints as accusing themselves indeed, but sparing others:

Paul saying I am the chief of sinners, and that God had compassion on him who was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, and calling himself one born out of due time, and not even thinking himself worthy of the title of Apostle: Peter saying "Depart from me because I am a sinful man: Matthew styling himself a publican even in the days of his Apostleship: David crying out and saying "My iniquities have gone over my head, and as a heavy burden have been burdensome to me: and Isaiah lamenting and bewailing "I am unclean, and have unclean lips: The three children in the furnace of fire, confessing and saying that they have sinned and transgressed, and have not kept the commandments of God. Daniel again makes the same lamentation. When after the enumeration of these Saints, I called their accusers flies, and introduced the right reason for the comparison, saying, that just as

they fasten themselves upon the wounds of others, so also the accusers bite at other people's sins, collecting disease therefrom for their acquaintance, and those who do the opposite, I designated bees, not gathering together diseases, but building honeycombs with the greatest devotion, and so flying to the meadow of the virtue of the Saint: Then accordingly-then ye shewed your insatiable longing. For when my discourse was extended to some length, yea to an interminable length, such as never was, many indeed expected that your eagerness would be quenched by the abundance of what was said. But the contrary happened.

For your heart was the rather warmed, your desire was the rather kindled: and whence was this evident? The acclamations at least which took place at the end were greater, and the shouts more clear, and the same thing took place as at the forge. For as there at the beginning indeed the light of the fire is not very clear, but when the flame has caught the whole of the wood that is laid upon it, it is raised to a great height; so also accordingly this happened on the occasion of that day. At the beginning indeed, this assembly was not vehemently stirred by me. But when the discourse was extended to some length, and gradually took hold of all the subjects and the teaching spread more widely, then accordingly, then the desire of listening was kindled in you, and the applause broke forth, more vehemently. On this account, although I had been prepared to say less than was spoken, I then exceeded the measure, nay rather I never exceeded the measure. For I am wont to measure the amount of the teaching not by the multitude of the words spoken, but by the disposition of the audience. For he who meets with a disgusted audience, even if he abridge his teaching, seems to be vexatious, but he who meets with eager, and wide-awake, and attentive hearers, though he extend his discourse to some length, not even thus fulfils their desire.

But since it happens that there are in so great a congregation, certain weak ones, unable to follow the length of the discourse, I wish to suggest this to them, that they should hear and receive, as much as they can, and having received enough should retire: There is no one who forbids, or compels them to remain beyond their natural strength. Let them not however necessitate the abridgement of the discourse before the time and the proper hours. Thou art replete, but thy brother still hungers. Thou art drunk with the multitude of the things spoken, but thy brother is still thirsty. Let him then not distress thy weakness, compelling thee to receive more than thine own power allows: nor do thou vex his zeal by preventing him from receiving all that he can take in. 2. This also happens at secular feasts. Some indeed are more quickly satisfied, some more tardily, and neither do these blame those, nor do they condemn these. But there indeed to withdraw more quickly is praiseworthy, but here to withdraw more quickly is not praiseworthy, but excusable. There to leave off more slowly, is culpable and faulty, here to withdraw more tardily, brings the greatest commendation, and good report. Pray why is this? Because there indeed the tardiness arises from greediness, but here the endurance, and patience are made up of spiritual desire and divine longing.

But enough of preamble. And we will proceed hereupon to that business which remained over to us from that day. What then was that which was then spoken? that all men had one speech, just as also they had one nature, and no one was different in speech, or in tongue.

Whence then comes so great a distinction in speech? From the carelessness of those who received the gift-of both of which matters we then spoke, shewing both the lovingkindness of the Master through this unity of speech, and the senselessness of the servants through their distinction of speech. For he indeed foreseeing that we should waste the gift nevertheless gave it: and they to whom it was entrusted, waxed evil over their charge. This is then one way of explanation, not that God wrested the gift from us but that we wasted what had been given. Then next after that, that we received afterwards gifts greater than those lost. In place of temporal toil he honoured us with eternal life. In place of thorns and thistles he prepared the fruit of the Spirit to grow in our souls. Nothing was more insignificant than man, and nothing became more honoured than man. He was the last item of the reasonable creation. But the feet became the head, and by means of the first-fruits, were raised to the royal throne.

For just as some generous and opulent man who has seen some one escape from shipwreck and only able to save his bare body from the waves, cradles him in his hands, and casts about him a bright garment, and conducts him to the highest honours; so also God has done in the case of our nature. Man cast aside all that he had, his right to speak freely, his communion with God, his sojourn in Paradise, his unclouded life, and as from a shipwreck, went forth bare. But God received him and straightway clothed him, and taking him by the hand gradually conducted him to heaven. And yet the shipwreck was quite unpardonable. For this tempest was due entirely not to the force of the winds, but to the carelessness of the sailor.

And yet God did not look at this, but had compassion for the magnitude of the calamity, and him who had suffered shipwreck in harbour, he received as lovingly as if he had undergone this in the midst of the open sea. For to fall in Paradise is to undergo shipwreck in harbour. Why so? Because when no sadness, or care, or labours, or toil, or countless waves of desire assaulted our nature, it was upset and it fell. And as the miscreants who sail the sea, often bore through the ship with a small iron tool, and let in the whole sea to the ship from below; so accordingly then, when the Devil saw the ship of Adam, that is his soul, full of many good things, he came and bored it through with his mere voice, as with some small iron tool, and emptied him of all his wealth and sank the ship itself. But God made the gain greater than the loss, and brought our nature to the royal throne. Wherefore Paul cries out and says, ”He raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him, on his right hand in the heavenly places, that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness towards us. What dost thou say? the thing has already happened and has an end, and dost thou say ”in order that he might shew to the ages to come? Has he not shewn?

He has already shewn, but not to all men, but to me who am faithful, but the unbelieving has not yet seen the wonder. But then, in that day the whole nature of man will come forward, and will wonder at that which has been done, but especially will it be more manifest to us. For we believe even now; but hearing and sight do not put a wonder before us in the same way, but just as in the case of kings when we hear of the purple robe, and the diadem, and

the golden raiment, and the royal throne, we wonder indeed, but experience this in greater degree when the curtains are drawn aside and we see him seated on the lofty judgment seat. So also in the case of the Only-Begotten, when we see the curtains of heaven drawn aside, and the King of angels descending thence, and with his body-guard of the heavenly hosts, then we perceive the wonder to be greater from our sight of it. For consider with me what it is to see our nature borne upon the Cherubim, and the whole angelic force surrounding it.

3. But look, with me, too, at the wisdom of Paul, how many expressions he seeks for, so as to present to us the lovingkindness of God. For he did not speak merely the word grace, nor riches, but what did he say? "The exceeding riches of his grace in kindness." But notwithstanding even so, he is below the mark; and even as the slippery bodies when grasped by countless hands, escape our hold, and slip through easily; so also are we unable to get hold of the lovingkindness of God in whatever expressions we may try to grasp it, but the exceeding magnitude of it baffles the feebleness of our utterances. And Paul therefore experiencing this, and seeing the force of words defeated by its magnitude, desists after saying one word: and what is this? "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift." For neither speech, nor any mind is able to set forth the tender care of God. On this account he then says that it is past finding out, and elsewhere "The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts."

But, as I was saying, these two ways of explanation are found in the meantime: one indeed that God has not wrested the gift that we have lost; and next, that the good things which have been given to us are even greater than those which we have lost. And I wish also to mention a third too. What then is the third? That even if he had not given the things after these, which were greater than those we had lost, but had only taken away what had been given to us, as we furnished the reason why, (for let this be added); even this is enough of itself to shew his tender care towards us. For not only to give, but also to take away what was given, is a mark of the greatest lovingkindness, and, if you will, let us lay bare the matter, in the case of Paradise. He gave Paradise. This of his own tender care. We were seen to be unworthy of the gift. This of our own senselessness. He took away the gift from those who became unworthy of it. This came of his own goodness. And what kind of goodness is it, says one, to take away the gift? Wait, and thou shalt fully hear. For think, what Cain would have been, dwelling in Paradise after his bloodguiltiness.

For if, when he was expelled from that abode, if when condemned to toil and labour, and beholding the threat of death hanging over his head, if seeing the calamity of his father before his eyes, and holding the traces of the wrath of God still in his hands, and encompassed with so great horrors, he lashed out into such great wickedness, as to ignore nature, and to forget one born from the same birth pangs, and to slay him who had done him no wrong, to lay hold on his brother's person, and to dye his right hand with blood, and when God wanted him to be still, to refuse submission and to affront his maker, to dishonour his parents; if this man had continued to dwell in Paradise-look, into how great evil he would

have rushed. For if when so many restraints were laid upon him, he leapt with fatal leaps; and if these walls were set at nought, whither would he not have precipitated himself?

Wouldest thou learn too from the mother of this man, what a good result the expulsion from the life of Paradise had, compare what Eve was before this, and what she became afterwards. Before this indeed, she considered that deceiving Devil, that wicked Demon to be more worth believing than the commandments of God, and at the mere sight of the tree, she trampled under foot the law which had been laid down by Him. But when the expulsion from Paradise came, consider how much better and wiser she grew. For when she bare a son, she says "I have gotten a man through the Lord. She straightway flew to the master, who before this had despised the master, and she neither ascribes the matter to nature, nor puts the birth down to the laws of marriage, but she recognizes the Lord of Nature, and acknowledges thanks to Him for the birth of the little child. And she who before this deceived her husband, afterwards even trained the little child, and gave him a name which of itself was able to bring the gift of God to her remembrance: and again when she bare another, she says "God hath raised up seed to me in place of Abel whom Cain slew. The woman remembers her calamity, and does not become impatient but she gives thanks to God, and calls the little child after his gift, furnishing it with constant material for instruction. Thus even in his very deprivation God conferred greater benefit.

The woman suffered expulsion from Paradise, but by means of her ejection she was led to a knowledge of God, so that she found a greater thing than she lost. And if it were profitable, says one, to suffer expulsion from Paradise, for what cause did God give Paradise at the beginning? This turned out profitably to man, on account of our carelessness, since, if at least, they had taken heed to themselves, and had acknowledged their master, and had known how to be self-restrained, and to keep within bounds, they would have remained in honour. But when they treated the gifts which had been given them with insolence, then it became profitable, that they should be ejected. For what cause then did God give at first? In order that he might shew forth his own lovingkindness, and because He himself was prepared to bring us even to greater honour. But we were the cause of chastisement and punishment on all sides, ejecting ourselves through our indifference to goods which were given to us.

Just as therefore an affectionate father, at first indeed, suffers his own son to dwell in his home, and to enjoy all his father's goods, but when he sees that he has become worthless of the honour, he leads him away from his table, and puts him far from his own sight, and often casts him forth from his paternal home, in order that he, suffering expulsion, and becoming better by this slight and this dishonour, may again shew himself worthy of restoration, and may succeed to his father's inheritance: So has God done. He gave Paradise to man. He cast him out when he appeared unworthy, in order that by his dwelling outside, and through his dishonour, he might become better, and more self-restrained, and might appear worthy again of restoration. Since after those things he did become better, he brings him back again and says "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise. Dost thou see that not the gift of

Paradise but even the ejection from Paradise was a token of the greatest tender care? For had he not suffered expulsion from Paradise, he would not again have appeared worthy of Paradise.

4. This argument therefore let us maintain throughout, and let us apply it to the case of the subject lying before us. God gave a speech common to all. This is part of his loving kindness to men. They did not use the gift rightly, but they lapsed to utter folly. He took away again that which had been given. For if when they had one speech, they fell into so great folly, as to wish to build a tower to heaven: had they not immediately been chastised would they not have desired to lay hold on the height of heaven itself? For why? If indeed that were impossible for them, yet notwithstanding their impious thoughts are made out from their plan. All which things God foresaw, and since they did not use their oneness of speech rightly, he rightly divided them by difference of speech. And see with me, his lovingkindness. "Behold," saith he "they all have one speech, and this they have begun to do."

For what reason did he not at once proceed to the division of tongues, but first of all defend himself, as if about to be judged in a lawcourt? And yet at least no one can say to him why hast thou thus done? yea he is at liberty to do all things as he wills. But still as one about to give account, he thus sets up a defence, teaching us to be gentle and loving. For if the master defends himself to his servants, even when they have done him this wrong; much more ought we to defend ourselves to one another, even if we are wronged to the highest degree. See at least how he defends himself. "Behold they have all one mouth and one speech" saith he, "and this they have begun to do," as if he said let no one accuse me of this when he sees the division of tongues. Let no one consider that this difference of speech was made over to men from the beginning. "Behold they all have one mouth, and one speech. But they did not use the gift aright. And in order that thou mayest understand that he does not chastise for what has taken place so much as he provides for improvement in the future, hear the sequel "and now none of all the things will fail them, which they set on foot to do. Now what he says, is of such a kind as this.

If they do not pay the penalty now, and be restrained from the very root of their sins, they will never cease from wickedness. For this is what "none of the things will fail them which they set on foot to do" means, as if he said, and they will add other deeds yet more monstrous. For such a thing is wickedness; if when it has taken a start it be not hindered, as fire catching wood, so it rises to an unspeakable height. Dost thou see that the deprivation of oneness of speech was a work of much lovingkindness? He inflicted difference of speech upon them, in order that they might not fall into greater wickedness. Hold fast this argument then with me, and let it ever be fixed and immoveable in your minds, that not only when he confers benefits but even when he chastises God is good and loving. For even his chastisements and his punishments are the greatest part of his beneficence, the greatest form of his providence. Whenever therefore thou seest that famines have taken place, and pestilences, and drought and immoderate rains, and irregularities in the atmosphere, or any other of the things

which chasten human nature, be not distressed, nor be despondent, but worship Him who caused them, marvel at Him for His tender care. For He who does these things is such that He even chastens the body that the soul may become sound. Then does God these things saith one?

God does these things, and even if the whole city, nay even if the whole universe were here I will not shrink from saying this. Would that my voice were clearer than a trumpet, and that it were possible to stand in a lofty place, and to cry aloud to all men, and to testify that God does these things. I do not say these things in arrogance but I have the prophet standing at my side, crying and saying, "There is no evil in the city which the Lord hath not done" -now evil is an ambiguous term; and I wish that you shall learn the exact meaning of each expression, in order that on account of ambiguity you may not confound the nature of the things, and fall into blasphemy.

5. There is then evil, which is really evil; fornication, adultery, covetousness, and the countless dreadful things, which are worthy of the utmost reproach and punishment. Again there is evil, which rather is not evil, but is called so, famine, pestilence, death, disease, and others of a like kind. For these would not be evils. On this account I said they are called so only. Why then? Because, were they evils, they would not have become the sources of good to us, chastening our pride, goading our sloth, and leading us on to zeal, making us more attentive. "For when," saith one, "he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned, and came early to God. He calls this evil therefore which chastens them, which makes them purer, which renders them more zealous, which leads them on to love of wisdom; not that which comes under suspicion and is worthy of reproach; for that is not a work of God, but an invention of our own will, but this is for the destruction of the other. He calls then by the name of evil the affliction, which arises from our punishment; thus naming it not in regard to its own nature, but according to that view which men take of it. For since we are accustomed to call by the name of evil, not only thefts and adulteries, but also calamities; so he has called the matter, according to the estimate of mankind.

This then is that which the prophet saith "There is no evil in the city which the Lord hath not done. This too by means of Isaiah God has made clear saying "I am God who maketh peace and createth evil," again naming calamities evils. This evil also Christ hints at, thus saying to the disciples, "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof," that is to say the affliction, the misery. It is manifest then on all sides, that he here calls punishment evil; and himself brings these upon us, affording us the greatest view of his providence. For the physician is not only to be commended when he leads forth the patient into gardens and meadows, nor even into baths and pools of water, nor yet when he sets before him a well furnished table, but when he orders him to remain without food, when he oppresses him with hunger and lays him low with thirst, confines him to his bed, both making his house a prison, and depriving him of the very light, and shadowing his room on all sides with curtains, and when he cuts, and when he cauterizes, and when he brings his bitter medicines, he is equally a physician. How is it not then preposterous to call him a physician who does so many evil

things, but to blaspheme God, if at any time He doeth one of these things, if He bring on either famine or death, and to reject his providence over all?

And yet He is the only true physician both of souls and bodies. On this account He often seizes this nature of ours wantoning in prosperity, and travailing with a fever of sins, and by want, and hunger, and death and other calamities and the rest of the medicines of which He knows, frees us from diseases. But the poor alone feel hunger, says one. But He does not chasten with hunger alone, but with countless other things. Him who is in poverty He has often corrected with hunger, but the rich and him who enjoys prosperity, with dangers, diseases, untimely deaths. For He is full of resources, and the medicines which He has for our salvation are manifold.

Thus too the judges do. They do not honour, or crown those only who dwell in cities, nor do they provide gifts alone, but they also often correct. On this account both the sword is sharpened by them, and tortures are prepared; both the wheel and the stocks, and the executioners, and countless other forms of chastisement. That which the executioner is to the judges, famine is to God-as an executioner correcting us and leading us away from vice. This too, it is possible to see in the case of the husbandmen: They do not then, only protect the root of the vine, nor hedge it round but prune it, and lop off many of the branches; on this account not only have they a hoe, but a sickle too, suitable for cutting: yet notwithstanding we do not find fault with them, but then above all we admire them, when we see them cutting off much that is unserviceable, so as through the rejection of what is superfluous to afford great security to that which remains. How is it not then preposterous, that we should thus approve of a father indeed and a physician and a judge, and a husbandman, and should neither blame nor censure him who casts his son out of his house nor the physician who puts his patient to torture nor the judge who corrects, nor the husbandman who prunes: but that we should blame and smite with countless accusations God, if he would at any time raise us up, when we are as it were, besotted through the great drunkenness which comes of wickedness? How great madness would it not be, not even to allow God a share of the same self-justification, of which we allow our fellow servants a share?

6. Fearing these things for them who reproach God, I speak now, in order that they may not kick against the pricks, and cover their own feet with blood, that they may not throw stones to heaven, and receive wounds on their own head. But I have somewhat else far beyond this to say. For omitting to ask (I say this by way of concession) if God took from us to our profit, I only say this; that if He took what had been given, not even thus, could anyone be able to reproach Him. For He was Lord of his own. Among men indeed, when they entrust us with money, and lend us silver, we give them our thanks for the time during which they lent it, we are not indignant at the time at which they take back their own. And shall we reproach God who wishes to take back his own? Indeed now is this not the extreme of folly? yea the great and noble Job did not act thus. For not only when he received, but even when he was deprived, he gives the greatest thanks to God saying, ”The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken

away; may the name of the Lord be blessed for ever. But if it is right to give thanks for both these even separately, and deprivation is not the less serviceable than bestowal;

what excusableness should we have, tell me, in recompensing in a contrary spirit, and being impatient with Him when we ought to worship, who is so gentle, and loving and careful, who is wiser than every Physician, and more full of affection than any father, juster than any judge, and more anxious than any husbandman, in healing these souls of ours? What then could be more insane and senseless than they who in the midst of so great good order, say that we are deprived of the providence of God? For just as if some one were to contend that the soul was murky and cold, he would produce an example of extreme insanity, by his opinion; so if any one doubts about the providence of God, much rather is he liable to charges of madness.

Not so manifest is the Sun, as the providence of God is clear. But nevertheless some dare to say that Demons administer our affairs. What can I do? Thou hast a loving Master. He chooses rather to be blasphemed by thee through these words, than to commit thine affairs to the Demons and persuade thee by the reality how Demons administer. For then thou wouldest know their wickedness well by the experience of it. But rather indeed now it is possible to set it before you as it were by a certain small example. Certain men possessed of Demons coming forth out of the tombs met Christ, and the Demons kept beseeching him to suffer them to enter the herd of swine. And he suffered them, and they went away, and straightway precipitated them all headlong. Thus do Demons govern; and yet to them the swine were of no particular account, but with thee there is ever a warfare without a truce, and an implacable fight, and undying hatred. And if in the case of those with whom they had nothing in common they did not even endure that they should be allowed a brief breathing space of time: if they had gotten unto their power us their enemies who are perpetually stinging them what would they not have done? and what incurable mischief would they not have accomplished?

For for this reason God let them fall upon the herd of swine, in order that in the case of the bodies of irrational animals thou mayest learn their wickedness, and that they would have done to the possessed the things which they did to the swine, had not the demoniacs in their very madness experienced the providence of God, is evident to all: and now therefore when thou seest a man excited by a Demon, worship the Master. Learn the wickedness of the Demons. For it is possible to see both things in the case of these Demons, the lovingkindness of God, and the evil of the Demons. The evil of the Demons when they harass and disturb the soul of the demented: and the lovingkindness of God whenever he restrains and hinders so savage a Demon, who has taken up his abode within, and desires to hurl the man headlong, and does not allow him to use his own power to the full, but suffers him to exhibit just so much strength, as both to bring the man to his senses, and make his own wickedness apparent. Dost thou wish to form another example to see once more how a Demon arranges matters when God allows him to use his own power? Consider the herds, the flocks of Job,

how in one instant of time he annihilated all, consider the pitiable death of the children, the blow that was dealt to his body:

and thou shalt see the savage and inhuman and unsparing character of the wickedness of the Demons, and from these things thou shalt know clearly that if God had entrusted the whole of this world to their authority, they would have confused and disturbed everything, and would have assigned to us their treatment of the swine, and of those herds, since not even for a little breathing space of time could they have endured to spare us our salvation. If Demons were to arrange affairs, we should be in no better condition than possessed men, yea rather we should be worse than they. For God did not give them over entirely to the tyranny of the Demons, otherwise they would suffer far worse things than these which they now suffer. And I would ask this of those who say these things, what kind of disorder they behold in the present, that they set down all our affairs to the arrangement of Demons? And yet we behold the sun for so many years proceeding day by day in regular order, a manifold band of stars keeping their own order, the courses of the moon unimpeded, an invariable succession of night and day, all things, both above and below, as it were in a certain fitting harmony, yea rather even far more, and more accurately each keeping his own place, and not departing from the order which God who made them ordained from the beginning.

7. And what is the use of all this, says one, when the heaven indeed, and sun, and moon, and the band of stars, and all the rest keep much good order, but our affairs are full of confusion and disorder. What kind of confusion, O man, and disorder? A certain one, says he, is rich, and overbearing, He is rapacious and covetous, he drains the substance of the poor day by day, and suffers no terrible affliction. Another lives in forbearance, self-restraint, and uprightness, and is adorned with all other good qualities, and is chastened with poverty and disease, and extremely terrible afflictions. Are these then the matters which offend thee? Yes, these, says he. If then thou seest both of the rapacious, many chastened, and of those living virtuously, yea some even enjoying countless goods, why dost thou not abandon thine opinion, and be content with the Almighty? Because it is this very thing which offends me more. For why when there are two evil men, is one chastened, and another gets off, and escapes; and when there are two good men, one is honoured, and the other continues under punishment? And this very thing is a very great work of God's providence. For if he were to chasten all the evil men, here; and were to honour here all the good men, a day of judgment were superfluous.

Again if he were to chasten no wicked man, nor were to honour any of the good, then the base would become baser and worse, as being more careless than the excellent, and they who were minded to blaspheme would accuse God all the more, and say that our affairs were altogether deprived of his providence. For if when certain evil men are chastened, and certain good men punished, they likewise say that human affairs are subject to no providence; if even this did not happen what would they not say? and what words would they not send forth? On this account some of the wicked he chastens, and some he does not chasten and some of the good he honours and some he does not honour. He does not chasten

all, in order that he may persuade thee, that there is a Resurrection. But he chastens some in order that he may make the more careless, through fear by means of the punishment of the others, more in earnest. Again he honours certain of the good, in order that he may lead on others by his honours to emulate their virtue. But he does not honour all, in order that thou mayest learn that there is another season for rendering to all their recompense. For if indeed all were to receive their deserts here, they would disbelieve the account of the Resurrection. But if no one were to receive his desert here, the majority would become more careless.

On this account some he chastens, and others he does not chasten, profiting both those who are chastened, and those who are not chastened. For he separates their wickedness from those, and he makes the others by their punishment, more self-restrained. And this is manifest from what Christ himself said. For when they announced to him that a tower had been brought to the ground, and had buried certain men, he saith to them "What think ye? that these men were sinners only? I say to you nay, but if ye do not repent ye also shall suffer the same thing."

Dost thou see how those perished on account of their sin, and the rest did not escape on account of their righteousness, but in order that they might become better by the punishment of the others? Were not then the chastened unjustly dealt with says one? For they could without being chastened themselves become better by the punishment of others. But if He had known that they would become better from penitence God would not have chastened them. For if when he foresaw that many would profit nothing from his longsuffering, he nevertheless bears with them, with much tolerance, fulfilling his own part, and affording them an opportunity of coming out of their own senselessness to their sober senses one day; how could he deprive those who were about to become better from the punishment of others, of the benefit of repentance? So that they are in no way unjustly treated, both their evil being cut off by their punishment, and their chastening is to be lighter there, because they suffered here beforehand. Again, they who were not chastened are in no way unjustly treated; for it was possible for them, had they wished, to have used the longsuffering of God, to accomplish a most excellent change, and wondering at his tolerance, to have become ashamed at his exceeding forbearance, and one day to have gone over to virtue, and to have gained their own salvation by the punishment of others.

But if they remain in wickedness, God is not to blame, who on this account was longsuffering, that he might recover them, but they are unworthy of pardon, who did not rightly use the longsuffering of God: and it is not only possible to use this argument as a reason why all the wicked are not chastened here, but another also not less than this. Of what kind then is this? That if God brought upon all, the chastenings which their sins deserved, our race would have been carried off, and would have failed to come down to posterity. And in order that thou mayest learn that this is true, hear the prophet saying "If Thou observedst iniquity O Lord, who shall stand? And if it seems good to thee to investigate this saying, leaving the accurate enquiry into the life of each, alone: (For it is not possible even to know all that

has been accomplished by each man) let us bring forward those sins which all, without contradiction, commit: and from these it will be plain and manifest to us, that if we were chastened for each of our sins, we should long ago have perished. He who has called his brother fool, "is liable to the hell of fire" saith He. Is there then any one of us who has never sinned this sin? What then? ought he to be straightway carried off? Therefore we should have been all carried off and would have disappeared, long ago, indeed very long ago.

Again he who swears, saith he, even if he fulfil his oath, doeth the works of the wicked one. Who is there then, who has not sworn? Yea rather who is there who has never sworn falsely? He who looketh on a woman, saith he, with unchaste eyes, is wholly an adulterer, and of this sin any one would find many guilty. When then these acknowledged sins are such and so insufferable, and each of these of itself brings upon us inevitable chastisement, if we were to reckon up the secret sins committed by us, then we shall see especially that the providence of God does not bring upon us punishment for each sin. So that when thou seest anyone rapacious, covetous, and not chastened, then do thou unfold thine own conscience; reckon up thine own life, go over the sins which have been committed and thou shalt learn rightly that in thine own case first, it is not expedient to be chastened for each of thy sins: for on this account the majority make reckless utterances, since they do not look on their own case before that of others, but we all leaving our own alone, examine that of the rest. But let us no longer do this, but the reverse, and if thou seest any righteous man chastened, remember Job: for if any one be righteous, he will not be more righteous than that man, nor within a small distance of approaching him.

And if he suffer countless ills, he has not yet suffered so much, as that man.

8. Taking this then into thy mind, cease charging the master; learning that it is not by way of deserting him does God let such an one suffer ill, but through desire to crown him, and make him more distinguished. And if thou seest a sinner punished, remember the paralytic who passed thirty eight years on his bed. For that that man was delivered over then to that disease through sin, hear Christ saying "Behold thou art made whole; sin no more lest a worse thing happen to thee. For either when we are chastened, we pay the penalty of our sins, or else we receive the occasion of crowning if, when we live in rectitude, we suffer ill. So that whether we live in righteousness, or in sins, chastening is a useful thing for us, sometimes making us more distinguished, sometimes rendering us more self-controlled, and lightening our punishment to come for us. For that it is possible that one chastened here, and bearing it thankfully should experience milder punishment there hear St. Paul saying "For this reason many are weak and sickly, and some sleep. For if we judged ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged we are corrected by the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. Knowing all these things therefore, Let us both moralize in this way on the providence of God, and stop the mouths of the gainsayers.

And if any of the events which happen pass our understanding, let us not from this consider that our affairs are not governed by providence, but perceiving His providence in part, in things incomprehensible let us yield to the unsearchableness of His wisdom. For if it is

not possible for one not conversant with it to understand a man's art, much rather is it impossible for the human understanding to comprehend the infinity of the providence of God. "For his judgments are unsearchable and his ways past finding out" But nevertheless from small portions we gain a clear and manifest faith about the whole, we give thanks to him for all that happens. For there is even another consideration that cannot be contradicted, for those who wish to moralize about the providence of God For we would ask the gainsayers, is there then a God? and if they should say there is not, let us not answer them. For just as it is worthless to answer madmen, so too those who say there is no God.

For if a ship having few sailors, and passengers, would not be conducted safely for one mile even, without the hand which guides it, much more, such a world as this, having so many persons in it, composed of different elements, would not have continued so long a time, were there not a certain providence presiding over it, both governing, and continually maintaining this whole fabric, and if in shame, through the common opinion of all men, and the experience of affairs, they confess that there is a God, let us say this to them. If there is a God, as indeed there is, it follows that He is just, for if He is not just neither is He God, and if He is just He recompenses to each according to their desert. But we do not see all here receiving according to their desert. Therefore it is necessary to hope for some other requital awaiting us, in order that by each one receiving according to his desert, the justice of God may be made manifest. For this consideration does not only contribute to our wisdom about providence alone, but about the Resurrection; and let us teach others, and let us do all diligence to shut the mouths of them who rave against the master, and let us ourselves glorify him in all things.

For thus shall we win more of his care, and enjoy much of his influence, and thus shall we be able to escape from real evil, and obtain future good, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, By whom and with whom be glory to the Father, with the Holy Spirit, now and always, for ever and ever. Amen.

Homily 2

Resisting the Temptation of the Devil.
Against those who object because the devil has not been put out of the world: And to prove that his wickedness does no harm to us-if we take heed: And concerning repentance. 1. When Isaac, in old time, was desirous to eat a meal at the hands of his son, he sent his son forth from the house to the chace. But when this Isaac was desirous to accept a meal at my hands he did not send me forth from the house, but himself ran to our table. What could be more tenderly affectionate than he? What more humble? who thought fit to shew his warm love thus, and deigned to descend so far. On this account surely, we also having spent the tones of our voice, and the strength of our feet over the morning discourse, when we saw his fatherly face, forgot our weakness, lay aside our fatigue, were uplifted with pleasure; we saw his illustrious hoary head, and our soul was filled with light. On this account too, we set out our table with readiness, in order that he should eat and bless us. There is no fraud and guile, here, as there was then, there. One indeed was commanded to bring the meal-but another brought it. But I was commanded to bring it, and brought it too. Bless me then, O my father, with spiritual blessing, which we all also pray ever to receive, and which is profitable not only to thee, but also to me, and to all these. Entreat the common master of us all, to prolong thy life to the old age of Isaac. For this is both for me, and for these, more valuable, and more needful than the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth.

But it is time to proceed to set out our table; what then is this? The remains of what was lately said with a view to our love of you. For still-still-we renew our discourse concerning the Devil, which we started two days ago, which we also addressed to the initiated, this morning when we discoursed to them about renunciation, and covenant. And we do this, not because our discourse about the Devil is sweet to us, but because the doctrine about him is full of security for you. For he is an enemy and a foe, and it is a great security to know clearly, the tactics of your enemies. We have said lately, that he does not overcome by force, nor by tyranny, nor through compulsion, nor through violence. Since were this so, he would have destroyed all men. And in testimony of this we brought forward the swine, against which the Demons were unable to venture anything, before the permission of the Master. The herds and flocks of Job. For not even did the Devil venture to destroy these, until he received power from above. We learned therefore this one thing first, that he does not overcome us by force, or by compulsion; next after that, we added that even when

he overcomes by deceitfulness, not thus does he get the better of all men, Then again we brought that athlete Job, himself into the midst, against whom he set countless schemes going, and not even thus got the better of him, but withdrew defeated.

One question still remains. What then is this matter? That if he does not overcome says one, by force, yet by deceitfulness. And on this account it were better that he should be destroyed. For if Job got the better of him, yet Adam was deceived and overthrown. Now if once for all he had been removed from the world, Adam would never have been overthrown. But now he remains, and is defeated indeed by one, butgets the better of many. Ten overcame him, but he himself overcomes and wrestles down ten thousand and if God took him away from the world, these ten thousand would not have perished. What then shall we say to this? That first of all they who overcame are more valuable far than they who are defeated, even if the latter be more, and the former less. ”For better is one,” saith he ”that doeth the will of God than ten thousand transgressors. And next, that if the antagonist were taken away he who overcomes is thereby injured. For if thou lettest the adversary remain, the more slothful are injured, not on account of the more diligent, but by their own slothfulness; whereas it thou takest away the antagonist, the more diligent are betrayed on account of the slothful, and neither exhibit their own power, nor win crowns.

2. Perhaps ye have not yet understood what has been said. Therefore it is necessary that I should say it again more clearly. Let there be one antagonist. But let there be also two athletes about to wrestle gainst him, and of these two athletes let one be consumed with gluttony, unprepared, void of strength, nerveless; but the other diligent, of good habit, passing his time in the wrestling school, in many gymnastic exercises, and exhibiting all the practice which bears upon the contest. If then thou takest away the antagonist, which of these two hast thou injured? The slothful, pray, and unprepared, or the earnest one who has toiled so much? It is quite clear that it is the earnest one: For the one indeed is wronged by the slothful, after the antagonist has been taken away. But the slothful, while he remains, is no longer injured on account of the earnest. For he has fallen, owing to his own slothfulness.

I will state another solution of this question, in order that thou mayest learn, that the Devil does not injure, but their own slothfulness everywhere overthrows those who do not take heed. Let the Devil be allowed to be exceeding wicked, not by nature, but by choice and conviction. For that the Devil is not by nature wicked, learn from his very names. For the Devil, the slanderer that is, is called so from slandering; for he slandered man to God saying ”Doth Job reverence thee for nought? but put out thine hand, and touch what he hath, see if he will not blaspheme thee to thy face. He slandered God again to man saying ”Fire fell from heaven and burnt up the sheep. For he was anxious to persuade him, that this warfare was stirred up from above, out of the heavens, and he set the servant at variance with the master, and the master with his servant; rather he did not set them at variance, but attempted to indeed, but was not able, in order that whenever thou mayest set another servant at variance with his master, Adam with God, and believing the Devil’s slander,

thou mayest learn that he gained strength, not owing to his own power but from that man's slothfulness and carelessness. He is called the Devil therefore on that account. But to slander, and to refrain from slander is not natural, but an action which takes place and which ceases to take place, occurring and ceasing to occur.

Now such things do not reach the rank of the nature or of the essence of a thing. I know that this consideration about essence and accident is hard to be grasped by many. But there are they who are able to lend a finer ear, wherefore also we have spoken these things. Do you wish that I should come to another name? You shall see that that also is not a name which belongs to his essence or nature. He is called wicked. But his wickedness is not from his nature, but from his choice. For even this at one time is present, at another time is absent. Do not thou then say this to me that it always remains with him. For it was not indeed with him at the beginning, but afterwards came upon him; wherefore he is called apostate. Although many men are wicked, he alone is called wicked by pre-eminence. Why then is he thus called? Because though in no way wronged by us, having no grudge whether small or great, when he saw mankind had in honour, he straightway envied him his good. What therefore could be worse than this wickedness, except when hatred and war exist, without having any reasonable cause. Let the Devil then be let alone, and let us bring forward the creation, in order that thou mayest learn that the Devil is not the cause of ills to us, if we would only, take heed:

in order that thou mayest learn that the weak in choice, and the unprepared, and slothful, even were there no Devil, falls, and casts himself into many a depth of evil. The Devil is evil. I know it myself and it is acknowledged by all, yet give heed strictly to the things which are now about to be said. For they are not ordinary matters, but those about which many words, many times, and in many places arise, about which there is many a fight and battle not only on the part of the faithful against unbelievers but also on the part of the faithful against the faithful. For this is that which is full of pain.

3. The Devil then is acknowledged, as I said, to be evil by all. What shall we say about this beautiful and wondrous creation? Pray is the creation too, wicked? and who is so corrupt, who so dull, and demented as to accuse the creation? what then shall we say about this? For it is not wicked, but is both beautiful and a token of the wisdom and power and lovingkindness of God. Hear at least how the prophet marvels at it, saying, "How are thy works magnified O Lord! in wisdom Thou hast made them all. He did go through them one by one, but withdrew before the incomprehensible wisdom of God. And that he has made it thus beautiful and vast hear a certain one saying, "From the vastness and beauty of the creatures, the originator of them is proportionably seen. Hear too Paul saying, "For the invisible things of Him, since the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made. For each of these by which he spake declared that the creation leads us to the knowledge of God, because it causes us to know the Master fully. What then? If we see this beautiful and wondrous creation itself becoming a cause of impiety

to many, shall we blame it? In no wise, but them who were unable to use the medicine rightly. Whence then is this which leads us to the knowledge of God, a cause of impiety?

"The wise" saith he "were darkened in their understandings, and worshipped and served the creature more than the creator" The Devil is nowhere here, a Demon is nowhere here, but the creation alone is set before us, as the teacher of the knowledge of God. How then has it become the cause of impiety? Not owing to its own nature, but owing to the carelessness of those who do not take heed. What then? Shall we take away even the creation? tell me.

And why do I speak about the creation? Let us come to our own members. For even these we shall find to be a cause of destruction if we do not take heed, not because of their own nature, but because of our sloth. And look; an eye was given, in order that thou mayest behold the creation and glorify the Master. But if thou dost not use the eye well, it becomes to thee the minister of adultery. A tongue has been given, in order that thou mayest speak well, in order that thou mayest praise the Creator. But if thou givest not excellent heed, it becomes a cause of blasphemy to thee. And hands were given thee that thou mayest stretch them forth unto prayer. But if thou are not wary, thou stretchest them out unto covetousness. Feet were given in order that thou mayest run unto good works, but if thou art careless thou wilt cause wicked works by means of them: Dost thou see that all things hurt the weak man? Dost thou see that even the medicines of salvation inflict death upon the weak, not because of their own nature but because of his weakness? God made the heaven in order that thou mayest wonder at the work, and worship the master. But others leaving the creator alone, have worshipped the heaven; and this from their own carelessness and senselessness. But why do I speak of the creation? assuredly what could be more conducive to salvation than the Cross?

But this Cross has become an offence to the weak. "For the word of the Cross is to them that are perishing, foolishness: but to those which are being saved, it is the power of God. And again, "we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block and unto Gentiles foolishness. What could be more fit for teaching than Paul, and the apostles? But the Apostles became a savour of death to many. He says at least "to one a savour from death unto death: to the other a savour from life unto life. Dost thou see that the weak is hurt even by Paul, but the strong is injured not even by the Devil?

4. Dost thou wish that we should exercise the argument in the case of Jesus Christ? What is equal to that salvation? what more profitable than that presence? But this very saving presence, so profitable, became an additional means of chastening to many. "For for judgment" saith he "came I into this world, that they which see not may see, and that they which see may become blind. What dost thou say? The light became a cause of blindness? The light did not become a cause of blindness, but the weakness of the eyes of the soul was not able to entertain the light. Thou hast seen that a weak man is hurt on all sides, but the strong is benefited on all sides For in every case, the purpose is the cause, in every case the disposition is master. Since the Devil, if thou wouldest understand it, is even profitable to us, if we use him aright, and benefits us greatly, and we gain no ordinary advantages;

and this, we shewed in a small degree from the case of Job. And it is possible also to learn this from Paul: for writing about the fornicator he thus speaks ”Deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved. Behold even the Devil has become a cause of salvation, but not because of his own disposition, but because of the skill of the Apostle. For as the physicians taking serpents and cutting off their destructive members, prepare medicines for antidotes;

so also did Paul. He took whatever was profitable of the chastening that proceeds from the Devil, and left the rest alone; in order that thou mayest learn that the Devil is not the cause of salvation, but that he hasted to destroy and devour mankind. But that the Apostle through his own wisdom cut his throat: hear in the second epistle to the Corinthians, what he saith about this very fornicator, ”confirm your love towards him,” ”lest by any means such an one should be swallowed up by over much sorrow. And, ”we be taken advantage of by Satan. We have snatched beforehand the man from the gullet of the wild beast, he saith. For the Apostle often used the Devil as an executioner. For the executioners punish those who have done wrong, not as they choose, but as the judges allow. For this is the rule for the executioner, to take vengeance, giving heed to the command of the judge. Dost thou see to what a dignity the Apostle mounted? He who was invested with a body, used the bodiless as an executioner; and that which their common master saith to the Devil, concerning Job: charging him thus, ”Touch his flesh, but thou shall not touch his life; giving him a limit, and measure of vengeance, in order that the wild beast might not be impetuous and leap upon him too shamelessly; this too the Apostle does.

For delivering the fornicator over to him he says ”For the destruction of the flesh,” that is ”thou shall not touch his life. Dost thou see the authority of the servant? Fear not therefore the Devil, even if he be bodiless: for he has come in contact with him. And nothing is weaker than he who has come into such contact even though he be not invested with a body, as then nothing is stronger than he who has boldness even though he bear about a mortal body.

5. All these things have been now said by me, not in order that I may discharge the Devil from blame, but that I may free you from slothfulness. For he wishes extremely to attribute the cause of our sins to himself, in order that we being nourished by these hopes, and entering on all kinds of evil, may increase the chastening in our own case, and may meet with no pardon from having transferred the cause to him. Just as Eve met with none. But let us not do this. But let us know ourselves. Let us know our wounds. For thus shall we be able to apply the medicines. For he who does not know his disease, will give no care to his weakness. We have sinned much: I know this well. For we are all liable for penalties. But we are not deprived of pardon; nor shall we fall away from repentance for we still stand in the arena, and are in the struggles of repentance. Art thou old, and hast thou come to the last outlet of life? Do not consider even thus that thou hast fallen from repentance, nor despair of thine own salvation, but consider the robber who was freed on the cross. For what was briefer than that hour in which he was crowned? Yet notwithstanding even this was enough for him, for salvation. Art thou young?

Do not be confident in thy youth, nor think that thou hast a very fixed term of life, ”For the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. On this account he has made our end invisible, in order that we might make our diligence and our forethought plain. Dost thou not see men taken away prematurely day after day? On this account a certain one admonishes ”make no tarrying to turn to the Lord and put not off from day to day,” lest at any time, as thou delayest, thou art destroyed. Let the old man keep this admonition, let the young man take this advice. Yea, art thou in security, and art thou rich, and dost thou abound in wealth, and does no affliction happen to thee? Still hear what Paul says ”when they say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them. Affairs are full of much change. We are not masters of our end. Let us be masters of virtue. Our Master Christ is loving.

6. Do you wish that I shall speak of the ways of repentance? They are many, and various, and different, and all lead to heaven. The first way of repentance is condemnation of sins. ”Declare thou first thy sins that thou mayest be justified. Wherefore also the prophet said ”I said, I will speak out, my transgression to the Lord, and thou remittedst the iniquity of my heart. Condemn thyself therefore for thy sins. This is enough for the Master by way of self-defence. For he who condemns his sins, is slower to fall into them again. Awake thy conscience, that inward accuser, in order that thou mayest have no accuser at the judgment seat of the Lord. This is one way of repentance, the best; and there is another not less than this, not to bear a grudge against thine enemies to overcome anger, to forgive the sins of our fellow-servants. For so will those which have been done against the master be forgiven us. See the second expiation of sins: ”For if ye forgive” saith he, ”your debtors, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. Dost thou wish to learn a third way of repentance? Fervent and diligent prayer, and to do this from the bottom of the heart. Hast thou not seen that widow, how she persuaded the shameless judge? But thou hast a gentle Master, both tender, and kind. She asked, against her adversaries, but thou dost not ask against thine adversaries, but on behalf of thine own salvation.

And if thou wouldest learn a fourth way, I will say almsgiving. For this has a great power and unspeakable. For Daniel saith to Nebuchadnezzar when he had come to all kinds of evil, and had entered upon all impiety, ”O King let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, redeem thy sins by almsgiving and thine iniquities by compassion on the poor. What could be compared with this lovingkindness? After countless sins, after so many transgressions, he is promised that he will be reconciled with him he has come into conflict with if he will show kindness to his own fellow-servants. And modesty, and humility, not less than all words spoken, exhaust the nature of sins. And the publican is proof, being unable to declare his good deeds, in sight of all, bringing forward his humility, and laying aside the heavy burden of his sins. See we have shewn five ways of repentance: first the condemnation of sins, next the forgiveness of our neighbours’ sins, thirdly that which comes of prayer, fourth that which comes of almsgiving, fifth that which comes of humility. Do not thou then be lazy; but walk in all these day by day. For the ways are easy, nor canst thou plead poverty.

And even if thou livest poorer than all, thou art able to leave thine anger, and be humble, and to pray fervently, and to condemn sins, and thy poverty is in no way a hindrance.

And why do I speak thus, when not even in that way of repentance in which it is possible to spend money (I speak of almsgiving), not even there is poverty any hindrance to us from obeying the command? The widow who spent the two mites is a proof. Having learned then the healing of our wounds, let us constantly apply these medicines, in order that we may return to health and enjoy the sacred table with assurance; and with much glory, reach Christ the king of glory, and attain to everlasting good by the grace, and compassion, and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom and with whom be glory, power, honour, to the Father, together with the all holy, and good and quickening Spirit, now and always and for ever and ever. Amen.

Homily 3

Resisting the Temptations of the Devil.
That evil comes of sloth, and virtue from diligence, and that neither wicked men, nor the devil himself, are able to do the wary man any harm. The proof of this from many passages, and amongst others from those which relate to Adam and to Job.

1. The day before yesterday we set on foot our sermon concerning the Devil, out of our love for you. But others, the day before yesterday while these matters were being set on foot here, took their places in the theatre, and were looking on at the Devil's show. They were taking part in lascivious songs; ye were having a share in spiritual music. They were eating of the Devil's garbage: ye were feeding on spiritual unguents. Who pray decoyed them? Who pray separated them from the sacred flock? Did the Devil pray deceive them? How did he not deceive you? you and they are men alike; I mean as regards your nature. You and they have the same soul, you have the same desires, so far as nature is concerned. How is it then that you and they were not in the same place? Because you and they have not the same purpose. On this account they indeed are under deception, but you beyond deception. I do not say these things again as discharging the Devil from accusation, but as desiring earnestly to free you from sins. The Devil is wicked; I grant this indeed, but he is wicked for himself not towards us if we are wary. For the nature of wickedness is of this kind. It is destructive to those alone who hold to it. Virtue is the contrary. It is not only able to profit those who hold to it, but those nearest at hand too. And in order that thou mayest learn that evil is evil in itself, but good is also good to others, I provide thee with proverbial evidence: "My son" saith he "if thou art become evil, thou shall bear thine evils alone, but if wise, for thyself and thy neighbour."

They were deceived in the theatre, but ye were not deceived. This is the greatest proof of things, a clear testimony, and unquestionable reasoning, that in every case, the purpose is master. Do thou accordingly use this method of proof, and if thou seest a man living in wickedness, and exhibiting all kinds of evil; then blaming the providence of God, and saying that by the necessity of fortune and fate and through tyranny of Demons He gave us our nature, and on all sides shifting the cause from himself indeed, and transferring it to the creator who provides for all; silence his speech not by word, but by deed, shewing him mother fellow servant living in virtue and forbearance. There is no need of long speeches,

no need of a complex plan, nor even of syllogisms. By means of deeds the proof is brought about. He said to him: thou art a servant, and he is a servant; thou art a man and he is a man. Thou livest in the same world: thou art nourished with the same nourishment under the same heaven: How is it that thou art living in wickedness, he in virtue? on this account God allowed the wicked to be mingled with the good; and did not give one law to the wicked indeed, and appointed another world as a colony for the good, but mixed these and those; conferring great benefit. For the good appear more thoroughly approved when they are in the midst of those who try to hinder them from living rightly, and who entice them to evil, and yet keep hold of virtue. "For there must" he saith "be also heresies among you that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."

Therefore also on this account he has left the wicked to be in the world, in order that the good may shine the brighter. Dost thou see how great is the gain? But the gain is not owing to the wicked, but owing to the courage of the good. On this account also we admire Noe, not because he was righteous nor yet because he was perfect alone, but because in that perverse and wicked generation he preserved his virtue, when he had no pattern of virtue, when all men invited him to wickedness; and he went his whole way contrary to them, like some traveller, pursuing his way while the great multitude is being borne along vehemently. On this account he did not simply say "Noe was just, perfect," but added "in his generation" in that perverse, that desperate generation, when there was no acquisition of virtue. To the good indeed then this was the gain from the wicked. Thus at all events; also trees tossed about by contrary winds, become stronger. And there is a gain to the wicked from their mixing with the good. They feel confusion, they are ashamed, they blush in their presence; and even if they do not abstain from evil, yet nevertheless they dare what they dare with secrecy. And this is no small thing not to have transgression publicly committed. For the life of the others becomes the accuser of the wickedness of these. Hear at least what they say about the righteous man.

"He is grievous to us, even when beheld," and it is no small beginning of amendment to be tormented at his presence. For if the sight of the righteous man did not torment them, this word would not have been uttered. But to be stung, and pinched in conscience at his presence, would be no little hindrance to indulging in wickedness with pleasure, Dost thou see how great is the gain both to the good from the wicked, and to the wicked from the good? On this account God has not set them apart, but allowed them to be mingled together.

2. Let our argument also about the Devil be the same. For on this account He hath left him also to be here, in order that he might render thee the stronger, in order that he may make the athlete more illustrious, in order that the contests may be greater. When therefore any one says, why has God left the Devil here? say these words to him, because he not only does no harm to the war and the heedful, but even profits them, not owing to his own purpose (for that is wicked), but owing to their courage who have used that wickedness aright. Since he even fixed upon Job not on this account that he might make him more illustrious, but in order that he might upset him. On this account he is wicked both because of such an

opinion and such a purpose. But notwithstanding he did no harm to the righteous man, but he rather rejoiced in the conflict as we accordingly shewed. Both the Demon shewed his wickedness and the righteous man his courage. But he does upset many says one: owing to their weakness, not owing to his own strength: for this too has been already proved by many examples. Direct thine own intention aright then, and thou shalt never receive harm from any, but shall get the greatest gain, not only from the good but even from the wicked.

For on this account, as I have before said, God has suffered men to be with one another, and especially the wicked with the good, in order that they may bring them over to their own virtue. Hear at least what Christ saith to his disciples, "The Kingdom of heaven is like unto a woman who took leaven and hid it in three measures of meal. So that the righteous have the power of leaven, in order that they may transfer the wicked to their own manner of conduct. But the righteous are few, for the leaven is small. But the smallness in no way injures the lump, but that little quantity converts the whole of the meal to itself by means of the power inherent in it. So accordingly the power also of the righteous has its force not in the magnitude of their number, but in the grace of the Spirit. There were twelve Apostles. Dost thou see how little is the leaven? The whole world was in unbelief. Dost thou see how great is the lump? But those twelve turned the whole world to themselves. The leaven and the lump had the same nature but not the same manner of conduct. On this account he left the wicked in the midst of the good, that since they are of the same nature as the righteous they may also become of the same purpose.

Remember these things. With these stop the mouths of the indolent, the dissolute, the slothful, the indisposed towards the labours of virtue, those who accuse their common Master. "Thou hast sinned" he saith "be still. "Do not add a second more grievous sin. It is not so grievous to sin, as after the sin to accuse the Master. Take knowledge of the cause of the sin, and thou wilt find that it is none other than thyself who hast sinned. Everywhere there is a need of a good intention. I have shewn you this not from simple reasoning only, but from the case of fellow-servants living in the world itself. Do thou also use this proof. Thus too our common master will judge us. Learn this method of proof, and no one will be able to reason with you. Is any a fornicator? Shew him another who is self-restrained. Is any covetous and rapacious? Shew him one who gives alms. Does he live in jealousy and envy? Shew him one clean from passion. Is he overcome by anger? Bring into the midst one who is living in wisdom, for we must not only have recourse to ancient example, but take our models from present times. For even to-day by the grace of God, good deeds are done not less than of old. Is a man incredulous? and does he think that the scriptures are false? Does he not believe that Job was such as he was? Shew him another man, emulating the life of that righteous person.

Thus will the Master also judge us: He places fellow servants with fellow-servants, nor does he give sentence according to his own judgment, in order that no one may begin to say again, as that servant said, who was entrusted with the talent, and who instead of a talent brought the accusation. "Thou art an austere man. For he ought to mourn, because he did

not double the talent, but rendered his sin the more grievous, by adding to his own idleness, his accusation against the Master. For what saith he? "I knew thee that thou art an austere man. O miserable, and wretched, ungrateful and lazy man! Thou oughtest to have accused thine own idleness, and to have taken away somewhat from thy former sin. But thou in bringing an account against the master hast doubled thy sin instead of doubling thy talent.

3. On this account God places together servants and servants in order that the one set may judge the other, and that some being judged by the others may not be able for the future to accuse the master. On this account, he saith "The Son of Man cometh in the glory of his Father. See the equality of the glory: he does not say in glory like to the glory of the Father, but in the glory of the Father, and will gather together all the nations. Terrible is the tribunal: terrible to the sinful, and the accountable. Since to those who are conscious to themselves of good works, it is desirable and mild. "And he will place the sheep on his right hand, and the kids on his left. Both these and those are men. For what reason then are those indeed sheep but these kids? Not that thou mayest learn a difference in their nature, but the difference in their purpose. But for what reason are the who did not show compassion kids? Because that animal is unfruitful and is not able to contribute services, either by its milk, or by progeny, or by its hair, to those who possess it, being on all sides destitute of such a contribution as this, on account of the immaturity of its age. On this account he has called those who bear no fruit, by comparison, kids, but those on the right hand sheep.

For from these the offering is great, both of their natural wool, their progeny, and their milk. What then does he say to them? "Ye saw me hungering and ye fed me, naked and ye clothed me, a stranger and ye took me in. Again to those he says the contrary. And yet both these and those were alike men, both these and those received the same promises, the same rewards were assigned to both on doing right. The same person came both to these and to those, with the same nakedness: and to these and to those with the same hunger, and in the same way and a stranger. All things were alike to those and to these.

How then was the end not the same? Because the purpose did not permit it. For this alone made the difference. On this account the one set went to Gehenna, but the other to the Kingdom. But if the Devil were the cause to them of their sins, these would not be destined to be chastened, when another sinned and drove them on. Dost thou see here both those who sin, and those who do good works? Dost thou see how on seeing their fellow-servants they were silenced? Come and let us bring our discourse to another example for thy benefit. There were ten virgins he says. Here again there are purposes which are upright, and purposes which are sinful, in order thou mayest see side by side, both the sins of the one and the good works of the others. For the comparison makes these things the plainer. And these and those were virgins; and these were five, and also those. All awaited the bridegroom. How then did some enter in, and others did not enter in? Because some indeed were churlish, and others were gentle and loving. Dost thou see again that the purpose determined the nature of the end, not the Devil? Dost thou see that the judgments were

parallel, and that the verdict given proceeds from those who are like each other? Fellow-servants will judge fellow-servants. Dost thou wish that I should shew thee a comparison arising from contrasts? for there is one also from contrasts so that the condemnation may become the greater.

"The men of Nineveh" he saith "shall rise up, and shall condemn this generation. The judged are no longer alike, for the one are barbarians, the others are Jews. The one enjoyed prophetic teaching, the others were never partakers of a divine instruction. And this is not the only difference, but the fact that in that case a servant went to them, in this the master; and that man came and proclaimed an overthrow; but this man declared the glad tidings of a kingdom of heaven. Which of these was it the more likely, would believe? The barbarians, and ignorant, and they who had never partaken of divine teaching, or they who had from their earliest age been trained in prophetic books? To every one, it is plain, that the Jews would be more likely to believe. But the contrary took place. And these disbelieved the Master when he preached a kingdom of heaven, but those believed their fellow-servant when he threatened an overthrow: in order that their goodness, and these men's folly might be manifested to a greater degree. Is there a Demon? a Devil? chance? or Fate? has not each become the cause to himself both of evil, and of virtue? For if they themselves were not to be liable to account, he would not have said that they shall judge this generation. Nor would he have said that the Queen of the South would condemn the Jews.

For then indeed not only will one people condemn another people, but one man will often judge a whole people, when they who, it is allowed, might readily have been deceived, are found to remain undeceived, and they who ought in every way to have the advantage, turn out to be worsted. On this account, we made mention of Adam and of Job, for there is necessity to revert to that subject, so as to put the finish to our discourse. He attacked Adam indeed by means of mere words, but Job by means of deeds. For the one he denuded of all his wealth, and deprived of his children. But from this man he took not away anything, great or little of his possessions. But let us rather examine the very words and the method of the plot. "The serpent came" saith he "and said to the woman, What is it that God hath said, ye shall not eat of every tree which is in the garden" Here it is a serpent; there a woman, in the case of Job: mean while great is the difference between the counsellors. The one is a servant, the other a partner of the man's life. She is a helpmate, but the other is under subjection. Dost thou see how unpardonable this is? Eve indeed, the servant in subjection deceived: but him not even his partner, and helpmate could overthrow. But let us see what he saith. "What is this that God hath said, thou shalt not eat of every tree?

Assuredly indeed God did not say this but the opposite. See the villany of the Devil. He said that which was not spoken, in order that he might learn what was spoken. What then did the woman? She ought to have silenced him, she ought not to have exchanged a word with him. In foolishness she declared the judgment of the Master. Thereby she afforded the Devil a powerful handle.

4. See what an evil it is to commit ourselves rashly to our enemies, and to conspirators against us. On this account Christ used to say, "Give not holy things to the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before the swine, lest they turn and rend you." And this happened in the case of Eve. She gave the holy things to the dog, to the swine. He trod under foot the words: and turned and rent the woman. And see how he works evil. "Ye shall not die the death" saith he.

Give me your attention on this point, that the woman was able to understand the deceit. For he immediately announced his enmity, and his warfare against God, he immediately contradicted Him. Let it be so. Before this thou declaredst the judgment to one who wished to learn it. After this why didst thou follow one who said the opposite? God said ye shall die the death. The Devil made answer to this and said "ye shall not die the death. What could be clearer than this warfare? From what other quarter ought one to learn the enemy and the foe, than from his answer returned to God? She ought then immediately to have fled from the bait, she ought to have started back from the snare. "Ye shall not die the death," saith he "for God knoweth, that on the day on which ye eat, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods. In hope of a greater promise she cast away the goods in her hand. He promised that he would make them Gods, and cast them down into the tyranny of death. Whence then O woman didst thou believe the Devil? What good didst thou discern? Was not the trustworthiness of the lawgiver sufficient to prove that the one was God, both creator and framer of the world, and the other the Devil and an enemy? And I do not say the Devil. Thou thoughtest that he was a mere serpent.

Ought a serpent to claim such equality that thou shouldest tell him the Master's judgment? Thou seest that it was possible to perceive the deceit, but she would not, and yet God gave many proofs of his own beneficence and shewed forth his care of his works. For he formed man, who had not existed before; and breathed a soul into him, and made him according to his image, making him ruler of all things upon the earth, and granted him a helpmate, planted Paradise, and having committed to him the use of the rest of the trees, refused him the taste of one only: and this very prohibition he made for man's advantage. But the Devil manifested no good things by his deed, whether little, or great: but exciting the woman with mere words and puffing her up with vain hopes, thus he deceived her. But nevertheless she considered the Devil to be more worthy of credit than God, although God shewed forth his good will by his works. The woman believed in one who professed mere words, and nothing else. Dost thou see how, from folly alone and sloth, and not from force, the deceit happened? and in order that thou mayest learn it more clearly hear how the scripture accuses the woman: For it does not say, being deceived, but "seeing the tree that it was fair, she ate. So that the blame belongs to her uncontrolled vision, not to the deceit alone which comes from the Devil.

For she was defeated by yielding to her own desire, not by the wickedness. of the Demon. On this count she did not have the benefit of pardon, but though she said, "the serpent deceived me," she paid the uttermost penalty. For it was in her power not to have fallen. And in

order that thou mayest understand this more clearly, come, let us conduct our discourse to the case of Job; from the defeated to the vanquisher, from the conquered to the conqueror. For this man will give us greater zeal, so that we may raise our hands against the Devil. There he who deceived and conquered was a serpent; here the tempter was a woman, and she did not prevail: and yet at least she was far more persuasive than he. For to Job after the destruction of his wealth, after the loss of his children, after being stripped bare of all his goods, her wiles were added. But in the other case there was nothing of this kind. Adam did not suffer the destruction! of his children, nor did he lose his wealth: he did not sit upon a dunghill, but inhabited a Paradise of luxury and enjoyed all manner of fruits, and fountains and rivers, and every other kind of security. Nowhere was there labour or pain, or despair and cares, or reproaches, and insults, or the countless ills which assailed Job: but nevertheless, when nothing of this kind existed, he fell and was overthrown. Is it not evident that it was on account of sloth?

Even so therefore as the other, when all these things beset him, and weighed upon him, stood nobly and did not fall, is it not evident that his steadfastness was owing to his vigilance of soul?

5. On both sides, beloved, reap the utmost gain, and avoid the imitation of Adam knowing how many ills are begotten of indolence: and imitate the piety of Job, learning how many glorious things spring from earnestness. Consider him, the conqueror throughout, and thou shall have much consolation in all pain: and peril. For as it were in the common theatre of the world that blessed and noble man stands forth, and by means of the sufferings which happened to him discourses to all to bear all things which befal them nobly, and never give in to the troubles which come upon them. For verily, there is no human suffering which cannot receive consolation from thence. For the sufferings which are scattered over the whole world, these came together, and bore down upon one body, even his. What pardon then shall there be for him who is unable to bear with thankfulness his share of the troubles which are brought upon him? Since he appears not bearing a part only, but the entire ills of all men, and in order that thou mayest not condemn the extravagance of my words, come, and let us take in hand severally the ills that came upon him, and bring forward this fulfilment of them. And if thou wishest, let us first bring forward that which seems to be the most unendurable of all, I mean poverty, and the pain which arises from it. For everywhere all men bewail this.

What was poorer then than Job, who was poorer than the outcasts at the baths, and those who sleep in the ashes of the furnace, poorer in fact than all men? For these indeed have one ragged garment, but he sat naked, and had only the garment which nature supplies, the clothing of the flesh, and this the Devil destroyed on all sides, with a distressing kind of decay. Again these poor folk are at least under the roof of the porches at the baths, and are covered with a shelter. But he continued always to pass his nights in the open air, not having even the consolation of a bare roof. And, what is still greater, the fact that these are conscious of many terrible evils within themselves, but he was conscious of nothing

against himself. For this is to be noticed in each of the things which happened to him, a thing which caused him greater pain, and produced more perplexity; the ignorance of the reason of what took place. These persons then, as I said, would have many things with which to reproach themselves. And this contributes no little to consolation in calamity; to be conscious in oneself of being punished justly. But he was deprived of this consolation, and while exhibiting a conversation full of virtue, endured the fate of those who had dared to do extreme wickedness. And these folk who are with us, are poor from the outset, and from the beginning are versed in calamity.

But he endured calamity in which he was unversed, experiencing the immense change from wealth. As then the knowledge of the cause of what takes place, is the greatest consolation; so it is not less than this, to have been versed in poverty from the beginning, and so to continue in it. Of both these consolations that man was deprived, and not even then, did he fall away. Dost thou see him indeed come to extreme poverty, even in comparison with which it is impossible to find a fellow? For what could be poorer than the naked who has not even a roof over him? Yea rather not even was it in his power to enjoy the bare ground, but he sat upon the dunghill. Therefore whenever thou seest thyself come to poverty, consider the suffering of the just one, and straightway thou shalt rise up, and shake off every thought of despondency. This one calamity therefore seems to men to be the groundwork of all sufferings together. And the second after it, yea rather before it, is the affliction of the body. Who then was even so disabled? Who endured such disease? Who received or saw any one else receive so great an affliction? No one.

Little by little his body was wasted, and a stream of worms on every side issued from his limbs, the running was constant, and the evil smell which surrounded him was strong, and the body being destroyed little by little, and decaying with such putrefaction, used to make food distasteful and hunger was to him strange and unusual. For not even was he able to enjoy the nourishment which was given to him. For saith he ”I see my food to be loathsome. Whenever then thou fallest into weakness, O man, remember that body and that saintly flesh. For it was saintly and pure, even when it had so many wounds. And if any one belong to the army, and then unjustly and without any reasonable pretext, be hanged upon the pillory, and has his sides rasped to pieces, let him not think the matter to be a reproach, nor let him give way to the pain when he thinks upon this saint. But this man, says one, has much comfort and consolation in knowing that God was bringing these sufferings upon him. This indeed especially troubled and disturbed him, to think that the just God who had in every way been served By him, was at war with him.

And he was not able to find any reasonable pretext for what took place, since, when at least he afterwards learned the cause, see what piety he shewed, for when God said to him ”Dost thou think that I have had dealings with thee in order that thou mightest appear righteous? conscious-stricken he says ”I will lay my hand upon my mouth, once have I spoken but to a second word I will not proceed,” and again ”as far as the hearing of the ear I have heard

thee before, but now mine eye hath seen thee, wherefore I have held myself to be vile, and am wasted away, and I consider myself to be earth and ashes."

6. But if thou thinkest that this is sufficient for consolation, thou wilt thyself also be able to experience this comfort. And even if thou dost not suffer any of these misfortunes at the hands of God but owing to the insolence of men; and yet givest thanks and dost not blaspheme him who is able to prevent them indeed, but who permits them for the sake of testing thee: just as they who suffer at the hands of God are crowned, so also thou shalt obtain the same reward, because thou hast borne nobly the calamities which were brought upon thee from men, and didst give thanks to him who was able indeed to hinder them, but not willing.

Behold then! thou hast seen poverty and disease, and both in the extremest degree brought upon this just man. Dost thou wish that I should shew thee the warfare at nature's hands, in such excessive degree waged then against this noble man? He lost ten children, the ten at one fell swoop, the ten in the very bloom of youth, ten who displayed much virtue, and that not by the common law of nature, but by a violent and pitiable death. Who could be able to recount so great a calamity? No one. Whenever therefore thou losest son and daughter together, have recourse to this just man, and thou shalt find altogether much comfort for thyself. Were these then the only misfortunes which happened to him? The desertion and treachery of his friends, and the gibes, and raillery, and the mockery and derision, and the tearing in pieces by all, was something intolerable. For the character of calamities is not of such a kind, that they who reproach us about our calamities are wont to vex our soul. Not only was there no one to soothe him but many even on many sides beset him with taunts. And thou seest him lamenting this bitterly, and saying "but even you too fell upon me. And he calls them pitiless, and says "My neighbours have rejected me, and my servants spake against me, and I called the sons of my concubines, and they turned away from me. "And others" saith he "sport upon me, and I became the common talk of all.

And my very raiment" saith he "abhorred me" These things at least are unbearable to hear, still more to endure in their reality, extreme poverty, and intolerable disease new and strange, the loss of children so many and so good, and in such a manner, reproaches and gibes, and insults from men. Some indeed mocked and some reproached and others despised; not only enemies, but even friends; not only friends, but even servants, and they not only mock and reproach, but even abhorred him, and this not for two or three, or ten days, but for many months; and (a circumstance which happened in that man's case alone) not even had he comfort by night, but the delusions of terrors by night were a greater aggravation of his misfortunes by day. For that he endured more grievous things in his sleep, hear what he says "why dost thou frighten me in sleep, and terrify me in visions? What man of iron what heart of steel could have endured so many misfortunes? For if each of these was unbearable in itself, consider what a tumult their simultaneous approach excited. But nevertheless he bore all these, and in all that happened to him he sinned not, nor was there guile in his lips.

7. Let the sufferings of that man then be the medicines for our ills, and his grievous surging sea the harbour of our sufferings, and in each of the accidents which befal us, let us consider this saint, and seeing one person exhausting the misfortunes of the universe, we shall conduct ourselves bravely in those which fall to our share, and as to some affectionate mother, stretching forth her hands on all sides, and receiving and reviving her terrified children, so let us always flee to this book, and even if the pitiable troubles of all men assail us, let us take sufficient comfort for all and so depart. And if thou sayest, he was Job, and for this reason bore all this, but I am not like him; thou suppliest me with a greater accusation against thyself and fresh praise of him. For it is more likely that thou shouldest be able to bear all this than he. Why pray? Because he indeed was before the day of grace and of the law, when there was not much strictness of life, when the grace of the Spirit was not so great, when sin was hard to fight against, when the curse prevailed and when death was terrible. But now our wrestlings have become easier, all these things being removed after the coming of Christ; so that we have no excuse, when we are unable to reach the same standard as he, after so long a time, and such advantage, and so many gifts given to us by God.

Considering therefore all these things, that misfortunes were greater for him, and that when the conflict was more grievous, then he stripped for the contest; let us bear all that comes upon us nobly, and with much thankfulness, in order that we may be able to obtain the same crown as he, by the grace and lovingkindness of Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom be glory to the Father together with the Holy Spirit, now and always and for ever and ever. 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.