

Exposition on Psalm 59

by St. Augustine

The Psalmist cries out to God for deliverance from his enemies, and calls on those who work iniquity to be converted and those who are strong to be made weak.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 19:11, Matthew 27:37, John 19:21, Acts 7:58, Romans 5:20, Romans 9:22, Romans 11:25, 2 Corinthians 12:10, Ephesians 2:20, Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 12:6

Topics: "Humility And Pride", "Repentance And Mercy"

Description

St. Augustine preaches about the conversion of the Jews and Gentiles, highlighting the importance of humility and the dangers of pride. He discusses the sins of the Jews, their blindness to Christ, and the need for confession and repentance. St. Augustine emphasizes the mercy and grace of God, the power of humility, and the unity of believers from different backgrounds in the Church. He encourages believers to rely on God's strength, confess their sins, and seek perfection through humility and faith.

Transcript

The First Part.

1. As the Scripture is wont to set mysteries of the Psalms on the titles, and to deck the brow of a Psalm with the high announcement of a Mystery, in order that we that are about to go in may know (when as it were upon the door-post we have read what within is doing) either of whom the house is, or who is the owner of that estate: so also in this Psalm there has been written a title, of a title. For it has, At the end, corrupt not for David himself unto the inscription of the title. This is that which I have spoken of, title of Title. For what the inscription of this title is, which to be corrupted he forbids, the Gospel to us does indicate. For when the Lord was being crucified, a title by Pilate was inscribed and set, King of the Jews, Matthew 27:37 in three tongues, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin: John 19:20 which tongues in the whole world mostly do prevail....Therefore corrupt not is most proper and prophetic; since indeed even those Jews made suggestion at that time to Pilate, and said, Do not write King of the Jews, but write, that Himself said that He was King of the Jews: John 19:21 for this title, say they, has established Him King over us. And Pilate, What I have written, I have written. And there was fulfilled, corrupt not.

2. Nor is this the only Psalm which has an inscription of such sort, that the Title be not corrupted. Several Psalms thus are marked on the face, but however in all the Passion of the Lord is foretold. Therefore here also let us perceive the Lord's Passion, and let there speak to us Christ, Head and Body. So always, or nearly always, let us hear the words of Christ from the Psalm, as that we look not only upon that Head, the

one mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 2:5 ...But let us think of Christ, Head and whole Body, a sort of entire Man. For to us is said, But you are the Body of Christ and members, 1 Corinthians 12:27 by the Apostle Paul. If therefore He is Head, we Body; whole Christ is Head and Body. For sometimes you find words which do not suit the Head, and unless you shall have attached them to the Body, your understanding will waver: again you find words which are proper for the Body, and Christ nevertheless is speaking. In that place we must have no fear lest a man be mistaken: for quickly he proceeds to adapt to the Head, that which he sees is not proper for the Body....

3. Let us hear, therefore, what follows: When Saul sent and guarded his house in order that he might kill him. This though not to the Cross of the Lord, yet to the Passion of the Lord does belong. For Crucified was Christ, and dead, and buried. That sepulchre was therefore as it were the house: to guard which the government of the Jews sent, when guards were set to the sepulchre of Christ. Matthew 27:66 There is indeed a story in the Scripture of the Reigns, of the occasion when Saul sent to guard the house in order that he might kill David. 1 Samuel 19:11 ...But in like manner as Saul effected not his purpose of slaying David: so this could not the government of the Jews effect, that the testimony of guards sleeping should avail more than that of Apostles watching. For what were the guards instructed to say? We give to you, they say, as much money as you please; and say ye, that while you were sleeping there came His disciples, and took Him away. Behold what sort of witnesses of falsehood against truth and the Resurrection of Christ, His enemies, through Saul figured, did produce. Enquire, O unbelief, of sleeping witnesses, let them reply to you of what was done in the tomb. Who, if they were sleeping, whence knew it? If watching, wherefore detained they not the thieves? Let him say therefore what follows.

4. Deliver me from mine enemies, my God, and from men rising up upon me, redeem Thou me Psalm 58:1. There has been done this thing in the flesh of Christ, it is being done in us also. For our enemies, to wit the devil and his angels, cease not to rise up upon us every day, and to wish to make sport of our weakness and our frailness, by deceptions, by suggestions, by temptations, and by snares of whatsoever sort to entangle us, while on earth we are still living. But let our voice watch unto God, and cry out in the members of Christ, under the Head that is in heaven, Deliver me from mine enemies, my God, and from men rising up upon me, redeem Thou me.

5. Deliver me from men working iniquity, and from men of bloods, save Thou me Psalm 58:2. They indeed were men of bloods, who slew the Just One, in whom no guilt they found: they were men of bloods, because when the foreigner washed his hands, and would have let go Christ, they cried, Crucify, Crucify: Matthew 27:23 they were men of bloods, on whom when there was being charged the crime of the blood of Christ, they made answer, giving it to their posterity to drink, His blood be upon us and upon our sons. Matthew 27:25 But neither against His Body did men of bloods cease to rise up; for even after the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, the Church suffered persecutions, and she indeed first that grew out of the Jewish people, of which also our Apostles were. There at first Stephen was stoned, Acts 7:58 and received that of which he had his name. For Stephanus does signify a crown. Lowly stoned but highly crowned. Secondly, among the Gentiles rose up kingdoms of Gentiles, before that in them was fulfilled that which had been foretold, There shall adore Him all the kings of the earth, all nations shall serve Him: and there roared the fierceness of that kingdom against the witnesses of Christ: there was shed largely and frequently the blood of Martyrs: wherewith when it had been shed, being as it were sown, the field of the Church more productively put forth, and filled the whole world as we now behold. From these therefore, men of bloods, is delivered Christ, not only Head, but also Body. From men of bloods is delivered Christ, both from them that have been, and from them that are, and from them that are to be;

there is delivered Christ, both He that has gone before, and He that is, and He that is to come. For Christ is the whole Body of Christ; and whatsoever good Christians that now are, and that have been before us, and that after us are to be, are an whole Christ, who is delivered from men of bloods; nor is this voice void, And from men of bloods save Thou me.

6. For behold they have hunted my soul....There have rushed upon me strong men Psalm 58:3. We must not however pass on from these strong men: diligently we must trace who are the strong men rising up. Strong men, upon whom but upon weak men, upon powerless men, upon men not strong? And praised nevertheless are the weak men, and condemned are the strong men. If it would be perceived who are strong men, at first the devil himself the Lord has called a strong man: No one, He says, is able to go into the house of a strong man, and to carry off his vessels, unless first he shall have bound the strong man.

Matthew 12:29 He has bound therefore the strong man with the chains of His dominion: and his vessels He has carried off, and His own vessels has made them. For all unrighteous men were vessels of the devil....But there are among mankind certain strong men of a blameable and damnable strength, that are confident indeed, but on temporal felicity. That man does not seem to you to have been strong, of whom now from the Gospel Luke 12:16 has been read: how his estate brought forth abundance of fruits, and he being troubled, hit upon the design of rebuilding, so that, having pulled down his old barns, he should construct new ones more capacious, and, these having been finished, should say to his soul, You have many good things, soul, feast, be merry, be filled....There are also other men strong, not because of riches, not because of the powers of the body, not because of any temporally pre-eminent power of station, but relying on their righteousness.

This sort of strong men must be guarded against, feared, repulsed, not imitated: of men relying, I say, not on body, not on means, not on descent, not on honour; for all such things who would not see to be temporal, fleeting, falling, flying? But relying on their own righteousness....Wherefore, say they, does your Master eat with publicans and sinners? Matthew 9:11 O you strong men, to whom a Physician is not needful! This strength to soundness belongs not, but to insanity. For even than men frenzied nothing can be stronger, more mighty they are than whole men: but by how much greater their powers are, by so much nearer is their death.

May God therefore turn away from our imitation these strong men....The same are therefore the strong men, that assailed Christ, commending their own justice. Hear ye these strong men: when certain men of Jerusalem were speaking, having been sent by them to take Christ, and not daring to take Him (because when he would, then was He taken, that truly was strong): Why therefore, say they, could ye not take Him? And they made answer, No one of men did ever so speak as He. And these strong men, Hath by any means any one of the Pharisees believed on Him, or any one of the Scribes, but this people knowing not the Law?

John 7:45-49 They preferred themselves to the sick multitude, that was running to the Physician: whence but because they were themselves strong? And what is worse, by their strength, all the multitude also they brought over unto themselves, and slew the Physician of all....

7. What next? Neither iniquity is mine, nor sin mine, O Lord Psalm 58:4. There have rushed on indeed strong men on their own righteousness relying, they have rushed on, but sin in me they have not found. For truly those strong men, that is, as it were righteous men, on what account would they be able to persecute Christ, unless it were as if a sinner? But, however, let them look to it how strong they be, in the

raging of fever not in the vigour of soundness: let them look to it how strong they be, and how as though just against an unrighteous man they have raged. But, however, neither iniquity is mine, nor sin mine, O Lord. Without iniquity I did run, and I was guided. Those strong men therefore could not follow me running: therefore a sinner they have deemed me, because my steps they have not seen.

8. Without iniquity I did run, and was guided; rise up to meet me, and see. To God is said this. But why? If He meet not, is He unable to see? It is just as if you were walking in a road, and from afar by some one you could not be recognised, you would call to him and would say, Meet me, and see how I am walking; for when from afar you espy me, my steps you are not able to see. So also unless God were to meet, would He not see how without iniquity he was guided, and how without sin he was running? This interpretation indeed we can also accept, namely, Rise up to meet me, as if help me. But that which he has added, and see, must be understood as, make it to be seen that I run, make it to be seen that I am guided: according to that figure wherein this also has been said to Abraham, Now I know that you fear God. Genesis 22:12 God says, Now I know: whence, but because I have made you to know? For unknown to himself every one is before the questioning of temptation: just as of himself Peter Matthew 26:35-69 in his confidence was ignorant, and by denying learned what kind of powers he had, in his very stumbling he perceived that it was falsely he had been confident: he wept, and in weeping he earned profitably to know what he was, and to be what he was not. Therefore Abraham when tried, became known to himself: and it was said by God, Now I know, that is, now I have made you to know. In like manner as glad is the day because it makes men glad; and sad is bitterness because it makes sad one tasting thereof: so God's seeing is making to see. Rise up, therefore, he says, to meet me, and see Psalm 58:5. What is, and see? And help me, that is, in those men, in order that they may see my course, may follow me; let not that seem to them to be crooked which is straight, let not that seem to them to be curved which keeps the rule of truth.

9. Something else I am admonished to say in this place of the loftiness of our Head Himself: for He was made weak even unto death, and He took on Him the weakness of flesh, in order that the chickens of Jerusalem He might gather under His wings, like a hen showing herself weak with her little ones. Matthew 23:37 For have we not observed this thing in some bird at some time or other, even in those which build nests before our eyes, as the house-sparrows, as swallows, so to speak, our annual guests, as storks, as various sorts of birds, which before our eyes build nests, and hatch eggs, feed chickens, as the very doves which daily we see; and some bird to become weak with her chickens, have we not known, have we not looked upon, have we not seen? In what way does a hen experience this weakness? Surely a known fact I am speaking of, which in our sight is daily taking place. How her voice grows hoarse, how her whole body is made languid? The wings droop, the feathers are loosened, and you see around the chickens some sick thing, and this is maternal love which is found as weakness. Why was it therefore, but for this reason, that the Lord willed to be as a Hen, saying in the Holy Scripture, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often have I willed to gather your sons, even as a hen her chickens under her wings, and you have not been willing. But He has gathered all nations, like as a hen her chickens....

10. And You, Lord God of virtues, God of Israel. Thou God of Israel, that art thought to be but God of one nation, which worships You, when all nations worship idols, Thou God of Israel, Give heed unto the visiting all nations. Fulfilled be that prophecy wherein Isaiah in Your person speaks to Your Church, Your holy City, that barren one of whom many more are the sons of Her forsaken than of her that has a husband. To Her indeed has been said, Rejoice, you barren, that bear not, Isaiah 54:1 etc., more than of the Jewish nation which has a Husband, which has received the Law, more than of that nation which had a visible

king. For your king is hidden, and more sons to you there are by a hidden Bridegroom....The Prophet adds, Enlarge the place of Your tabernacle, and Your courts fix thou: there is no cause for you to spare, extend further your cords, and strong stakes set thou again and again on the right and on the left. Isaiah 54:2 Upon the right keep good men, on the left keep evil men, Matthew 25:33 until there come the fan: Matthew 3:12 occupy nevertheless all nations; bidden to the marriage be good men and evil men, filled be the marriage with guests; Matthew 22:9 it is the office of servants to bid, of the Lord to sever. Cities which had been forsaken You shall inhabit: Isaiah 54:3 forsaken of God, forsaken of Prophets, forsaken of Apostles, forsaken of the Gospel, full of demons. For You shall prevail; and blush not because abominable You have been. Therefore though there have risen up upon you strong men, blush not: when against the name of Christ laws were enacted, when ignominy and infamy it was to be a Christian. Blush not because abominable You have been: for confusion for everlasting You shall forget, of the ignominy of Your widowhood You shall not be mindful....

11. Have not pity upon all men that work iniquity. Here evidently He is terrifying. Whom would He not terrify? What man falling back upon his own conscience would not tremble? Which even if to itself it is conscious of godliness, strange if it be not in some sort conscious of iniquity. For whosoever does sin, also does iniquity. 1 John 3:4 For if You shall have marked iniquities, O Lord, what man shall abide it? And nevertheless a true saying it is, and not said to no purpose, and neither is nor will it be possible to be void, Have not pity upon all men that work iniquity. But He had pity even upon Paul, who at first as Saul wrought iniquity. For what good thing did he, whence he might deserve of God? Did he not hate His Saints unto death? Acts 9:1 did he not bear letters from the chief of the priests, to the end that wheresoever he might find Christians, to punishment he should hurry them? When bent upon this, when there proceeding, breathing and panting slaughter, as the Scripture testified of him, was he not from Heaven with a mighty voice summoned, thrown down, raised up; blinded, lightened; slain, made alive; destroyed, restored? In return for what merit? Let us say nothing; himself rather let us hear: I that before have been, he says, a blasphemer, and persecutor; and injurious, but mercy I have obtained. 1 Timothy 1:13 Surely You would not have pity upon all men that work iniquity: this in two ways may be understood: either that in fact not any sins does God leave unpunished; or that there is a sort of iniquity, on the workers whereof God has indeed no pity.

12. All iniquity, be it little or great, punished must needs be, either by man himself repenting, or by God avenging. For even he that repents punishes himself. Therefore, brethren, let us punish our own sins, if we seek the mercy of God. God cannot have mercy on all men working iniquity as if pandering to sins, or not rooting out sins. In a word, either you punish, or He punishes....

13. But let us see now another way in which this sentence may be understood. There is a certain iniquity, on the worker whereof it cannot be that God have mercy. You enquire, perchance, what that is? It is the defending of sins. When a man defends his sins, great iniquity he works: that thing he is defending which God hates. And see how perversely, how iniquitously. Whatever of good he has done, to himself he would have it to be ascribed; whatever of evil, to God. For in this manner men defend sins in the person of God, which is a worse sin....Therefore you defend your sin in such sort, that you lay blame on God. So the guilty is excused, so that the Judge may be charged. However on men working iniquity God has no pity at all.

14. Let them be converted at the evening Psalm 58:6. Of certain men he is speaking that were once workers of iniquity, and once darkness, being converted in the evening. What is, in the evening? Afterward. What is at the evening? Later. For before, before that they crucified Christ, they ought to have acknowledged their Physician. Wherefore, when He had been crucified-- rising again, into Heaven

ascending-- after that He sent His Holy Spirit, wherewith were fulfilled they that were in one house, and they began to speak with the tongues of all nations, there feared the crucifiers of Christ; they were pricked through with their consciences, they besought counsel of safety from the Apostles, they heard, Repent, and be baptized each one of you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and your sins shall be remitted unto you.

Acts 2:38 After the slaying of Christ, after the shedding of the blood of Christ, remitted are your sins....Let these be converted, therefore, they also at evening. Let them yearn for the grace of God, perceive themselves to be sinners; let those strong men be made weak, those rich men be made poor, those just men acknowledge themselves sinners, those lions be made dogs. Let them be converted at evening, and suffer hunger as dogs. And they shall go around the city. What city?

That world, which in certain places the Scripture calls the city of standing round: that is, because in all nations everywhere the world had encompassed the one nation of Jews, where such words were being spoken, and it was called the city of standing round. Around this city shall go those men, now having become hungry dogs. In what manner shall they go around? By preaching. Saul out of a wolf was made a dog at evening, that is, being late converted by the crumbs of his Lord, in His grace he ran, and went around the city. 15.

Behold, themselves shall speak in their mouth, and a sword is on the lips of them Psalm 58:7. Here is that sword twice whetted, whereof the Apostle says, And the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Ephesians 6:17 Wherefore twice whetted? Wherefore, but because smiting out of both Testaments? With this sword were slain those whereof it was said to Peter, Slay, and eat. Acts 10:13 And a sword is on the lips of them. For who has heard? They all speak in their mouth, Who has heard?

That is, they shall be angry with men that are slow to believe. They that a little before were even themselves unwilling to believe, do feel disgust from men not believing. And truly, brethren, so it is. You see a man slow before he is made a Christian; you cry to him daily, hardly he is converted: suppose him to be converted, and then he would have all men to be Christians, and wonders that not yet they are. It has chanced out to him at evening to have been converted: but because he has been made hungering like a dog, he has also on his lips a sword; he says, Who has heard?

What is, Who has heard? Who has believed our hearing, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Isaiah 53:1 For who has heard? The Jews believe not: they have turned them to the nations, and have preached. The Jews did not believe; and nevertheless through believing Jews the Gospel went around the city, and they said, For who has heard? And You, Lord, shall deride them Psalm 58:8. All nations are to be Christian, and you say, Who has heard? What is, shall deride them? As nothing You shall esteem all nations. Nothing for You it shall be; because a most easy thing it will be for all nations to believe in You.

16. My strength to You I will keep Psalm 58:9. For those strong men have fallen for this reason; because their strength to You they have not kept: that is, they that upon me have risen up and rushed, on themselves have relied. But I my strength to You will keep: because if I withdraw, I fall; if I draw near, stronger I am made. For see, brethren, what there is in a human soul. It has not of itself light, has not of itself powers: but all that is fair in a soul, is virtue and wisdom: but it neither is wise for itself, nor strong for itself, nor itself is light to itself, nor itself is virtue to itself. There is a certain origin and fountain of virtue, there is a certain root of wisdom, there is a certain, so to speak, if this also must be said, region of

unchangeable truth: from this the soul withdrawing is made dark, drawing near is made light. Draw near to Him, and be made light: because by withdrawing you are made dark. Therefore, my strength, I will keep to You: not from You will I withdraw, not on myself will I rely. My strength, to You I will keep: because, O God, my lifter up You are. For where was I, and where am I? Whence have You taken me up? What iniquities of mine have You remitted? Where was I lying? To what have I been raised up? I ought to have remembered these things: because in another Psalm is said, For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord has taken me unto Him.

17. My God, the mercy of Him shall come before me Psalm 58:10. Behold what is, My strength, to You I will keep: on myself I will in no ways at all rely. For what good thing have I brought, that you should have mercy on me, and should justify me? What in me have You found, save sins alone? Of Yours there is nothing else but the nature which Thou hast created: the other things are my own evil things which You have blotted out. I have not first risen up to You, but to awake me You have come: for His mercy shall come before me. Before that anything of good I shall do, His mercy shall come before me. What answer here shall the unhappy Pelagius make? My God has shown to me among mine enemies Psalm 58:11. How great mercy He has put forth concerning me, among mine enemies He has showed. Let one gathered compare himself with men forsaken, and one elect with men rejected: let the vessel of mercy compare itself with the vessels of wrath; and let it see how out of one lump God has made one vessel unto honour, another unto dishonour.

For so God, willing to show wrath, and to manifest His power, has brought in, in much patience, the vessels of wrath, which have been perfected unto perdition. Romans 9:22 And wherefore this? In order that He might make known His riches upon the vessels of mercy. If therefore vessels of wrath He has brought in, wherein He might make known His riches upon the vessels of mercy, most rightly has been said, His mercy shall come before me: My God has showed to me among mine enemies: that is however great mercy He has had concerning me, to me He has showed it among these men concerning whom He has not had mercy. For unless the debtor be in suspense, he is less grateful to him by whom the debt has been forgiven. My God has showed to me among mine enemies.

18. But of the enemies themselves what? Slay them not, lest sometime they forget Your law. He is making request for his enemies, he is fulfilling the commandment....Slay not them of whom the sins Thou slayest. But what is it to be slain? To forget the law of the Lord. It is real death, to go into the pit of sin; this indeed may be also understood of the Jews. Why of the Jews, Slay not them, lest sometime they forget Your law? Those very enemies of mine, that have slain me, do not Thou slay. Let the nation of the Jews remain: certes conquered it has been by the Romans, certes effaced is the city of them, Jews are not admitted into their city, and yet Jews there are. For all those provinces by the Romans have been subjugated. Who now can distinguish the nations in the Roman empire the one from the other, inasmuch as all have become Romans and all are called Romans? The Jews nevertheless remain with a mark; nor in such sort conquered have they been, as that by the conquerors they have been swallowed up. Not without reason is there that Cain, on whom, when he had slain his brother, God set a mark in order that no one should slay him. Genesis 4:15 This is the mark which the Jews have: they hold fast by the remnant of their law, they are circumcised, they keep Sabbaths, they sacrifice the Passover; they eat unleavened bread. These are therefore Jews, they have not been slain, they are necessary to believing nations. Why so? In order that He may show to us among our enemies His mercy. My God has shown to me in mine enemies. He shows His mercy to the wild-olive grafted on branches that have been cut off because of pride. Behold where they lie, that were proud, behold where you have been grafted, that lied: and be not proud, lest you should

deserve to be cut off.

19. Scatter them abroad in Your virtue Psalm 58:11. Now this thing has been done: throughout all nations there have been scattered abroad the Jews, witnesses of their own iniquity and our truth. They have themselves writings, out of which has been prophesied Christ, and we hold Christ. And if sometime perchance any heathen man shall have doubted, when we have told him the prophecies of Christ, at the clearness whereof he is amazed, and wondering has supposed that they were written by ourselves, then out of the copies of the Jews we prove, how this thing so long time before had been foretold. See after what sort by means of our enemies we confound other enemies. Scatter them abroad in Your virtue: take away from them virtue, take away from them their strength. And bring them down, my protector, O Lord. The transgressions of their mouth, the discourse of their lips: and let them be taken in their pride: and out of cursing and lying shall be declared consummations, in the anger of consummation, and they shall not be Psalm 58:12. Obscure words these are, and I fear lest they be not well instilled....

The Second Part.

1. For, behold, the Jews are enemies, whom this Psalm seems to imply; the law of God they hold, and therefore of them has been said, Slay not them, lest sometime they forget Your law: in order that the nation of Jews might remain, and by it remaining the number of Christians might increase. Throughout all nations they remain certainly, and Jews they are, nor have they ceased to be what they were: that is, this nation has not so yielded to Roman institutions, as to have lost the form of Jews; but has been subjected to the Romans so as that it still retains its own laws; which are the laws of God. But what in their case has been done? You tithe mint and cummin, and have forsaken the weightier matters of the law, mercy, and judgment, straining a gnat, but swallowing a camel. Matthew 23:23-24 This to them the Lord says. And in truth so they are; they hold the law, hold the Prophets; read all things, sing all things: the light of the Prophets therein they see not, which is Christ Jesus. Not only Him now they see not, when he is sitting in Heaven: but not even at that time saw they Him, when among them humble He was walking, and they were made guilty by shedding the blood of the Same; but not all. This even today we commend to the notice of your Love. Not all: because many of them were turned to Him whom they slew, and by believing on Him, they obtained pardon even for the shedding of His blood: and they have given an example for men; how they ought not to despair that sin of whatsoever kind would be remitted to them, since even the killing of Christ was remitted to them confessing....

2. What in them will You slay? The Crucify, Crucify, which they cried out, not them that cried out. For they willed to blot out, cut off, destroy Christ: but Thou, by raising to life Christ, whom they willed to destroy, dost slay the transgressions of their mouth, the discourse of their lips. For in that He whom they cried out should be destroyed, lives, they are taken with dread: and that He whom on earth they despised, in heaven is adored by all nations, they wonder: thus are there slain the transgressions of them, and the discourse of their lips. What is, let them be taken in their pride? Because to no purpose have strong men rushed on, and it has fallen out to them as it were to think themselves to have done somewhat, and they have prevailed against the Lord. They were able to crucify a man, weakness might prevail and virtue be slain; and they thought themselves somewhat, as it were strong men, as it were mighty men, as it were prevailing, as it were a lion prepared for prey, as it were fat bulls, as of them in another place he makes mention: Fat bulls have beset me. But what have they done in the case of Christ? Not life, but death they have slain....And what now has come to pass in those men that have been converted? For it was told to them that He whom they slew rose again. They believed Him to have risen again, because they saw that He, being in Heaven, thence sent the Holy Spirit, and filled those that on Him believed; and they found

themselves to have condemned nought, and to have done nought. Their doing issued in emptiness, the sin remained. Because therefore the doing was made void, but the sin remained upon the doers; they were taken in their pride, they saw themselves under their iniquity. It remained therefore for them to confess the sin, and for Him to pardon, that had given Himself up to sinners, and to forgive His death, having been slain by men dead, and making alive men dead. They were taken therefore in their pride.

3. And out of cursing and lying shall be declared consummations, in anger of consummation, and they shall not be. This too with difficulty is understood, to what is joined the and they shall not be. What shall they not be? Let us therefore examine the context above: when they shall have been taken in their pride, there shall be declared out of cursing and lying consummations. What are consummations? Perfections: for to be consummated, is to be perfected. One thing it is to be consummated, another thing to be consumed. For a thing is consummated which is so finished as that it is perfected: a thing is consumed which is so finished that it is not. Pride would not suffer a man to be perfected, nothing so much hinders perfection. For let your Love attend a little to what I am saying; and see an evil very pernicious, very much to be guarded against. What sort of evil do ye think it is? How long could I enlarge upon how much evil there is in pride? The devil on that account alone is to be punished. Certes he is the chief of all sinners: certes he is the tempter to sin: to him is not ascribed adultery, not wine-bibbing, not fornication, not the robbing of others' goods: by pride alone he fell. And since pride's companion is envy, it must needs be that a proud man should envy....In a word, all vices in evil-doings are to be feared, pride in well-doings is more to be feared. It is no wonder, then, that so humble is the Apostle, as to say, When I am made weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:10 For lest he should himself be tempted by this sin, what sort of medicine does he say was applied to him against swelling by the Physician, who knew what He was healing? Lest by the greatness, he says, of the revelations I should be exalted, there was given to me a thorn of my flesh, the angel of Satan, to buffet me: wherefore thrice the Lord I besought, that it should depart from me: and He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for virtue in weakness is made perfect. 2 Corinthians 12:7-9 See what the consummations are. An Apostle, the teacher of Gentiles, father of the faithful through the Gospel, received a thorn of the flesh whereby he might be buffeted. Which of us would dare to say this, unless he had not been ashamed to confess this? For if we shall have said that Paul had not suffered this; while to him as it were honour we give, a liar we make him. But because truthful he is, and truth he has spoken; it behooves us to believe that there was given to him an angel of Satan, lest by the greatness of the revelations he should be exalted. Behold how much to be feared is the serpent of pride....

4. What is, in the anger of consummation shall be declared consummations? There is an anger of consummation, and there is an anger of consuming. For every vengeance of God is called anger: sometimes God avenges, to the end that He may make perfect; sometimes He avenges, to the end that He may condemn. How does He avenge, to the end that He may make perfect? He scourges every son whom He receives. Hebrews 12:6 How does He avenge, to the end that He may condemn? When He shall have set ungodly men on the left hand, and shall have said to them, Go ye into fire everlasting, that has been prepared for the devil and his angels. Matthew 25:41 This is the anger of consuming, not that of consummation. But there shall be declared consummations in the anger of consummation; it shall be preached by the Apostles, that where sin has abounded, grace shall much more abound, Romans 5:20 and the weakness of man has belonged to the healing of humility. Those men thinking of this, and finding out and confessing their iniquities, shall not be. Shall not be what? In their pride.

5. And they shall know how God shall have dominion of Jacob, and of the ends of the earth Psalm 58:13. For before they thought themselves just men, because the Jewish nation had received the Law, because it

had kept the commandments of God: it is proved to them that it has not kept them, since in the very commandments of God Christ it perceived not, because blindness in part has happened to Israel. Romans 11:25 Even the Jews themselves see that they ought not to despise the Gentiles, of whom they deemed as of dogs and sinners. For just as alike they have been found in iniquity, so alike they will attain unto salvation. Not only to Jews, says the Apostle, but also even to Gentiles. Romans 2:10 For to this end the Stone which the builders set at nought, has even been made for the Head of the corner, in order that two in itself It might join: for a corner does unite two walls. The Jews thought themselves exalted and great: of the Gentiles they thought as weak, as sinners, as the servants of demons, as the worshippers of idols, and yet in both was there iniquity. Even the Jews have been proved sinners; because there is none that does good, there is not even so much as one: they have laid down their pride, and have not envied the salvation of the Gentiles, because they have known their own and their weakness to be alike: and in the Corner Stone being united, they have together worshipped the Lord....

6. They shall be converted at evening Psalm 58:14: that is, even if late, that is, after the slaying of our Lord Jesus Christ: They shall be converted at evening: and hereafter they shall suffer hunger as dogs. But as dogs, not as sheep or calves: as dogs, as Gentiles, as sinners; because they too have known their sin that thought themselves righteous....It is a good thing therefore for a sinner to be humbled; and no one is more incurable than he that thinks himself whole. And they shall go around the city. Already we have explained city; it is the city of standing round; all nations.

7. They shall be scattered abroad in order that they may eat Psalm 58:15; that is, in order that they may gain others, in order that into their Body they may change believers. But if they shall not be filled, they shall murmur. Because above also he had spoken of the murmur of them, saying, For who has heard? And You, O Lord, he says, shall deride them, saying, Who has heard? Wherefore? Because, as nothing You shall count all nations. Let the Psalm be concluded. See ye the Corner Ephesians 2:20 exulting, now with both walls rejoicing. The Jews were proud, humbled they have been; Gentiles were despairing, raised up they have been: let them come to the Corner, there let them meet, there run together, there find the kiss of peace; from different parts let them come, but with differing not come, those of Circumcision, these of uncircumcision. Far apart were the walls, but before that to the Corner they came: but in the Corner let them hold themselves, and now let the whole Church from both walls, say what? But I will sing of Your power, and I will exult in the morning of Your mercy Psalm 58:16. In the morning when temptations have been overcome, in the morning when the night of this world shall have passed away; in the morning when no longer the lyings in wait of robbers and of the devil and of his angels we dread, in the morning when no longer by the lamp of prophecy we walk, but Himself the Word of God as it were a Sun we contemplate. And I will exult in the morning of Your mercy. With reason in another Psalm is said, In the morning I will stand by You, and I will meditate. With reason also of the Lord Himself the Resurrection was at dawn, that there should be fulfilled that which has been said in another Psalm, In the evening shall tarry weeping and in the morning exultation. For at even the disciples mourned our Lord Jesus Christ as dead, at dawn at Him rising again they exulted. For You have become my taker up, and my refuge in the day of my tribulation.

8. My Helper, to You I will play, because Thou, O God, art my taker up Psalm 58:17. What was I, unless You succoured? How much despaired of was I, unless You healed? Where was I lying, unless You came to me? Certes with a huge wound I was endangered, but that wound of mine did call for an Almighty Physician. To an Almighty Physician nothing is incurable....Lastly, thinking of all good things whatsoever we may have, either in nature or in purpose, or in conversion itself, in faith, in hope, in charity, in good

morals, in justice, in fear of God; all these to be only by His gifts, he has thus concluded: My God is my mercy: He being filled with the good things of God has not found what he might call his God, save his mercy. O name, under which no one must despair! If you say, my salvation, I perceive that He gives salvation; if you say, my refuge, I perceive that you take refuge in Him; if you say, my strength, I perceive that He gives to you strength: my mercy, is what? All that I am is of Your mercy....

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