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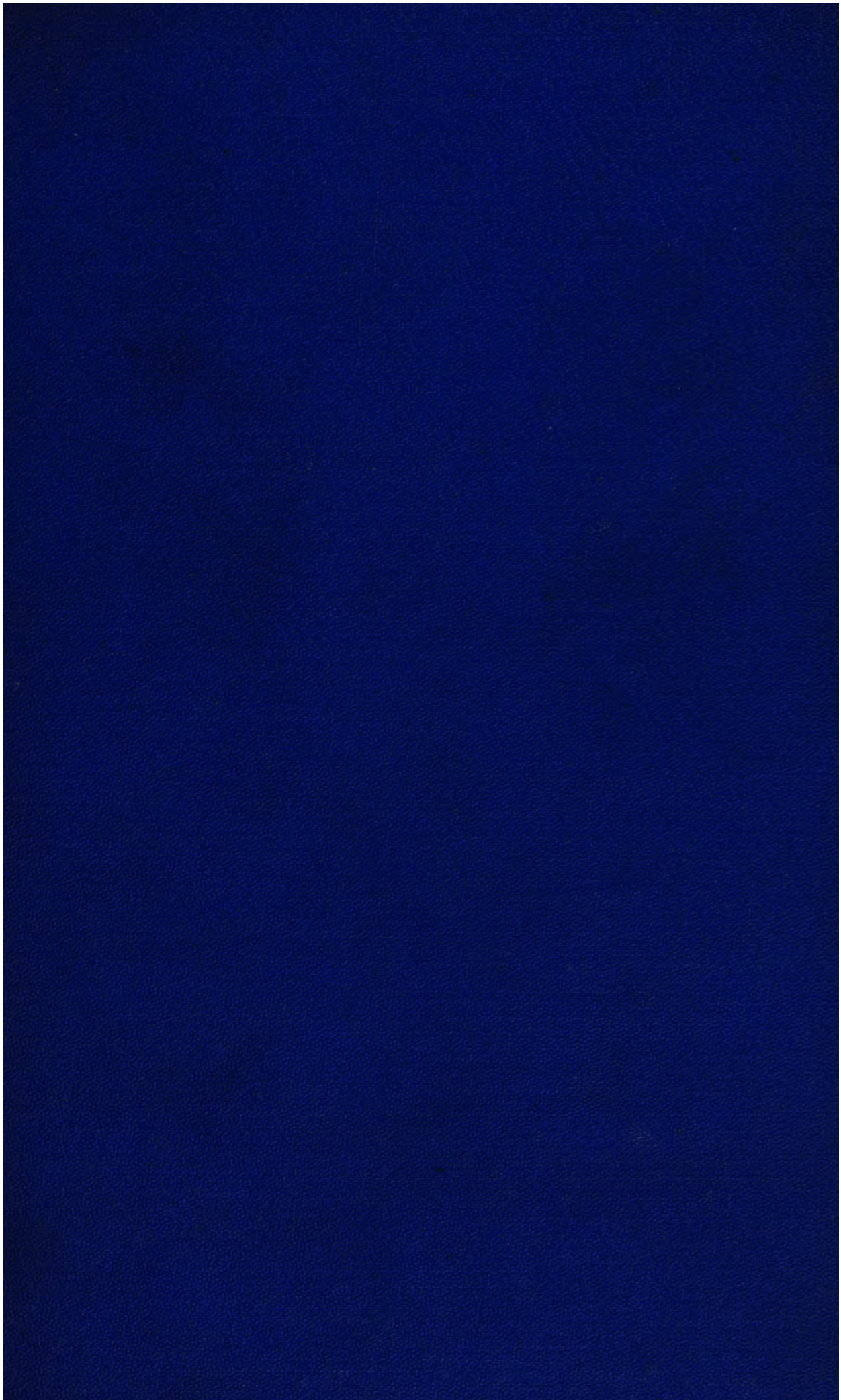
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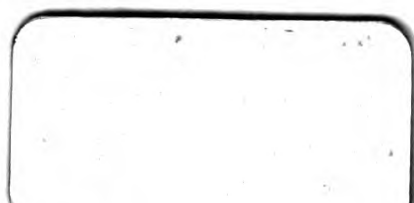


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**LIBRARY OF THE FATHERS.**



**Part II.**

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**SELECT TREATISES OF S. CYPRIAN,**

TRANSLATED BY

**THE REV. W. B. FLOWER, B.A.,**

FORMERLY SCHOLAR OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, AND CHAPLAIN  
OF THE TRAINING SCHOOLS, SWINTON.

No. 1 ON UNITY.

No. 2 ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

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*Preserve this wrapper*

NOTICE.

The Editor has to thank several Priests for their cordial approval of the plan of the "Library of the Fathers," and some, also, for the kind assistance they have offered. He has to regret that a multiplicity of engagements has prevented the Rev. C. F. Smith completing a Preface to S. Cyprian on Unity, which he had kindly promised. He hopes to give it hereafter. A General Preface, and Notes, illustrative of the text and allusions, will be given at the conclusion of each volume. He hopes that this endeavour to supply Churchmen with the writings of the Ancient Fathers, will commend itself to the attention of all who love our branch of Christ's Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

Festival of S. Bartholomew, 1846.

*92*

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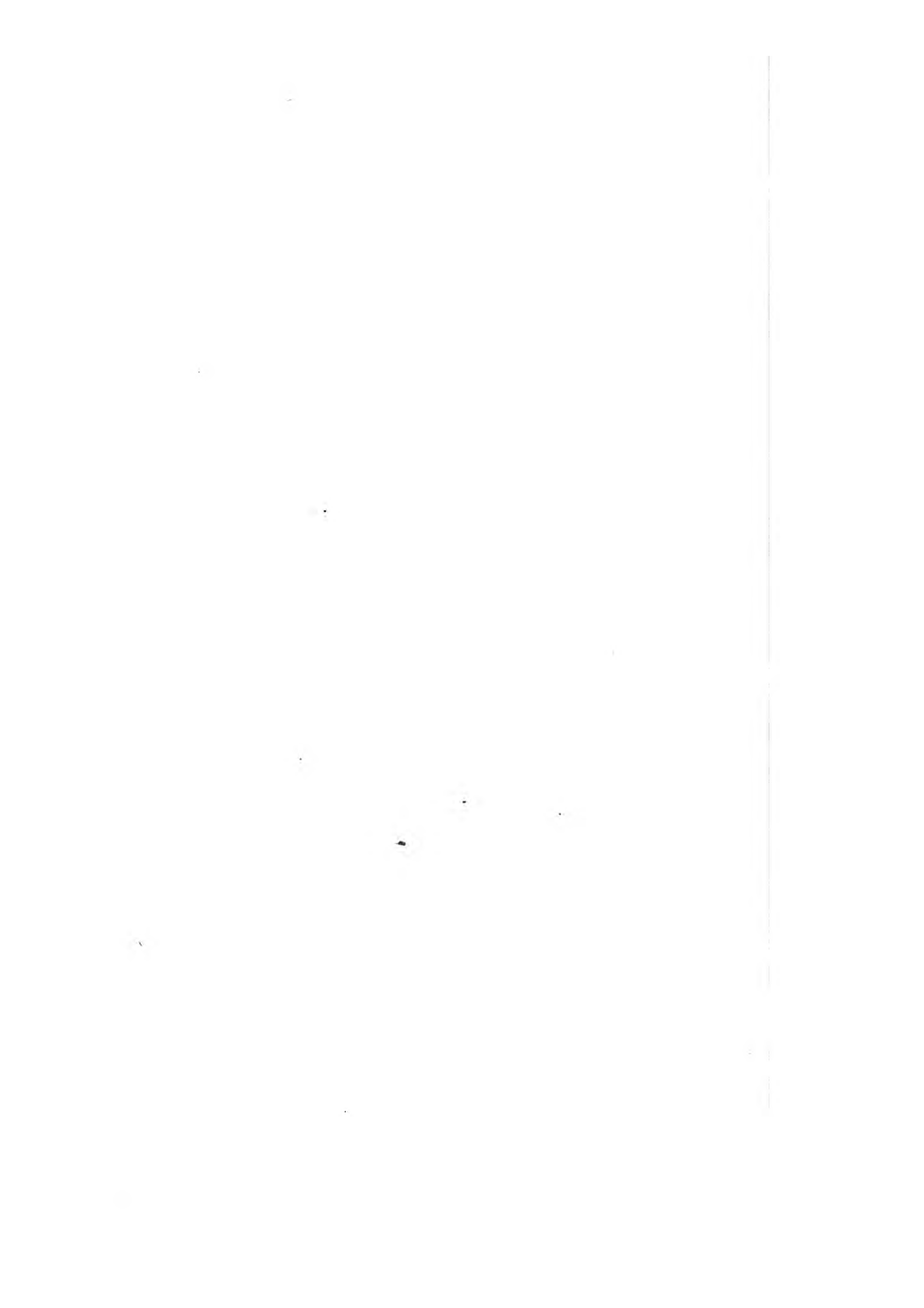




## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE following treatise, which enunciates in a plain and forcible manner the true principles of unity, was written A.D. 251, with a view to put a stop to the disorders consequent upon the schismatical proceedings of Novatian, who claimed the see of Rome, in opposition to Cornelius.



## S. CYPRIAN ON UNITY.

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Since our Lord admonishes us, and says, *Ye are the salt of the earth* and commands us to unite simplicity with innocency, and yet prudence with simplicity, what else should we do, most beloved brethren, than be circumspect, and watching with anxious heart both discover, and guard against the snares of our wily enemy, lest we, who have put on Christ the Wisdom of God the Father, should be found unwise for securing our salvation? For we must not fear that persecution, and those things alone, which come on by open assault to overthrow, and cast down the servants of God. Caution is easier where there is evident cause of fear, and the mind is forearmed for the contest, when the enemy avows himself. Far more must we fear and guard against an enemy when he steals on unawares, and when, deceiving under the semblance of peace, he creeps on by unseen approaches, whence he has obtained the name of serpent. Such ever is his craftiness, such the dark and insidious wiles by which he encompasses man. Thus also immediately from the foundation of the world did he deceive, and, flattering by lying words, ensnared ignorant minds in unwary incredulity. Thus, when he essayed to tempt our Lord Himself, he approached stealthily, as though he would again creep on and deceive; but yet found out he was both subdued and discomfited, because discovered and exposed.

II. Here also an example was given us to avoid the way of the old man, and tread in the steps of Christ Who conquered, that we may not again be unwarily involved in the meshes of death, but, forearmed against

danger, may enjoy the immortality won for us. But how can we attain immortality, unless we keep those commandments of Christ, by which death is taken captive, and vanquished, as Himself admonishes us, when He says, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments* ;\* and again, *If ye do whatsoever I command you, I call you not servants, but friends.*† These, in a word, He calls firm and steadfast; these built with strong foundation on the rock; these strengthened by immovable and unshaken steadfastness against all the tempests and storms of this world. *Therefore, saith He, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock.*‡

We ought, therefore, to obey His words, to learn and do whatever He both taught and did. But how can he say that he believeth in Christ, who does not do what Christ commanded him to do? Or how shall he attain unto the reward of faith, who doth not wish to preserve the faith of the commandment? He must needs waver, and stray, and, carried away by the spirit of error, be tossed about like dust, which the wind sweepeth away; nor can he by walking advance to salvation, who doth not hold the truth of the saving way.

III. But, most beloved brethren, we must be on our guard, not only against those things which are open and manifest, but also against those which deceive by the subtlety of crafty fraud. But what more crafty and subtle than that the enemy discovered, and overthrown by the coming of Christ—after that light came to the Gentiles, and saving beams burst forth for the salvation of men, so that the deaf heard the tidings of spiritual

\* S. Matthew xix. 17. † S. John xv. 14. ‡ S. Matthew vii. 24—25.

grace, the blind opened their eyes to God, the weak became strong with everlasting health, the lame ran to His Church, the dumb prayed with clear voices and supplications—that he, when he saw his idols abandoned, and his temples and seats forsaken, because of the great number of the faithful, should invent a new fraud, so as, under the very title of the Christian name, to deceive the unwary? He discovered heresies and schisms, whereby to overthrow the faith, corrupt the truth, and rend unity. Whom he cannot detain in the blindness of the old path he overreaches and deceives by the mazes of the new way. He taketh men away from the Church Herself, and, whilst they imagine they have already come to the light, and escaped from the night of this world, he again throweth around them other darkness of which they knew not; so that standing neither with the Gospel of Christ, nor His ordinances and law, they call themselves Christians, and, walking in darkness, they think that they have light; the adversary meanwhile flattering and deceiving them, who, according to the words of the Apostle, transformeth himself into an angel of light, and enrobes his ministers as the ministers of righteousness; who maintain night for day, death for salvation, despair under the show of hope, heresy for faith, anti-Christ under the name of Christ, so that whilst they speak falsely with a semblance of truth, they by their subtlety mar the faith. This will be, most beloved brethren, so long as they return not to the origin of truth, nor seek the Head, nor maintain the doctrine of our heavenly master.

IV. And were one to ponder and weigh these things well, there would be no need of a lengthy treatise, or many arguments. The proof for belief is easy in a short statement of the truth. The Lord saith to Peter, *I say unto thee* (saith he) *that thou art Peter, and upon*



*this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.\** And again, after His resurrection, He said to the same, *Feed my sheep.†* And although after His Resurrection He gave to all His Apostles the same power, and said, *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained;\** yet to manifest unity, He by His own authority ordained that this unity should commence from one. Doubtless the rest of the Apostles also were what Peter was, endued with the like fellowship of both honour and power; but a commencement is made from unity, that the Church of Christ may be shown to be one. And this one Church the Holy Spirit points out in the Canticles, under the person of Christ, when He says, *My Dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother; she is the choice one of her that bare her.‡* He that holdeth not this unity of the Church, does he believe that he holds the faith? He that opposes, and fights against the Church, is he sure that he is in the Church, since the blessed Apostle S. Paul also teacheth this self-same thing, and showeth plainly the sacrament of unity, when he says, *There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God.||*

V. And this unity we are bound firmly to hold and maintain, especially those of us who are Bishops, and bear rule in the Church, that we may show that the Episcopacy also is itself one, and undivided. Let none deceive the

\* S. Matthew xvi. 18.      † S. John xxi. 16.      ‡ S. John xx. 21.

§ Solomon's Songs vi. 9.

|| Ephesians iv. 4.

brotherhood by falsehood ; none by faithless prevarication corrupt the truth of the faith. The Episcopacy is one whole of which an entire part is held by each. The Church also is one which is extended far and wide by the increase of Her offspring ; as the sun has many rays, but one light ; and the boughs of a tree are many, but there is one strength settled in the firmly-seated root ; and as, when many streams flow down from one fountain, although by reason of the plenty of its overflowing abundance a multiplicity may seem to be spread abroad, yet is unity preserved in the source. Take a ray of the sun from its orb, and unity admits not the division of light ; break a bough from a tree, broken it cannot branch forth ; cut off a stream from its fountain, cut off it is dried up. So also the Church, filled with the light of the Lord, scatters Her rays over the whole world ; yet one is the light, which is everywhere shed abroad, and the unity of the body is not destroyed. In the plenteousness of Her abundance She extends Her boughs over the whole earth, far and wide does She bountifully pour forth Her flowing streams ; yet is there one head, and one origin, and one mother, rich in the results of her fruitfulness. Of Her womb are we born, by Her milk are we nourished, by Her breath are we quickened.

VI. The spouse of Christ cannot be debauched ; she is undefiled and chaste. She knoweth but one house, and preserves with holy modesty the sanctity of one chamber. She keeps us for God, and appoints to the kingdom the sons whom she has borne. Whoever is separated from the Church is joined to an adulteress, and is cut off from the promises of the Church. And he who leaves the Church of Christ will not attain unto the rewards of Christ. He is an alien, an infidel, an enemy. He can no longer have God for his father, who has not the Church for his mother. If any could have escaped, who was without the ark of Noah, so also may he escape who is

beyond the pale of the Church. The Lord warns us, and says, *He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.*\* He that breaketh the peace and concord of Christ acts in opposition to Christ; he that gathers anywhere but in the Church scattereth the Church of Christ. Our Lord saith, *I and my Father are one;*† and again of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, it is written, *And these three are one.*‡ Does any one believe that this unity, proceeding from Divine immutability, and cemented by heavenly sacraments, can be broken in the Church, and split by the divorce of clashing wills? He who maintaineth not this unity holds not the law of God, holds not the faith of the Father and Son, holds not the truth necessary to salvation.

VII. This sacrament of unity, this bond of concord indissolubly joined together, is shown, when in the Gospel, the coat of our Lord Jesus Christ is not divided nor rent at all, but is received an entire garment, and is possessed as an uninjured and undivided coat, by those that cast lots concerning it, which of them should rather wear it. The Divine Scripture speaks and saith, *But concerning his coat, which was without seam, and woven from the top throughout, they said to each other, let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be.*§ This betokened unity descending from above, that is, coming from heaven and the Father, which could not be rent at all by the receiver and possessor, but which he received indivisibly, in its complete and entire wholeness. He cannot possess the garment of Christ who rends and divides the Church of Christ.

On the other hand, when, on the death of King Solomon, his kingdom and people were divided, the prophet

\* Matthew xii. 30.

† S. John x. 30.

‡ I. S. John v. 7.

§ S. John xix. 23.

Ahijah meeting King Jeroboam in the field, rent his garment into twelve pieces, and said, *Take thee ten pieces, for thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee, and he shall have two tribes, for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.\** When the twelve tribes of Israel were divided, the prophet Ahijah rent his garment. But because Christ's people cannot be rent, His coat woven throughout, and knit together, was not divided by the possessors. Undivided, conjoined, seamless, it showed the united concord of our people, who put on Christ. In the sacrament and sign of His garment He plainly declared the unity of the Church.

VIII. Who, then, is there so wicked and treacherous, who so maddened by the fury of discord, as either to believe that the unity of God, the garment of the Lord, the Church of Christ, can be rent asunder, or to dare to rend it. Himself warns and teaches us in His Gospel when He says, *And there shall be one flock, and one shepherd.†* And does any one think that in one place there can be many shepherds and many flocks? So likewise the Apostle S. Paul, recommending this self-same unity, beseeches and exhorts us, saying, *I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.‡* And again he says, *Forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.§* And do you think that he can stand and live who withdraweth from the Church, and buildeth for himself other homes, and different dwelling places, when it was said to Rahab, in whom the Church was prefigured, *Thou shalt*

\* 1st Kings xi. 29. † S. John x. 16. ‡ 1st Corinthians i. 10. § Ephesians iv. 2.

*bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee; and it shall be that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the streets his blood shall be upon his head.\** So likewise the Sacrament of the Passover requireth this only in the law of Exodus, that the lamb, which is slain as a figure of Christ, be eaten in one house. God speaks, and says, *In one house shall it be eaten; thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house.†* The flesh of Christ, and the Holy thing of the Lord, cannot be cast out, nor have the faithful any other house, but the one Church. This house, this hostlery of unanimity, the Holy Spirit points out, and intends in the Psalms, when He says, God, *who maketh men to dwell with one mind in a house.* In the house of God, in the Church of Christ, men of one mind dwell; the united and single-minded continue therein.

IX. Therefore, also, the Holy Spirit came in the form of a dove. It is a simple and joyous animal, with no bitter gall, no sharpness of bite, no violence of tearing talons; it is wont to love the dwelling places of men, to know the society of one home. Both of them bring up their young together, they cling close to each other with their wings when they fly; they spend their life in common intercourse, they acknowledge the concord of peace by a kiss of the bill, and fulfil the law of unanimity in all things. This single-mindedness must be felt, and this love maintained, in the Church, so that the love of the brotherhood may imitate the doves, and their gentleness and kindness resemble the lambs and sheep. What have the fierceness of wolves, and the madness of dogs, and the deadly poison of serpents, and the wild cruelty of beasts, to do in the breast of the Christian? Matter of rejoicing is it when such are separate from the Church, lest, by their

\* Joshua ii. 18.

† Exodus xii. 46.

deadly and poisoned contagion, they make a prey of the doves and sheep of Christ. Bitter cannot agree with and be joined to sweet, darkness with light, foul weather with fair, war with peace, barrenness with fruitfulness, drought with fountains, storm with calm. Let none think that good men can leave the Church. The wind sweepeth not away the wheat, nor doth the storm overthrow the firmly-rooted tree. Light chaff is tossed about by the tempest, and the sickly tree is uprooted by the stroke of the whirlwind. These the Apostle S. John curses and chides, when he says, *They went out from us, because they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would surely have remained with us.\**

X. Hence heresies both frequently have been, and still are, whilst the perverted mind holdeth not peace, and faithless discord breaketh unity. But the Lord permits and suffers this to be, that men retaining full freedom of choice, whilst the discrimination of truth trieth our hearts and minds, the perfect faith of the approved may shine forth in manifest light. The Holy Spirit warns us by the Apostle, and says, *Heresies must needs be, that the faithful may be made manifest among you.†* Thus the faithful are proved, the faithless discovered; thus, even here, before the day of judgment, the souls of the righteous and wicked are divided, and the chaff separated from the wheat.

These are they who, of their own will, and without Divine appointment, place themselves over their inconsiderate followers, and constitute themselves rulers, without lawful ordination, and arrogate to themselves the title of Bishop, when none gives them a Bishopric. These are they whom the Holy Spirit describes in the Psalms as *sitting in the seat of pestilence*, as plagues and blights of the faith, deceiving with the mouth of the serpent, skilful

\* 1 S. John ii. 19.

† 1 Cor. xi. 19.

corrupters of the truth, pouring out deadly poison from pestilential tongues ; whose word doth eat as doth a canker, and whose writings instil a deadly poison into the breasts and hearts of all.

XI. Against such our Lord cries out. From these He curbs and calls back His wandering people, saying, *Hearken not unto the words of false prophets, since speaking visions of their own hearts they deceive you. They speak, but not out of the mouth of the Lord. They say unto them who despise the word of God, there shall be peace unto you, and every one who walketh in his own imagination. No evil shall come upon him who walketh in the error of his heart. I have not spoken to them, yet have they prophesied. For if they had stood in my counsel, and heard my words, and had taught my people so, I would have turned them from their evil thoughts.\** These very same the Lord marks out, and intends, when He says, *They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out broken cisterns, that can hold no water.†* When there cannot be but one Baptism, they imagine that they have power to baptize ; forsaking the fountain of life, they promise the grace of life-giving and saving water. By them men are not cleansed, but rather defiled ; their sins are not washed away, but rather increased. That birth beareth children not for God, but the devil. Born by falsehood, they receive not the promises of truth ; begotten of faithlessness, they lose the grace of faith. They cannot attain unto the rewards of peace, who, through the madness of discord, have broken the peace of the Lord.

XII. Nor let any deceive themselves by a false interpretation of that which our Lord hath said, *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.‡* The corrupters and false inter-

\* Jeremiah xxiii. 16.

† Jeremiah ii. 13.

‡ S. Matthew xviii. 20.

preters of the Gospel lay hold of the conclusion, and pass by the premises, bearing part in mind, and craftily suppressing a part. As they themselves are cut off from the Church, so they destroy the meaning of one connected passage. For when our Lord was exhorting His disciples to agreement and peace, He said, *I say unto you, that if two or three shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father, which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them* ;\* showing that most is given not to the number, but to the unanimity of those who pray. *If* (says He) *two of you shall agree on earth* ; He placed unanimity first ; He first laid down the concord of peace, and taught us, that we ought firmly and faithfully to agree together. But how can he agree with anyone who does not agree with the body of the Church Herself, and with the universal brotherhood ? How can two or three be gathered together in Christ's name who are clearly separated from Christ, and His Gospel ? For we did not withdraw from them, but they from us, since heresies and schisms sprung up in later times, and, when men set up different conventicles for themselves, they left the head and origin of truth. But the Lord speaks of His Church, and says to those who are in the Church, that, if they be of one mind, and when gathered together, though only two or three, pray unanimously, according to what He commanded and enjoined, they, though only two or three, shall obtain their requests from the Majesty of God. *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I, saith He, am in the midst of them*, that is, I am with the single-minded, and the peaceful, with those who fear God, and keep the commandments of God. He has said that He is with these, two or three though they be,

\* S. Matthew xviii. 18.



as He also was present with the three children in the fiery furnace, and, because they continued single-hearted, and were of one mind towards God, He refreshed them with the breath of dew when the flames encircled them. As also He was present with the two Apostles shut up in prison, and because they were single-hearted, and of one mind, Himself loosed the bolts of the prison, and conducted them again to the Market-place, to deliver to the multitude the word which they faithfully preached. When, therefore, He sets it forth in His commandments, and says, *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*, He, Who ordained and instituted the Church, does not divide men from the Church, but censuring the faithless for their dissension, and by His own words commending peace to the faithful, He shows that He is the rather present with two or three praying with one heart, than with many at variance, and that more can be obtained by the united prayer of a few, than the contentious supplications of many.

XIII. Therefore, also, when He gave the rule of prayer, He added this, saying: *And when ye stand praying forgive, if ye have ought against any; that your Father also, which is in heaven, may forgive you your trespasses.\** And when one came to sacrifice at variance with another, He called him back from the altar, and commanded him first to be reconciled to his brother, and then, being at peace, to return and offer his gift to God; because neither had God respect unto the offering of Cain; for he could not have God reconciled unto him who, through discord and envy, was not at peace with his brother. What peace, then, do the enemies of the brethren promise themselves? What sacrifices do the rivals of the Priests imagine they celebrate? Or do they,

\* S. Mark xi. 25.

who are gathered together beyond Christ's Church, think, when they are so gathered together, that Christ is with them?

XIV. Though such be put to death for the confession of the Christian name, yet is not that stain washed out even by their blood. The inexpressible and grievous sin of discord is not atoned for even by suffering. He cannot be a martyr who is not in the Church; he cannot attain unto the kingdom who hath left Her, That is to reign. Christ gave peace unto us; He enjoined us to be of one heart, and one mind; He commanded that the bonds of love and charity be preserved unbroken, and inviolate; and he cannot show himself a martyr who hath not maintained brotherly love.

This the Apostle S. Paul teaches and witnesses when he says, *And though I have faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not itself, doth not behave itself unseemly, is not puffed up, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; loveth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; charity never faileth.\** Charity, saith he, *never faileth.* She shall be for ever in the kingdom; she shall continue for ever in the unity of the brotherhood cemented to her. Discord cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. He, who by treacherous discord hath broken the love of Christ, cannot win the rewards of Christ, Who has said, *This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.†* He who has not love, has not God. It is the word of the blessed Apostle St. John: *God, says he, is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.‡* They cannot

\* 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

† S. John xv. 12.

‡ 1 S. John iv. 16.

dwell in God who would not be of one mind in the Church of God. Though they be given up and burnt by the flames and fire, or die a prey to wild beasts, yet shall not theirs be the crown of faith, but the punishment of faithlessness; not the glorious end of holy courage, but the death of despair. Such may be put to death, crowned he cannot be. He professes himself to be a Christian in such a manner as the devil oftentimes feigneth himself to be Christ, as the Lord Himself forewarns us when He says, *Many shall come in my name, saying I am Christ, and shall deceive many.\** As he is not Christ, though he deceive under His name, so neither can he be regarded as a Christian who does not abide in the truth of His gospel and of faith.

XV. For both to prophesy, and cast out devils, and work great miracles, is doubtless a high and wonderful thing, yet, whoever he be that is found in all these, he attaineth not unto the heavenly kingdom, except he walk in an observance of the straight and righteous way. The Lord denounces such in these words, *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name cast out devils, and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.†* Need of righteousness is there so that we may find favour with God, the Judge; we must obey His instructions and warnings, so that our deserts may receive the reward. Our Lord, when He would mark out the way of our hope, and faith, in a short summary, says in His Gospel, *The Lord thy God is one God; thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like unto it; thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the*

\* S. Mark xiii. 6.

† S. Matt. vii. 22.

*law and the prophets.\** He hath in His precepts taught unity and love together; in these two commandments He has comprised all the prophets and the law. But what unity does he keep, what love doth he maintain or think of, who, infatuated by the madness of discord, rends the Church, destroys the faith, disturbs peace, scatters charity, profanes the sacrament?

XVI. This evil, most faithful brethren, had commenced long ago; but now the fearful havoc of this same evil has increased, and the poisoned plague of heretical perverseness and schisms has begun to spring up, and grow more and more; for it must needs be so in the end of the world, as the Holy Spirit hath foretold and forewarned us by the Apostle: *In the last days, saith he, perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own-selves, proud, boasters, covetous, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof. For of this sort are they who creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now, as James and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further; for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.†* Whatever things were predicted are being fulfilled, and as the end of the world draws nigh, these things have come upon us as a trial both of men and the times. As the enemy rages more and more, error deceives, senselessness lifts up, envy

\* S. Mark xiii. 29.

† 2 Tim. iii. 1.

inflames, avarice blinds, impiety corrupts, pride puffeth up, dissension exasperates, and anger hurries men headlong.

XVII. Let not, however, the excessive and hasty faithlessness of many move or disturb us, but rather, as the truth of the event was told beforehand, let it confirm our faith. As some have become such, because this was told beforehand, so let the rest of us beware of them, because this also was foretold, our Lord teaching us and saying: *But take ye heed; behold, I have foretold you all things.\** Brethren, I beseech you, avoid such like, and drive away from your sides and your ears their hurtful discourses, as though the contagion of death, as it is written: *Hedge thine ears about with thorns, and refuse to hear a wicked tongue;†* and again, *Evil communications corrupt good manners.‡* The Lord teaches us and admonishes us to withdraw from such. *They, saith He, be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the ditch.§* Whoever he be that is separate from the Church, such is to be shunned and avoided. *Such a one is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself.||* Does he think that he is with Christ who opposeth the Priests of Christ, and separateth himself from the society of His clergy and people? He beareth arms against the Church. He fighteth against the appointment of God. An enemy of the Altar, a rebel against the sacrifice of Christ, treacherous as to faith, sacrilegious as to religion, disobedient son, an unloving brother, by despising the Bishops and leaving the Priests of God, he dares to set up another altar, to offer up prayers in unsanctioned words, to profane the truth of the Lord's sacrifice by false sacrifice, and knoweth not that he who strives against the

\* St. Mark xiii. 23.      † Ecc. xxiv. 28.      ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 33.

§ St. Matt. xv. 14.      || Tit. iii. 11.

appointment of God, is punished by divine visitation because of his daring rashness.

XVIII. Thus Chorah, Dathan, and Abiram, who, in opposition to Moses, and Aaron the Priest, endeavoured to claim to themselves the power of sacrificing, forthwith suffered punishment for their attempts. The earth burst its bonds, and opened its deep bosom, and the cleft of the parting ground engulfed them standing and alive. And the anger of an offended God did not smite the authors only, but a fire coming forth from the Lord consumed with instantaneous punishment the other two hundred and fifty also, who had been partakers and companions of that same madness, and had been united together with them in their daring attempt. And this was done to teach and show us that whatever steps wicked men may take to overthrow the ordination of God by human will are taken against God. So also King Uzziah, when, bearing a censer, and forcibly claiming to himself the right of sacrifice against the law of God, he would not obey, and give way, when Azariah the Priest opposed him, was confounded by Divine wrath, and marked with spots of leprosy on his forehead; that is, he was marked, by an offended God, in that part of the body where they are signed, who have gained the favour of the Lord. And the sons of Aaron, who had placed on the altar a strange fire which the Lord had not commanded, were forthwith consumed in the presence of an avenging Lord.

XIX. And these they imitate and follow, who, despising the tradition of God, ardently desire strange doctrines, and bring in precepts of human teaching. These our Lord chides and rebukes in the Gospel, when He says, *Ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.\** This is a more grievous sin than the fallen seem to have committed; for they, when in a

\* S. Mark vii. 9.

state of penitency for their sin, beg pardon of God with full satisfaction. By the latter the Church is sought and entreated, by the former the Church is opposed; in the one case there may have been compulsion, in the other the will is engaged in the sin. In the one case the fallen has injured himself alone, in the other he who endeavoured to introduce heresy, or make a schism, has deceived many by drawing them with him. In the one instance there is the loss of one soul, in the other the souls of many are endangered. Doubtless the one both sees, and bewails, and grieves that he has sinned; but the other, puffed up in his heart, and revelling in his sins, separates children from their mother, lures sheep from their shepherd, and disturbs the sacraments of God. And whereas the fallen has sinned once, the other sins daily. Lastly, the fallen may afterwards win martyrdom, and receive the promises of the kingdom; the other, if he be killed without the Church, cannot attain unto the Church's rewards.

XX. Nor let any be astonished, most beloved brethren, that some even of the confessors proceed so far, that some of them also commit so fearful and grievous sins. For confession doth neither render one safe from the snares of the devil, nor defend him by continual security against the temptations, and dangers, and attacks, and conflicts of the world, so long as he is in it. For if this were so, we should not afterwards see in confessors the frauds, and fornication, and adultery, which now we see in some, and lament and bewail. Whoever he is that is a confessor he is not greater, nor better, nor dearer to God than Solomon, and yet he retained the graces he had received from God only so long as he walked in the ways of the Lord. After he left the way of the Lord, he lost also the grace of the Lord. And for this cause it is written, *Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.\** Doubt-

\* Revelations iii. 11.

less the Lord would not threaten that the crown of righteousness can be taken away, were it not, that righteousness failing, the crown also must needs be lost.

XXI. Confession is the commencement of glory, not the gaining of the crown; it doth not perfect our praise, but commences our greatness; and since it is written, *He that endureth to the end shall be saved*,\* whatever is before the end, is but a step, by which we ascend to the height of salvation, not the goal, when the highest point is already reached. He is a Confessor; but after confession the danger is greater, because the adversary is more provoked. He is a Confessor, therefore ought he the more steadfastly to stand with the Gospel of the Lord, since he by the Gospel has obtained glory from the Lord. For the Lord says, *Unto whomsoever much is given, from him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.*† Let none perish through the example of a Confessor, none learn unrighteousness, pride, faithlessness, from the manners of a Confessor. He is a Confessor; let him be humble and peaceable, let him, by modesty of conduct, show the effects of discipline, that he, who is called a Confessor of Christ, may imitate Christ Whom he confesses. For inasmuch as He says, *He that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*;‡ and since Himself was exalted by the Father, because He, the Word, the Power, and Wisdom of God the Father, humbled Himself on earth, how can He love exaltation, Who both by His own law commanded humility to us, and Himself received from His Father a most excellent name, as the reward of His humility? He is a Confessor of Christ, but only so, if the majesty and dignity of Christ be not afterwards blasphemed by him. Let not the tongue that confesses Christ be slan-

\* S. Matthew x. 22. † S. Luke xii. 48. ‡ S. Matthew xxiii. 12.



derous; let it not be quarrelsome; let it not be heard violently uttering reproaches and strifes, nor after words of praise cast forth the poison of the serpent against the brethren and Priests of God. But if afterwards he become guilty, and odious; if by wicked conversation he waste away his confession; if he stain his life by base unholiness; if, in a word, leaving the Church, where he confessed, and breaking the concord of unity, he changes his former faith into after unbelief, he cannot flatter himself because of his confession, as though he had been elected to the reward of glory, since, for this very reason, is the desert of punishment the more increased.

XXII. For our Lord chose even Judas among His Apostles, and yet Judas afterwards betrayed our Lord. Still the faith and steadfastness of the Apostles did not therefore fail, because Judas, the betrayer, had fallen away from their society. So even here the holiness and dignity of the Confessors are not forthwith lessened, because the faith of some has been broken. The blessed Apostle St. Paul says in his epistle, *For what if some have fallen away from the faith, hath their unbelief made the word of God of none effect? God forbid: yea let God be true, but every man a liar.\** The greater and better part of the Confessors remain firm in the strength of their faith, and in the truth of the law, and the Lord's discipline; nor do they depart from the peace of the Church, who remember that of God's goodness they obtained grace in the Church, and on this account they receive the greater praise of faith, because separated from the faithlessness of those who were found with them in the fellowship of confession, they have escaped the contagion of their sin. But, illumined by the light of the Gospel, and shining with the pure and glistening rays of the Lord, they are as praiseworthy for preserving the

\* Romans iii. 3.

peace of Christ, as they were victorious in their encounters with the devil.

XXIII. I wish, indeed, most beloved brethren, and I both advise and exhort you, that, if it be possible, none of the brethren perish, and that our joyful Mother may bear in Her bosom the one body of a united people. But if healthy advice cannot recall to the way of salvation some leaders of schism and authors of dissension, who persevere in their blind and determined madness, yet do the rest of you, who have been ensnared through single-mindedness, or won by error, or deceived by any craftiness of deceitful wiles, loose yourselves from the meshes of deceit, free your wandering steps from error, and return to the straight path of the heavenly way. It is the word of an Apostle bearing witness, *Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.\** And again he says, *Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.†* We must withdraw, nay, rather flee, from the offenders, lest, whilst any is joined to those that walk disobediently, and goeth in the ways of error and sin, he, wandering from the path of truth, be himself also involved in equal guilt. God is one and Christ is one, and His Church is one, and the faith is one, and the people is joined by the cement of concord into the entire unity of the body. Unity cannot be rent, nor can one body be split asunder by a disruption of joints, nor, with torn and lacerated vitals, be cast into pieces. Whatever is separate from the womb, cannot live and breathe apart from it, but loses the means of life.

\* 2 Thes. iii. 6.

† Eph. v. 6.

XXIV.—The Holy Spirit admonishes us, and says: *What man is he that desireth life, and loveth to see good days? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil and do good: seek peace and pursue it.\** The son of peace is bound to seek and follow peace; he who knows, and loves the bond of charity, should restrain his tongue from the evil of dissension. Among His divine commands, and saving precepts, the Lord now nigh unto His passion added this, and said: *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.†* This is the legacy He gave to us; and all the gifts and rewards of His promises, He promised on condition of the preservation of peace. If we are heirs of Christ, remain we in the peace of Christ; if we are sons of God, peace-makers should we be. *Blessed, saith He, are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the sons of God.‡* The sons of God should be peace-makers, mild in heart, simple in discourse, united in affections, faithfully knit together by the bonds of unanimity.

XXV. This unanimity existed formerly under the Apostles. Thus the new body of the faithful keeping the commands of the Lord, maintained its charity. This the divine Scripture proveth, which says: *And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.§* And again, *These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.||* And, therefore, they prayed with effectual prayers; therefore they could confidently ask whatever they required of the mercy of the Lord.

XXVI. But in our days unanimity hath been so lessened, that the vastness also of charitable deeds has been

\* Psalm xxxiv. 12.

† S. John xiv. 27.

‡ S. Matthew v. 9.

§ Acts iv. 32.

|| Acts i. 14.

diminished. Then they offered their houses and farms for sale, and, laying up for themselves treasures in heaven, gave the money to the Apostles to be distributed for the use of the poor. But now we do not give even a tenth of our possessions, and, when the Lord commands us to sell, we choose rather to buy, and increase. So much among us hath the vigour of our faith withered away, and the strength of the faithful waxed feeble. And therefore the Lord, regarding our times, saith in His gospel: *When the son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?\** We see that that hath taken place which He foretold. In the fear of the Lord, in the law of righteousness, in love, in our works there is no faith. None thinks of the terror of the future; none regardeth the day of the Lord, and the anger of the Lord, and the punishments that await the unbelieving, and the everlasting torments decreed for the faithless. What our conscience would fear if it believed, that it fears not, because it believes not at all. For if it believed, it would also take care; if it took care, it would escape.

XXVII. Let us then, most beloved brethren, rouse ourselves, as much as we can, and breaking the sleep of former slothfulness, wake we to observe and do the commandments of the Lord. Be we such as He has commanded us to be, when He says: *Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men, that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching.†* Girded we ought to be, lest when the day of marching cometh, He find us encumbered and hindered. Let our light so shine, and break forth in good works, that it may lead us onwards from the night of this world, to the

\* S. Luke xviii. 8.

† S. Luke xii., 35.

light of eternal brightness. Ever wait we anxiously and watchfully the sudden coming of our Lord, that when He cometh, our faith may watch, and so receive the reward of watchfulness from the Lord. If these commands are kept, these warnings and injunctions observed, we cannot be surprised by the deceit of the devil, but as watchful servants, shall reign with Christ, Who reigns.

## ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

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I. The gospel precepts, dearest brethren, are nothing less than divine directions, foundations on which our hope is built, stays by which faith is strengthened, nourishment by which the heart is comforted, rudders by which our way is directed, safeguards for obtaining salvation, which, while they build up the teachable minds of the faithful on earth, lead them onwards to the heavenly kingdoms. Many things God willed should be spoken, and declared by His servants the Prophets ; but how much greater are those which the Son speaks, which the Word of God, Who was in the Prophets, testifies by His own voice, no longer commanding the way to be prepared for His coming, but Himself coming, and opening and showing to us the way ; that we, who were ignorantly and blindly wandering in the shadows of death, being illumined by the light of grace, should hold on the way of life, with the Lord for our leader and guide.

II. And amongst His other saving instructions and divine commands, by which He provided for the salvation of His people, Himself also gave us a form of prayer, and taught and directed us for what we ought to pray. He Who made us live, taught us also how to pray, showing herein that same bountifulness by which He deigned to give and bestow all the rest ; to the intent that, when we address the Father in the prayers and supplications which the Son hath taught us, we may be the more readily heard. He had already foretold that the hour was nigh at hand, *when the true worshippers should worship the Father in spirit and in truth*, and now He fulfilled what He aforetime promised, that we, who

through His gift of sanctification have received the spirit and truth, may according to His teaching, worship in a true and spiritual manner. For what prayer can be more spiritual than that which has been given by Christ, by Whom also the Holy Spirit was sent unto us? What prayer more true in presence of the Father than that which has been uttered by the mouth of the Son, Who is Truth? Hence, to pray otherwise than He has commanded is not ignorance only, but also a sin; since Himself has ordained and said, *Ye reject the commandment of God that ye may keep your own tradition.\**

III. Pray we, therefore, most beloved brethren, as God our master has taught us. It is the prayer of friends and familiars, to ask God of His own, and to ascend unto His ears with the petitions of Christ. When we offer up our prayers, let the Father recognize the words of the Son; let Him Who dwelleth in our hearts, be also in our voice; and since we have Him as an advocate with the Father for our sins, let us bring forward the words of our advocate, when as sinners we ask pardon for our offences. For, when He says, that *whatsoever we shall ask the Father in His name, He will give it us,†* how much more effectually shall we obtain what we ask in Christ's name, if we ask in His words?

IV. But when we pray, let our words and petitions be under rule, evincing composure and modesty. Think we, that we are standing in the presence of God. We must please the Divine eyes, both by the carriage of the body and the tones of the voice. For as the shameless raises his voice in clamour, so is it, on the other hand, the characteristic of a modest man to pray in sober words. Besides, our Lord in His instructions, enjoined us to pray in secret, that is, in retired and private places, even in our chamber (as more becometh faith); that we may know

\* S. Mark, vii. 9.

† S. John, xvi. 23.

that God is everywhere present, and hears and sees us all, and by the fullness of His Majesty penetrateth even hidden and remote places, as it is written, *I am a God at hand, and not a God afar off. Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him? Do not I fill heaven and earth?\** And again, *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.†* And when we meet together in one place with the brethren, and celebrate the Divine sacrifices with the Priest of God, we ought to be mindful to show a modest and disciplined bearing, and not everywhere to utter our prayers in ill-considered language, nor carelessly send forth in tumultuous words, our petitions, which should with modesty be commended to God, for God hears the heart and not the voice. He is not to be reminded by clamours, Who sees the thoughts of men, as the Lord proves, saying, *Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?‡* And in another place, *And all the Churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts.§*

V. Hannah, in the first book of Kings, being a type of the Church, kept and observed this rule; for she supplicated the Lord not with clamorous entreaty, but silently and modestly within the hidden recesses of her heart. She spake with secret prayer, but manifest faith; she spake not with her voice, but with her heart, because she knew that God heareth such, and she effectually obtained her request, because she asked in faith. This the Divine Scripture declares, which says, *She spake in her heart; only her lips moved; but her voice was not heard, and God heard her.||* So also we read in the Psalms, *Commune with your heart upon your bed and be still.\*\** By Jeremiah, also, the Holy Spirit suggests and teaches

\* Jer. xxiii. 23.    † Proverbs xv. 3.    ‡ S. Matthew ix. 4.    § Rev. ii. 23.

|| 1 Sam. i. 13.    \*\* Psalms iv. 4.



the self-same things, saying, *In the heart, O God, we must worship Thee.\**

VI. And let not the worshipper, dearest brethren, be ignorant how the publican prayed with the Pharisee in the temple. Not with eyes presumptuously upraised to heaven, nor hands proudly uplifted, but smiting upon his breast, and confessing his sins inclosed within, he earnestly besought the aid of Divine mercy. And while the Pharisee was well pleased with himself, this man, who thus asked, obtained rather to be sanctified, inasmuch as he did not place his hopes of salvation in confidence of his own innocency (for none is innocent), but confessing his sins, prayed with humility; and He who pardons the humble heard his prayer. This the Lord sets forth in His Gospel, and declares, *Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.†*

VII. After that, most beloved brethren, we have learnt these things from the Divine word, and become acquainted with the spirit in which we ought to pray, let us learn also from the teaching of the Lord what prayer we ought to use. *After this manner, saith He, pray ye, Our Father which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom*

\* Ba. vi. 6.

† S. Luke, xviii. 10.

*come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts; for we also forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. Amen.*

VIII. First, the Teacher of peace, and Master of unity would not that we should pray singly and individually, so that, when one prays, he should pray for himself alone. For we do not say "My Father which art in heaven," nor "Give me this day my daily bread;" nor does each pray that his own debt only may be forgiven him, nor ask for himself alone, not to be led into temptation, and to be delivered from evil. Our prayer is general and universal; and when we pray, we pray not for one alone, but for all, since all we are one. God, the master of peace and concord, Who taught unity, willed that one should so pray for all, as He Himself did bear us all in one. The three children shut up in the fiery furnace observed this rule of prayer, agreeing in prayer, and being united in oneness of spirit. This the authority of the Divine Scripture declares and when it teaches us how such prayed, it gives us an example that we in our prayers should imitate them, in order that we may be like unto them. *Then these three, it says, as out of one mouth sang an hymn and blessed God.\** They spake as out of one mouth, though Christ had not yet taught them how to pray. And therefore their words prevailed and were effectual, because their peaceful, and simple, and spiritual prayer, won them the favour of the Lord. Moreover, we find that the Apostles, and disciples so prayed, after the Ascension of our Lord. *These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.†* They continued with one accord in prayer, manifesting by the perseverance and oneness of their prayers, that God, *Who*

\* Song of the three children, v. 28.

† Acts i. 14.

*maketh men to be of one mind in a house*, admits into the divine and eternal mansions those only among whom there is unanimous prayer.

IX. But of what kind, dearest brethren, are the sacraments of the Lord's Prayer ! How many ! How important ! Comprehended in a few words, but so rich in spiritual virtue, that there is nothing at all which in our prayers and supplications is not comprised in this summary of heavenly doctrine. *After this manner*, saith He, *pray ye; Our Father which art in heaven*. The new man, born again, and restored to God by His grace, says first of all, *Father*, because he has now begun to be a son. *He came unto His own*, saith He, *and His own received him not*. *But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.\** He, therefore, that has believed on His name, and has been made a son of God, ought to commence from this point, to the intent that he may both offer up his thanksgiving, and profess himself a son of God, when he says that God is his Father in heaven ; and that he may also in the very first words of the new birth, confess, that he has renounced his earthly and fleshly father, and begun to acknowledge and have but one Father, which is in heaven, as it is written, *Who said unto their father and their mother, I have not known thee, and have not acknowledged their own children, these have observed Thy word, and kept thy covenant.†* Our Lord also hath enjoined us in His Gospel, to *call no man our father upon the earth, for one is our Father which is in heaven.‡* And to the disciple who made mention of his dead father, He said, *Let the dead bury their dead.§* For he had spoken of his father as dead, whereas the Father of believers is living.

\* S. John i. 11.

† Deut. xxxiii. 9.

‡ S. Matt. xxiii. 9.

§ S. Matt. viii. 22,

X. Neither, most beloved brethren, should we consider and perceive this only, that we call Him *Father which is in heaven*, but we add thereto and say, *Our Father*; that is, the Father of those that believe, and, being sanctified by Him, and renewed by the birth of spiritual grace, have begun to be sons of God. This word also reproves and condemns the Jews, who not only unbelievably despised, but also cruelly put to death Christ, Who had been foretold to them by the Prophets, and was sent first of all to them. They can no longer call God their Father, for our Lord confutes and convicts them, saying, *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.\** And by Isaiah the Prophet, God in His anger cries out, *I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah! sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters; ye have forsaken the Lord, and have provoked the Holy one of Israel unto anger.†* In condemnation of them, we Christians, when we pray, say *Our Father*, because He has begun to be ours, and ceased to be that of the Jews who have forsaken Him. A sinful people cannot be a son, but to them whose sins are forgiven, is given the name of sons, and to them eternity is promised, as our Lord Himself says, *Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the son abideth ever.‡*

XI. But how great is the indulgence of the Lord, how overflowing the plentifulness of His mercy and goodness toward us, in that, He has willed that we should so offer up our prayers in God's presence, as to call God Father,

\* S. John viii. 44.

† Isaiah i. 2.

‡ S. John viii. 34.

and name ourselves sons of God, even as Christ is Son of God—a name this, which none of us would have presumed to use, had not He Himself permitted us thus to pray. We should, therefore, dearest brethren, remember and feel that, when we call God our Father, we ought to act as the sons of God; that as we joy in Him as Father, He also may so joy in us. Let us demean ourselves as the Temples of God, that it may be manifest that God dwelleth in us. Let not our deeds fall away from the Spirit, that we who have begun to be heavenly and spiritual, may only think and do what is spiritual and heavenly, for the Lord God Himself has said, *Them that honour me I will honour; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.\** The blessed Apostle also hath set forth in his epistle, *Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price. Glorify and possess God in your body.†*

XII. After this we say, *Hallowed be thy name*; not because we wish for God to be made holy by our prayers, but because we ask of Him, for His name to be preserved holy in us. For by whom can God be sanctified, Who Himself sanctifies? But because Himself has said, *Be ye holy for I am holy,‡* we pray and entreat this, that we who have been made holy in Baptism, may continue what we have begun to be. And for this we daily entreat. For we stand in need of daily sanctification, that we who daily sin, may cleanse again our sins by continual sanctification. But in what this sanctification consists which is conferred upon us of God's goodness the Apostle declares, saying, *Neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord*

\* 1 Samuel ii. 30.

† 1 Cor. vi. 19.

‡ Lev. xi. 44.

*Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.\** He says that we are sanctified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God. We pray that this sanctification may abide in us; and because the Lord and Judge warned the man healed and quickened by Him, not to sin again, lest a worse thing should come upon him, we offer up this prayer with constant supplications; we request night and day that this sanctification and new life, which are obtained of God's grace, may by His protection be preserved.

XIII. In the next clause there follows *Thy kingdom come*. We ask that the kingdom of God may be shown unto us in just the same way as we pray that His name may be hallowed in us. For when does not He reign? and when has that a beginning which ever has been, and which shall continue for ever? We beseech that our kingdom may come,—a kingdom promised unto us by God, and purchased for us by the blood and Passion of Christ; that we, who were His servants in this world, may hereafter reign together with Christ, as Himself promised us, saying, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*† But, most beloved brethren, even Christ Himself may be meant by the kingdom of God, Whom we daily desire to come, and Whose coming we pray may be shown unto us. For inasmuch as He is our resurrection, because in Him we rise again; so also He may be understood to be the kingdom of God, because we shall reign in Him. Well do we desire the kingdom of God, that is, a heavenly one, seeing that there is also an earthly kingdom. But he who has already renounced the world, is beyond its honours and its kingdom. And, therefore, he who dedicates himself to God and Christ, asks not earthly, but heavenly kingdoms. And we need

\* 1 Cor. vi. 9.

† S. Mat. xxv. 34.

continual prayer and supplication lest we should forfeit our claim to this heavenly kingdom, as have the Jews to whom it was aforetime promised, as the Lord declares and shows. *Many, saith He, shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.\** Herein He shows that the Jews were once children of the kingdom, so long as they continued to be children of God; but after they lost their claim to the Father's name, they forfeited also the kingdom. Wherefore, we Christians, who in our prayers have begun to call God our Father, pray also that the kingdom of God may come unto us.

XIV. We add further and say, *Thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth*, not that God may do what He wills, but that we may be able to fulfil His will. For who hindereth God from doing what He wills? But since the devil opposes us, so that our thoughts and actions do not in all things obey God, we pray and entreat that the will of God may be done in us; and that it may be done in us we need the will of God, that is, His help and protection, since none is strong in his own strength, but is safe only in the indulgence and mercy of God. Thus our Lord, showing the infirmity of that human nature which He bare, says, *Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me,†* and giving His disciples an example to do not their own will, but the will of God, He added these words, *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.* And in another place He says, *I came down from heaven not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent me.‡* Since, then, the Son was so obedient unto the will of His Father, how much more should the servant be obedient unto his master's will. Thus also, in His

\* S. Matt. viii. 11.

† S. Matt. xxvi. 39.

‡ S. John vi. 38.

Epistle, S. John exhorts, and teaches us to do the will of God, saying, *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever, as God also abideth for ever.\** We who would abide for ever must do the will of God, Who is eternal.

XV. But the will of God is that which Christ both did and taught. Humility in deportment; steadfastness in the faith; modesty in words; justice in acts; mercy in alms-deeds; discipline in manners; not to know how to commit an injury; and to be able to bear one when inflicted; to preserve peace with the brethren; to love God with all our hearts; to love Him because He is our Father; to fear Him because He is God; to prefer nothing at all to Christ, because neither did He prefer anything whatever to us; to cling inseparably to His love; boldly and faithfully to stand by His cross; when a contest arises touching His name and honour, to evince by our words that firmness by which confession is made; in torture that boldness by which we encounter; in death that endurance by which we are crowned; this is to strive to be a co-heir with Christ, this to perform the commandments, and to fulfil the will of our Father.

XVI. But we pray that the will of God may be done *as in heaven, so on earth*; because both conduce to the consummation of our safety and salvation. For since we possess a body of earth, and a spirit of heaven, we ourselves are both earth and heaven; and we pray that in both, that is in body and spirit, the will of God may be done. For there is a struggle betwixt the flesh and the spirit, and

\* 1 S. John ii. 15.



a daily encounter betwixt these two antagonist principles, so that we do not the things we would, because, whilst the spirit seeketh things heavenly and divine, the flesh lusteth after what is earthly and worldly. And, therefore, we pray that by the aid and assistance of God, peace may be made between these two, so that, whilst the will of God is done both in the flesh and spirit, the soul which has been new-born through Him, may be saved. And this the Apostle S. Paul openly and plainly declares in these words, *The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh : and these are contrary the one to the other ; so that ye cannot do what ye would. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these ; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like : of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, chastity.\** And, therefore, we pray for this with daily, nay, ceaseless supplications, that the will of God may be done in us both in heaven and earth ; because this is the will of God, that things temporal give way to things heavenly, the spiritual and divine have the pre-eminence.

XVII. It may also, most beloved brethren, be understood in this manner, that, since the Lord commands and admonishes us to love even our enemies, and pray for them also that persecute us, we make supplications for those who are still earth, and have not yet begun to be heavenly, that in them also may be done the will of God, which Christ fulfilled by saving and restoring man. For seeing that the disciples are no more called earth by

\* Gal. v. 17.

Him, but *the salt of the earth*; and the apostle says, that the first man is *of the dust of the earth*, but the second *from heaven*; fitting is it that we also, who ought to be like unto God our Father, *who maketh His sun to rise on the good and the evil, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust*, should pray and entreat (Christ teaching us) in such a manner, as to make our prayer for the salvation of all; that, as in heaven, that is, in us the will of God is done through our faith, so that we are of heaven; so on earth, that is in unbelievers, God's will may be done; that they, who by their first birth are earthly, may, born again of water and the spirit, begin to be heavenly.

XVIII. In the next clause of the prayer we entreat, and say, *Give us day by day our daily bread*. And this may be understood both spiritually and literally, because both interpretations conduce, by Divine aid, to our salvation. For Christ is the bread of life, and this bread belongs not to all, but to us. And as we say *Our Father*, because He is the Father of those who know and believe on Him, so also we say *our bread*, inasmuch as Christ is the bread of us who belong to His body. But we pray that this bread may be given unto us daily, lest we, who are in Christ, and daily receive the Eucharist as the food of our salvation, should commit some greivous crime, and so expelled and not communicating, should be deprived of the bread of heaven, and separated from the body of Christ, as Himself declares and warns us, saying, *I am the bread of life, which came down from heaven: if any man eat of my bread, he shall live for ever. And the bread which I shall give him is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world*. When therefore He saith, *that if any man eat of His bread he shall live for ever*, as it is manifest that they live who belong to his body, and by the right of communication receive the

Eucharist, so on the other hand, must we fear and pray, lest any being excommunicated be separated from the body of Christ, and remain far from salvation, as Himself warns us, and says, *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.\** And therefore we pray that our bread, that is, Christ may be daily given unto us, so that we who remain and live in Christ, may not be deprived of His sanctification and body.

XIX. It may likewise be interpreted in this manner, that we who have renounced the world, and through the faith of spiritual grace, cast aside its pomps and riches, ask only that food and sustenance may be given unto us, as the Lord instructs us, and says, *Whosoever forsaketh not all that he has cannot be my disciple.†* But he who has begun to be a disciple of Christ, and has renounced all things according to the direction of his master, should ask only for daily food, and not further extend the desires of his prayer, as our Lord Himself again teaches us, and says, *Take no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.‡* Fitting, therefore, is it that a disciple of Christ ask only food for the day, since he is forbidden to take thought for the morrow, and since it is self-contradictory and inconsistent for us to ask to live long in the world, when we pray that the kingdom of God may quickly come. Thus, also, the blessed Apostle instructs us, forming and confirming the steadfastness of our hope and faith. *We brought nothing into the world, saith he, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some have*

\* S. John vi. 51.

† S. Luke xiv. 33.

‡ S. Mat. vi. 34.

*coveted after they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.\**

XX. Herein he shows that riches are not only to be despised, but are dangerous ; that they are the root of flattering evils, which by secret deception mislead the blindness of the human mind. Wherefore also God condemns the rich fool, who thought of his worldly stores, and boasted of the plentifulness of his abundant fruits, saying, *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee. Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ?*† The rich man, doomed to die that very night, joyed in his possessions, and when life was already failing, his thoughts were fixed on the abundance of his provisions. Our Lord on the contrary teaches that he is a perfect and accomplished Christian, who, selling all his goods, and distributing for the use of the poor, layeth up for himself treasures in heaven. He saith that such a one can follow Him, and imitate the glory of our Lord's passion, who, unhindered and girt about is involved in no meshes of worldly cares, but can easily and uninterruptedly follow his possessions which he has sent beforehand to God. And that each one may prepare himself for this, let him so learn to pray, and from the tenor of the prayer discover what kind of person he ought to be.

XXI. For it cannot be that the righteous should be in want of his daily bread, since it is written, *The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish.*‡ And again, *I have been young, and now am old: yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*§ So also the Lord promises, and says, *Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have*

\* 1 Tim. vi. 7. † S. Luke xii. 20. ‡ Prov. x. 3. § Ps. xxxvii. 25.

*need of these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.\** He promises that all things shall be added unto those, *who seek the kingdom of God, and His righteousness.* For since all things are God's, he that hath God shall lack nothing, if he fail not in his duty to God. Thus, for Daniel, shut up in the lion's den by order of the king, a meal was provided by divine interposition, and the man of God was fed in the midst of wild beasts hungry, yet sparing him. Thus Elijah was fed in flight, and was supported during persecution, as the ravens ministered to him, and the birds brought him food in solitude. And oh! savage cruelty of human wickedness: the wild beasts spare, the birds bring food, and men lie in wait and rage.

XXII. After this, we entreat forgiveness of our sins, saying, *And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.* After supply of food pardon of sin also is asked, that he who is fed by God, may live in God; and that provision may be made, not only for this present and fleeting life, but also for the eternal, to which they can come whose sins are forgiven; which our Lord calls debts, as in the Gospel He says, *I forgave thee thy debts, because thou desiredst me.†* But how necessary, wise, and saving a thing is it to be admonished that we are sinners, who are compelled to ask pardon of our sins; so that, when the mercy of God is entreated, the mind is called back to a consciousness of guilt. And that none may flatter himself as innocent, and so by exalting himself perish the more miserably, he is instructed and taught, that he sinneth daily, by being commanded daily to pray for forgiveness. So also, in a word, St. John warns us in his epistle, saying, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;*

\* S. Matt. vi. 31.

† S. Mat. xviii. 32.

*but if we confess our sins, He is faithful, and just to forgive us our sins.\** In his epistle he has comprehended both, viz.: that we ought to pray for our sins, and that, when we do so, we obtain mercy. Therefore, also, he said, that God is faithful to forgive sins, keeping the words of His promise, seeing that He, Who taught us to pray for our debts and sins, has promised that His fatherly mercy and pardon, shall be granted unto us.

XXIII. But, besides this, He added a law binding us by a fixed condition, and covenant, to ask that our debts may be so forgiven, as we also forgive our debtors, knowing that our petitions for forgiveness can not be granted, unless we also adopt the like rule towards our debtors. Therefore also in another place he says : *With what measure ye mete, it shall be meted unto you again.†* And the servant, who, after that all his debt had been forgiven him by his master would not forgive his fellow servant, was cast unto prison. Because he would not yield to his fellow servant, he lost what his master had yielded unto him. And this Christ more forcibly sets forth in his precepts with the greater weight of His authority : *When ye stand praying, saith He, forgive if ye have ought against any ; that your Father also who is in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in Heaven forgive your trespasses.‡* You will have no excuse in the day of judgment, when you are judged according to your own sentence, and you yourselves are treated as you have treated others. For God has commanded us to be peaceable, and of one mind, and heart, in His house, and such as He made us in our second birth, He would have us continue when new-born ; that we who have begun to be sons of God may remain in the peace of God, and we

\* 1 S. John i. 8.

† S. Matthew, vii. 2.

‡ S. Mark, xi. 25.

who have one spirit may be of one mind and heart. For this reason God receives not the sacrifice of one at enmity, and commands him to return from the altar, and be first reconciled to his brother, that God also may be reconciled by his peaceful prayers. Our peace, and brotherly love, and a people bound together in the unity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are a sacrifice more acceptable to God.

XXIV. For in the sacrifices which Abel and Cain first offered unto God, He regarded not their gifts, but their hearts, so that his gift was accepted who approved himself in his heart. Peaceable and righteous Abel, when in innocency he sacrificed to God, taught the rest also, when they bring their gifts to the altar, so to come in the fear of God, in singleness of heart, and righteousness, and the peace of agreement. Deservedly was he, who offered such sacrifices to God, himself afterwards made a sacrifice unto God, so that he, who possessed the righteousness and peace of the Lord, by first enduring martyrdom might be the first fruits of the Lord's passion by the glory of his blood. Such in a word will be crowned by the Lord; such in the day of judgment will judge with the Lord. But he who is at variance, and enmity, and maintaineth not peace with his brethren, cannot, according to the testimony of the blessed Apostle, and holy writ (even though put to death for the name of Christ), escape the sin of brotherly disunion, since it is thus written: *He that hateth his brother is a murderer,\** and no murderer can enter the kingdom of Heaven, or live with God. He cannot live with Christ who would imitate Judas, rather than Christ. Of what enormity is a sin, that cannot be washed away even by the baptism of blood! How heinous the offence, which cannot be expiated by martyrdom!

\* 1 S. John, iii. 15.

XXV. The Lord also necessarily admonishes us to say in our prayer: *And lead us not into temptation.* By these words it is shown that the adversary hath no power against us, unless God first permit him; so that all our fear, devotion, and thoughts, are turned to God, since the evil one can do nothing in our temptations, unless power be given from Him. This the divine scripture proves, which says, *Nebuchadnessar, King of Babylon, came against Jerusalem, and besieged it, and the Lord delivered it into his hands.\** But power is granted unto the evil one against us in proportion to our sins, as it is written: *Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord against whom they sinned, and would not walk in His ways, neither were obedient unto His laws? Wherefore He poured upon them the fury of His anger.†* And again, when king Solomon sinned, and forsook the commandments and ways of the Lord, it is written: *And the Lord raised up Satan against Solomon.‡*

XXVI. But power is granted against us for two reasons; either for punishment when we sin, or for our glory when we are approved, as we find was the case with Job; God manifesting it, and saying: *Behold, all that he hath I give into thy power; only upon himself put not forth thy hand.§* Our Lord, also, at the time of His Passion, says: *Thou couldst have no power against me, except it were given thee from above.||* But when we ask that we may not come into temptation, we are reminded of our frailty and weakness; seeing that we thus pray, lest any should boastingly exalt himself, or arrogantly and proudly claim anything to himself, or regard as his own the glory either of confession or suffering, since our Lord himself, teaching us humility, has said: *Watch*

\* Daniel i. 1, 2. † Isaiah xlii. 25. ‡ 1 Kings xi. 23. § Job i. 12.

|| S. John xix. 11.



*and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak;*\* that, whilst a humble and lowly confession comes first, and all is ascribed unto God, we may of His bounty obtain whatever we ask as suppliants, in the fear and reverence due to God.

XXVII. After all these, there follows a clause which in a comprehensive summary comprises all our petitions and prayers. For, last of all, we say: *But deliver us from evil;* comprehending all things which the enemy frameth against us in this world; from which we may have secure and firm protection, if God deliver us, and grant His aid in answer to our prayers and supplications. But when we say: *Deliver us from evil,* there remaineth nothing more which we need require, when we have once implored the protection of God against evil. And if this be gained, we stand safe and secure against all things which the devil and the world devise. For what fear has he of the world, who has God as his protector in it?

XXVIII. What wonder, most beloved brethren, that such is the prayer which God taught, since in His instructions He has comprised all our prayers in one saving sentence? This had already been told beforehand by the prophet Isaiah, when, full of the Holy Ghost, he spake of the majesty and mercy of God. *Summing up,* says he, *and cutting short his word in righteousness, because the Lord will make a short word in all the earth.*† For when our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, came to all, and collecting together the learned and the unlearned alike, gave His saving precepts to both sexes, and all ages, He made a full compendium of His instructions, so that the memory of the learner might not be burdened by the heavenly discipline, but might quickly learn whatever was necessary for simple faith. Thus, when He taught

\* S. Matt. xxvi. 41.

† Isaiah x. 22.

what life eternal is, He comprised the mystery of life in a great and divine brevity, saying: *But this is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent.\** So, also, when He chose out of the law and the prophets the first and greatest commandments, He said: *Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.†* On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.‡ And again: *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, so do ye also unto them. For this is the law and the prophets.§*

XXIX. Not only in words, but by deeds also, did our Lord teach us to pray, Himself often praying, and making intercession, and by the testimony of his example teaching us what we ought to do, as it is written, *Himself departed into a solitary place, and prayed.||* And again, *He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.\*\** But if He, Who was without sin, was wont to pray, how much more ought we sinners to do so? And if He, watching without ceasing all night long, offered up continual prayers, how much more ought we to watch by night, with oft-repeated supplications.

XXX. But our Lord offered up His prayers and petitions not for Himself (for what should He without sin ask for Himself), but for us, and our sins, as Himself also declares, when He says unto Peter, *Behold Satan hath desired to have you, that He may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.††* And afterwards He made intercession with His Father for all, saying, *I pray not for these alone, but for them also, who*

\* S. John xvii. 3. † S. Mark xii. 29. ‡ S. Matt. xxii. 40. § S. Matt. vii. 12

|| S. Luke v. 16. \*\* S. Luke vi. 12. †† S. Luke xxii. 31.

*shall believe on me though their word, that they all may be one, as Thou Father art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one.\** So great was our Lord's mercy and concern for our salvation, that not content with having redeemed us by His blood, He asked besides this prayer even somewhat more for us. See what was the desire of His petition, that as Father and Son are one, so we also may abide in the same unity. So that hence also may be seen how grievously he sins, who rends unity, and breaketh peace, seeing that for this our Lord also prayed, wishing, namely, that thus His people should be saved, and live in unity, since He knew that discord entereth not into the kingdom of God.

XXXI. But when we stand to pray, most beloved brethren, we ought to watch and fix our thoughts upon our prayers with all our heart. Let all carnal and worldly thoughts be withdrawn, and let not the mind think of anything save the subject of our prayers. For this reason the Priest before prayers uses a prefatory address, and prepares the minds of the brethren, by saying, *Lift up your hearts*; so that, when the people answer, *We lift them up unto the Lord*, they may be reminded that they ought to think of nothing but the Lord. Let the breast be closed to our enemy, and opened to God alone, and let us not permit the enemy of God to have access to it at the times of prayer. For oftentimes he steals on, and entereth in, and by subtle wiles withdraws our prayers from God, so that we have one thing in our hearts, and another in our voice, whereas not the sound of the voice, but the mind and thoughts should pray unto the Lord, in all purity of intention. But what carelessness is it to be distracted, and led astray by foolish and profane imaginations, when you are entreating the Lord's mercy, as though there were any subject on which you ought more to think

\* S. John xvii. 20

than that you are conversing with God. How can you claim to be heard by God, when you do not hear yourself? Would you have God mindful of you, when you pray, whilst you are unmindful of yourself? This is not to be on your guard at all against the enemy; this is in prayer to insult the majesty of God by the carelessness of your entreaties; this is to watch with the eye, and sleep with the heart, whereas a Christian ought, even when his eyes slumber, to watch with the heart, as it is written in the Person of the Church speaking in the Song of Songs, *I sleep, and my heart watcheth\** Wherefore the Apostle impressively and cautiously warns us, saying, *Continue instant in prayer, and watch in the same*;† teaching and showing us in these words that they can obtain what they ask of God, whom God observes watchful in prayer.

XXXII. But those who pray should not come to God with unfruitful or empty prayers. Ineffectual is our petition, when a barren prayer is offered unto God. For since every tree that beareth not fruit is cut down, and cast into the fire, so likewise a prayer that beareth not fruit cannot gain the favour of God, because it is not fruitful of good works. And therefore Holy Scripture instructs us, saying, *Prayer is good with fasting and alms.*† For He, Who in the day of judgment will give us the reward for good works, and alms, is now a gracious hearer of him who cometh to prayer with good works. Thus was it that Cornelius, the centurion, gained a hearing when he prayed. *For he gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.*‡ And when he was praying about the ninth hour, an angel came in unto him, bearing testimony to his deeds and saying, *Cornelius, thy prayers, and thine alms, have come up as a memorial before God.*||

\* Cant. v. 2.

† Col. iv. 2.

‡ Tob. xii. 8.

§ Acts x. 2.

|| Acts x. 4.

XXXIII. Quickly do our prayers ascend to God, when the claims of our works carry them up unto Him. Thus also did the angel Raphael bear witness to the unceasing prayer, and continual alms-deeds of Tobit, saying: *It is honourable to reveal, and confess the works of God. Now, therefore, when thou didst pray, and Sarah thy daughter-in-law, I did bring the remembrance of your prayers before the Holy One; and when thou didst bury the dead, I was with thee likewise. And when thou didst not delay to rise up, and leave thy dinner to go and cover the dead, I was sent to prove thee, and now the Lord hath sent me to heal thee, and Sarah thy daughter-in-law. For I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, who go in and out before the glory of the Holy One.\** So also the Lord admonishes and teaches us the same things by the prophet Isaiah, saying: *Loose, says he, the bonds of wickedness, undo the heavy burdens. Let the oppressed go free, and put an end to all unjust obligations. Deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are cast out into thy house. When thou seest the naked cover him, and hide not thyself from thine own flesh. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer, and whilst thou art still speaking, He shall say, Here I am.†* He promises that He is nigh, and hears, and protects those who loose the bonds of unrighteousness from the heart, and give alms to the household of God, according to His commandments, and who are themselves heard by God, because they hearken unto His commands. The blessed Apostle St. Paul, assisted in the straits of his distress by the brethren, says that the

\* Tob. xii. 11.

† Isaiah lviii. 6.

good works which are done are sacrifices unto God. *I am full*, saith he, *having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, and well pleasing unto God.\** For when a man *hath pity on the poor, he lendeth unto God*; and he that gives to the least, gives unto God, and spiritually sacrifices unto Him an odour of a sweet smell.

XXXIV. Now in celebrating worship we find that the three children with Daniel, strong in faith, and victorious in captivity observed the third, sixth, and ninth hour, denoting by a sacrament the Trinity, which was to be revealed in latter days. For the first hour going on to the third shows the perfect number of the Trinity; so from the fourth to the sixth we have another Trinity, and when from the seventh to the ninth is completed, a perfect Trinity is numbered in these spaces of three hours. And the worshippers of God long ago spiritually fixed upon these intervals of time, and observed them as the stated and lawful hours of prayers. And it was afterwards shown that there were sacraments in holy men praying at these times. For at the third hour, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples, Who fulfilled the gracious promise of the Lord. So also St. Peter went up upon the house at the sixth hour, and was taught both by a sign and the voice of God admonishing him, to admit all to the grace of salvation, since before he was in doubt touching the cleansing of the Gentiles. And our Lord being crucified from the sixth to the ninth hour washed away our sins in His own blood, and, that He might redeem and quicken us, then perfected the victory by his passion.

XXXV. But now, most beloved Brethren, besides the hours antiently observed, both the times and mysteries of prayer have been increased upon us. For in the morning we must pray, that the resurrection of our Lord may be

\* Phil. iv. 18.

commemorated in our early devotions. And this the Holy Ghost long ago pointed out to us in the Psalms, saying: *My King, and my God, to Thee will I pray; Thou shalt hear my voice in the morning; in the Morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and look up.\** And again the Lord speaks by the Prophet, in these words: *They will seek me early in the morning, saying: Come, and let us return unto the Lord.†* And at sunset also, and when the day closes we must also pray again. For since Christ is the true Sun, and the true day, when, at the setting of the world's sun, and the close of its day, we pray and entreat that the light may again shine upon us, we pray that the coming of Christ may bestow upon us the grace of eternal light. And that Christ is called the day, the Holy Spirit declares in the Psalms. *The stone, saith He, which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. It is the Lord's doing, and is wonderful in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord has made, let us walk in it, and be glad.‡* So also that He is called the Son, the prophet Malachi testifies, saying: *To you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings.§* But if in Holy Scripture Christ is called the true sun, and the true day, there is no hour in which Christians are exempt from the duty of frequently, and always worshipping God, that we who are in Christ, that is, in the true sun, and day, may continue all day long in prayer to Him. And when night, advancing in its turn, comes on in its appointed course, our prayers can suffer no loss from the darkness of night, because the sons of light have day even in the night season. For when is he without light who has light in his heart? or when has he not sun, and day, whose sun and day is Christ?

\* Ps. v. 3.

† Hos. v. 15.

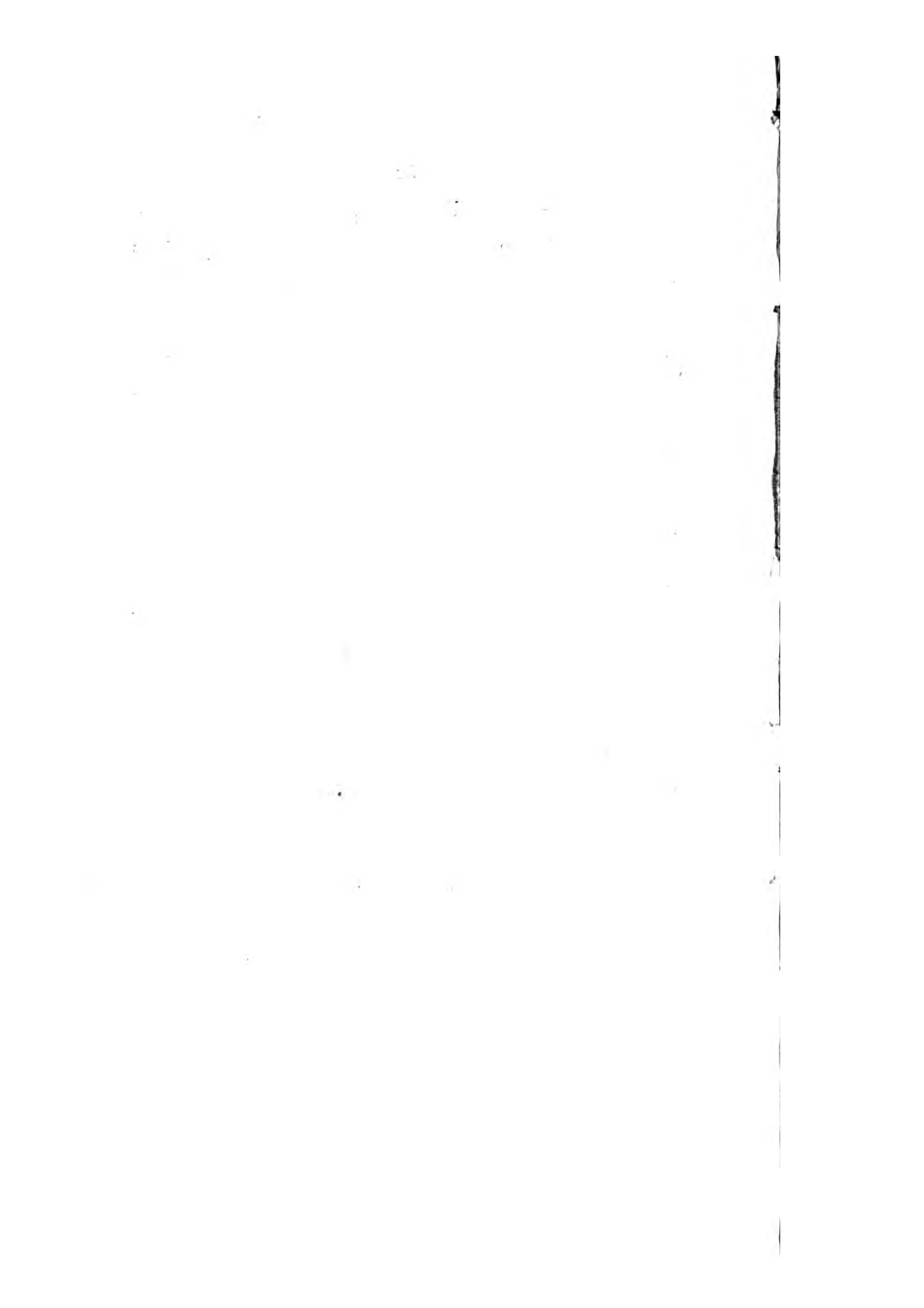
‡ Psalms cxviii. 22.

§ Mal. iii. 20.

XXXVI. But let not us who are always in Christ, that is, in light, cease from prayers even at night. Thus the widow Anna continued without intermission her constant prayers and watchings, in asking the favour of God as it is written in the Gospel: *She departed not, it says, from the Temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.\** Let the Gentiles, therefore, who have not yet been enlightened, consider this, or the Jews, who have forsaken the light, and remained in darkness. Let us, most beloved brethren, who are always in the light of the Lord, who remember and bear in mind what we began to be when we received grace, esteem the night as day. Let us ever believe that we are walking in the light, and let us not be hindered by the darkness from which we have escaped. Let there be no cessation of prayers in the hour of night, no slothful and reckless waste at the time of devotion. Spiritually refreshed and new-born by the mercy of God, let us imitate what we are about to be. About to have for ever in the kingdom day alone, without the intervention of night, let us so watch in the night as in the day. About always to pray and give thanks unto God, let us here also cease not from prayers and thanksgivings.

\* S. Luke ii. 3





## ON THE LAPSED,

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X The following treatise (written 252), was composed for the purpose of inciting those who had fallen away from their holy faith, during the persecution under Decius, to deep and sincere penitency for the grievous sin they had committed. The lapsed here mentioned were of three classes; first, of those who obtained certificates that they had complied with the edict; second, of those who offered the sacrifices required; and third, of those who went even further than this, and denied and blasphemed the name of the blessed Jesus, Whom they were bound by the vows of Holy Baptism, to confess before men. Attempts were made to admit these into the bosom of the Church they had forsaken, by some easy and new process. To expose the danger of satisfying a sin-burdened conscience by these deceptive methods, and to obtain an observance of the ancient discipline of the Church, was the object which St. Cyprian proposed to himself in this eloquent treatise. The character of this discipline may be learnt from the tractate itself, and is more fully set forth in his epistles.

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I. We see, dearest brethren, that peace has been restored to the Church again; and, (what the weak regarded as difficult, and the unbelievers as impossible,) by Divine aid, and protection, our safety is re-insured. Our minds are returning unto joy, and now that the tempest and clouds of persecution have been scattered, tranquillity and calm have shone upon us again. We must ascribe praise unto God, and celebrate with thanksgiving His benefits and gifts, although our voices ceased not even in persecution from returning thanks unto Him. For our enemy cannot gain so great power over us, as to prevent us, who love the Lord with all our heart, and soul, and strength, from adoring and confessing His blessedness, and praises, always and in all places. The day ardently wished for by all has come, and after the fearful and dismal darkness of a long night, the world has been illumined by the light of the Lord.

II. We look upon Confessors illustrious in the renown of an unsullied name, and glorious in the praise of constancy and faith; we salute with a holy kiss, and embrace those for whom we have long looked with ardent affection. We have before us a white-robed army of soldiers, who

by steadfast encounter have broken the fierce attack of the persecution by which they were assailed, prepared to undergo imprisonment, armed to suffer death. Boldly have ye withstood the world: a noble sight have ye afforded unto God, and become an example to brethren who shall tread in your steps. Your conscientious voice has spoken of Christ, on Whom it once confessed that it believed; your unsullied hands, which were accustomed to none but works Divine, assisted not at sacrilegious sacrifices; your mouths, hallowed by heavenly food, after the Body and Blood of Christ, loathed the ungodly contagion, and remains of idol-offerings; your heads have remained free from the impious and polluted veil, by which the captive heads of the sacrificers were there covered; your foreheads, consecrated by the sign of God, brooked not the crown of the devil, but were reserved for the crown of the Lord. With how great gladness does your mother, the Church, receive you in her bosom, on your return from battle! How joyfully and exultingly does she open her gates that ye may enter in united companies, bearing the trophies from the vanquished foe! With triumphant men, women also come, who have surpassed their sex in battling with the world. Virgins also, twice glorious in warfare, swell your numbers; and boys, whose virtues are beyond their years. Besides these, the rest of those who remained firm attend your honours, and follow your footsteps with the next and almost conjoint insignia of praise. These, too, possess the same sincerity of heart, and the same sound, unwavering faith. Leaning upon the unshaken foundations of the heavenly precepts, and strengthened by the evangelical traditions, they were not alarmed either by the threatened exiles, the intended tortures, or the loss of their estates, or the pains of the body. The time for the trial of their faith was fixed beforehand; but he who bears in mind that he has renounced the world, heeds not the

days of the world; and he who hopes for eternity from God, reckons not earthly seasons.

III. Let no one, dearest brethren, let no one diminish this glory; let no one, by evil detraction, weaken the undoubted constancy of the steadfast. When the day fixed upon for recantation was passed away, whoever did not comply within the time, confessed that he was a Christian. It is the highest kind of victory, for one seized by the hands of the Gentiles to confess the Lord. It is the next step to glory, by prudent withdrawal, to be reserved for the service of the Lord. The former is a public, the latter a private confession; the one conquers an earthly judge, the other, content with God for his Judge, preserves a pure conscience in the integrity of his heart; the one gives proof of a readier courage, the other of more prudent anxiety. The one, as the day approached, was already found prepared; the other was, perhaps, respited; and yet he, who withdrew and left his property, because he would not deny the faith, would doubtless have confessed, had he also been detained.

These heavenly crowns of the Martyrs—these spiritual glories of Confessors—these noble and exemplary virtues of the steadfast, are saddened by this one cause of grief, *viz.*, that the relentless foe has torn from us, and cast aside a part of our bowels in his devastating slaughter. What, dearest brethren, shall I do at this juncture? Tossed about by the conflicting passions of my mind, what shall I say, or in what words express myself? Tears are more needed than words, to express the grief with which I bewail the blow inflicted on our body, and bemoan the multiplied losses of our once numerous community. For who is there so unfeeling and iron-hearted, who so forgetful of brotherly charity, as to refrain from tears when standing in the midst of manifold ruins, and mournful, and sadly disfigured remnants of his brethren,

and not, in the first outbreak of sorrow, to express his grief in tears, sooner than in words? I grieve, brethren, I grieve with you; and my own integrity and steadfastness entice me not to assuage my grief, inasmuch as the Shepherd is most deeply wounded by the wounds of his flock. I link my heart to all; I share with you the distressing weight of sorrow and mourning. I mourn with those that mourn; I weep with those that weep, and feel that I am fallen with the prostrate. My limbs are pierced by those darts of the raging foe; those cruel swords passed through my vitals. My mind could not be free and untouched during the time of persecution; and sympathy laid me low with my fallen brethren.

V. Nevertheless, dearest brethren, the truth must be maintained; and we must not permit the gloomy darkness of this grievous persecution so to blind our minds and understandings, that there remain no light, and illumination, whence the Divine precepts can be understood. If only the cause of the slaughter be acknowledged, the remedy for the disease is discovered. The Lord willed that His family should be tried; and, because long peace had relaxed the rigor of the discipline which was divinely delivered unto us, a heavenly visitation awakened our fallen and, I had almost said, sleeping faith; and, whereas, we for our sins have deserved far more, a most merciful Lord has so tempered all things, that whatever has happened, would seem to be rather a trial than a persecution.

VI. All were giving themselves up to the increasing of their possessions, and forgetful of what the faithful either had done in the times of the Apostles, or are bound to do at all times, they, influenced by an unquenchable desire for gain, were engrossed by the acquisition of increased wealth. The priests were wanting in earnest devotion; the ministers held not the entire faith; there

was no mercy in deeds, no discipline in manners. The beards of the men were marred, the women stained their faces with dye. The eyes, formed by the hands of God, were changed; and the hair was falsely coloured. Crafty deceits were practised to allure the hearts of the simple-minded, and wily devices to ensnare the brethren. They entered into the bonds of marriage with unbelievers, and prostituted the members of Christ to the Gentiles. They not only swore falsely, but were even guilty of perjury; swollen with pride, they depised their rulers; with poisoned tongues they slandered each other, and through inveterate hatred were separated. Many Bishops, who ought to have been an encouragement and example to the rest, neglecting their divine cure, became engrossed in secular affairs; they quitted their Chairs, and deserting their people, wandered through strange provinces, and frequented the markets for gainful transactions; whilst their brethren in the Church were starving, they endeavoured to accumulate money, took possession of farms by wily deceit, and made their gains greater by increased usuries. What did we not deserve to suffer for sins of such enormity, seeing that the divine word has long ago forewarned us, saying: *If they forsake My law, and walk not in My judgments: if they break My statutes, and keep not My commandments, I will visit their transgressions with a rod, and their sins with vengeance.\**

VII. These things were declared beforehand, and foretold: but we, unmindful of the rule and instructions given unto us, have brought it to pass by our sins, that, because we despised the commandments of the Lord, we were brought by more severe remedies to a correction of our sins and the trial of our faith. And we were not at last so turned unto the fear of God, as to bear faithfully, and

\* Ps. lxxxix 31.

manfully, this our correction and trial, sent by Him. Almost at the very first words of the threatening, a very great number of the brethren betrayed the faith, and were not overthrown by the fierceness of persecution, but threw themselves down by a voluntary fall. What, I beseech you, was the strange, and new thing which had happened, that (as though unheard of, and unexpected things had arisen) the vow of Christ should be broken with inconsiderate rashness? Did not the Prophets of old, and the Apostles afterwards, foretell these things? Did not they, full of the Holy Ghost, foretell the sufferings which the faithful would ever endure, and the injuries which heathens would ever inflict? Does not the Divine Scripture, which is ever arming our faith, and strengthening the servants of God by its heavenly voice, say: *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve?*\* Does it not, showing the anger of the Lord's indignation, and forewarning us of the fearfulness of His punishments, say again: *They worship them whom their fingers have made, and the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself, and I will forgive them not.*† And again God speaks, and says: *He that sacrificeth unto any God, save unto the Lord only, he shall utterly be destroyed.*‡ Afterwards, also, in the Gospel, our Lord, a teacher by words, and accomplisher by deeds; teaching what should be done, and doing whatever He taught; did not He foretell whatever is now doing, and shall be done? Did He not also determine beforehand, eternal punishments to those who denied Him, and the rewards of everlasting life to the Confessors?

VIII. All these things, alas! have escaped, and been obliterated from the memory of some. They did not, at all events, wait to be apprehended before they went up, nor to

\* Deut. vi. 13.

† Is. ii. 9.

‡ Ex. xxii. 20.

be examined before they denied. Many were vanquished before the battle, and overcome without encounter; they did not even reserve to themselves the power of appearing to offer unwillingly the sacrifices to idols. They ran to the market-place of their own free will, and voluntarily hastened unto death, as though they had long desired this, and were embracing the granted opportunity for which they had ever wished. How many, because of the approach of evening, were put off by the magistrates! How many entreated that their death might not be delayed! What violence can such adduce as an excuse for his sin, since he himself rather committed violence, that he might die? When they thus came, of their own accord, to the capitol, and voluntarily submitted to the commission of this heinous sin, did not their limbs tremble, their faces become blackened, their hearts fail, and their arms fall powerless? Were not their senses stupified? Did not their tongues cleave to their mouths, and their speech fail them? Could a servant of God, who had already renounced the Devil, and the world, stand there and speak, and renounce Christ? Was not that altar, on which he went to die, his funeral pile? Should he not have fled with abhorrence from that altar, which he had seen smoking, and redolent with noisome odours, as from the death and grave of his existence? Why bring with thee, unhappy wretch, an offering and a victim for a sacrifice? Thou thyself hast come as an offering and a victim to the altar; there thou hast sacrificed thy salvation, and hope; thy faith thou hast burnt in those fatal flames.

IX. And many were not satisfied with their own death; the people were urged on to destruction by mutual exhortations, and they pledged one another to death in the fatal cup. And that nothing might be wanting to fill up the measure of their guilt, infants also, brought in the arms, or led on by the hands of their parents, lost the privileges



which, in the very commencement of their life, they had gained. Will not these, when the day of judgment comes, say, "We committed no sin, nor did we voluntarily leave the food and cup of the Lord, and hasten to unholy communion; the treachery of others destroyed us, and we have found that our parents were our murderers; they lost us the Church as our mother, and God as our Father, so that, whilst young and unable to think, and ignorant of that fearful deed, we were brought by others into a participation of their sins, and undone by the treachery of others."

X. And alas! no weighty and just reason can be advanced to excuse such heinous conduct. They had to leave their country, and bear the loss of their property. But who, I would ask, can be born, and die, and not at some time or other leave his country, and suffer the loss of his estates? Let not Christ be left; and let them ever fear the loss of salvation and their eternal home. Lo, the Holy Spirit cries out, saying: *Depart ye, depart ye; go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.\** And yet those who are the vessels of the Lord, and the temple of God, do not come out from the midst, nor retire to escape touching the unclean thing, and being polluted and defiled by deadly food. In another place, also, a voice from heaven is heard, telling us beforehand what the servants of God should do: *Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.†* He that comes out, and departs, does not become a partaker of her sins; but he *receives of her plagues*, who is found to be *a partaker of her sins*. And therefore our Lord hath commanded us to withdraw, and flee in times of persecution; He hath taught us to do so both by His word and example. For

\* Isaiah, lii. 11. † Rev. xviii. 4.

since the crown is the gift of God, and cannot be received until the hour is come, he who abides in Christ, and in the meanwhile retires, does not deny the faith, but is waiting for the time. But he who has fallen because he did not withdraw, has remained to make a denial.

XI. We must not, brethren, disguise the truth, nor conceal the real cause and origin of the wounds we have received. A blind love for their possessions ensnared many; and they could neither be prepared nor in readiness for departure, whose property bound them as with a chain. They who remained were tied down by these chains and fetters; by them their virtue was kept under, their faith subdued, and their minds chained down, and their souls imprisoned; so that they, who were devoted to earthly lusts, became a prey and food to the serpent, who, according to God's sentence, feeds on the dust of the earth. And therefore was it, that our Lord, the Teacher of good things, and instructing us for the future, says: *If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, and follow Me.\** Did the rich do this, they would not perish because of their riches; *laying up treasure in heaven*, they would not have a domestic enemy and conqueror. *If their treasure were in heaven, their hearts, and souls, and affections would be in heaven;* and they could not be conquered by this world, if they had nothing in it whereby they might be overcome. Then could one freely and unshackled follow the Lord, as did the Apostles, and many in the Apostles' time, and some ever have done, who left their parents and their all, and united themselves to Christ by indissoluble ties.

XII. But how can they follow Christ, who are bound down by the chain of their property? or how do they seek heaven, and ascend to high and lofty things, who are bent

\* S. Matthew xix. 21.

downwards by earthly lusts? They think that they possess, whereas they are rather possessed; the servants of gain, they are not masters over their money, but are rather enslaved by it. To times and men such as these the Apostle alluded, when he said, *But they that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some have coveted, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.\** But with what rewards does the Lord invite us to a contempt of this world's goods? With what plentifulness does He recompense us for the paltry, trifling things of this world? *There is no one, saith He, that leaves house, or land, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, and in the world to come life everlasting.†* When we know, and are well assured of these things on the truth of the Lord Who promises them, losses of this kind are not only not to be feared, but even to be wished for; since the Lord Himself again says, and declares unto us: *Blessed are ye, when men shall persecute you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall cast you out, and reproach your name as evil for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for behold your reward is great in heaven.‡*

XIII. But (they may further say) torments were about to be employed, and fearful tortures threatened those who refused to comply. He who has been conquered by tortures, may indeed complain of them; he may allege his sufferings as an excuse, who has been overcome by them. Such a one may ask and say, "I was resolved manfully to contend, and mindful of my vow, took up the arms of

\* 1 Tim. vi. 9.

† S. Mark x. 29.

‡ S. Luke vi. 22.

devotion and faith; but the various tortures and long-continued punishments overpowered me contending in the struggle. My mind remained fixed, and my faith strong, and a long time my unchanging spirit struggled with the racking pains. But when the cruelty of my unrelenting judge was renewed afresh, and when at one time the lashes flayed, at another the clubs beat, the rack stretched, the claw dug up, and the fire burnt my already wearied frame, then my flesh failed me in the contest, the infirmity of my body yielded, and my body, not my mind, gave way under my sufferings." Such a reason may readily obtain pardon — such an excuse awaken our commiseration. For such a reason was it that our Lord lately pardoned Castus and Emilius; thus was it, that having been vanquished in the first encounter, He made them victorious in the second battle, so that they became stronger than the flames to which they had aforesaid yielded, and conquered that by which they had been worsted. They entreated pardon, not by pitiable tears, but wounds; not by a lamentable tone of voice alone, but by the agonies and sufferings of a lacerated body. Their blood was in the stead of weeping, and flowed from their half-burnt bodies in the place of tears.

XIV. But now what wounds can the conquered show—what seams of lacerated bodies—what mangling of limbs, seeing that their faith did not struggle and fail, but their faithlessness prevented the encounter? When an act is voluntarily done, necessity cannot be pleaded in excuse. And this I do not say to load our brethren with reproaches, but rather to move them to offer up the prayers of satisfaction. For since it is written: *They that call you happy, cause you to err, and destroy the way of your path*;\* he who soothes the sinner by flattering words, adds

\* Is. iii. 12.

fuel to his sins, and does not stay, but multiplies his offences; but he who, at the same time, rebukes and instructs his brother with healthier counsel, leads him forward unto salvation. *As many as I love*, saith the Lord, *I rebuke and chasten*.\* So it behoves the priest of God, not to mislead by deceitful complaisance, but to provide wholesome remedies. He is an unskilful physician, who handles with sparing touch the swollen covering of the wounds, and by preserving increases the virus lodged in the inmost parts of the body. The wound must be opened, and cut, and healed by stronger remedies, the ulcerated parts being removed. The sick patient may, through excess of pain, speak, cry out, and complain; but, he will afterwards be thankful when he feels that he is healed.

XV. A new kind of havoc, most beloved brethren, has broken out amongst us, and, as though the storm of the persecution had not raged wildly enough, a deceitful evil, and mild-seeming pestilence has been added to the number, under the pretence of mercy. Contrary to the rigor of the Gospel—contrary to the law of our Lord and God, by the rashness of some, easy terms of communion have been framed, a vain and delusive peace, fraught with danger to those that give, and bringing no blessing to those that receive. They looked not for a tardy return to health, nor the true medicine derived from giving satisfaction; penitency has been driven from their breasts, and the remembrance of a most grievous, and heinous offence, is removed. The wounds of the dying are concealed, and a deadly blow, lodged in the very depths of their vitals, is covered over by pretended grief. Returning from the altar of the Devil, they approach the Holy thing of the Lord, with filthy and polluted hands; even now, whilst almost surfeited with the deadly food of idol

† Rev. iii. 19.

offerings, their jaws breathing forth their sin, and redolent with fatal contagion, they approach the Body of the Lord; whereas divine Scripture meets them, and cries out, and says: *They that be clean, shall eat of the flesh; but the soul that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offerings that pertain to the Lord, having his uncleanness on him, even that soul shall be cut off from his people.\** The Apostle likewise bears witness, and says: *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.†* And he further threatens, and denounces the perverse and incorrigible, saying: *Whosoever eateth the bread, or drinketh the cup of the Lord unworthily, is guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.‡*

XVI. Contemning and despising all these precepts before their crimes have been expiated, before they have made public confession of their sins, or had their consciences cleansed by the sacrifice, and hands of the Priest, and appeased the wrath of an angry and threatening Lord, violence is done to His Body and Blood, and they offend more against the Lord with mouth and hands, than when they denied Him. They deem that peace, which some offer with deceitful words. Peace it is not, but war; and he is not united to the Church who is separated from the Gospel. Why call they an injury a kindness? or why call ungodliness by the name of piety? Why cut short the bitterness of their repentance, and pretend that they communicate with those, who ought incessantly to weep, and entreat the mercy of the Lord? This is to the fallen what the hail is to the corn, the storm star to the trees. murrain to cattle, and dreadful storm to the mariners, They take away the comfort of eternal hope; they tear up the tree by the root; by poisonous conversation they

\* Lev. vii. 20.

† 1 Cor. x. 21.

‡ 1 Cor. xi. 27.

increase the deadly contagion ; they dash the ship against the rocks, so that it cannot reach the harbour. This facility does not grant, but robs them of, peace ; it giveth not communion, but is a hindrance to salvation. This is another persecution, and another trial, by which the subtle enemy by secret devastation attempts the ruin of the fallen, to the intent that mourning may cease, grief be silenced, the remembrance of their sin may pass away, the bewailings of the flock be stifled, their weeping stayed, and the wrath of a grievously offended Lord be not deprecated by long and complete repentance, although it is written: *Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent.\**

XVII. Let none impose upon, or deceive himself. The Lord alone can have mercy ; He only can grant pardon of sins committed against Him, Who bore our sins, Who suffered for us, Whom God delivered up for our offences. Man cannot be greater than God ; the servant cannot bestow his grace and indulgence for sins of deeper dye committed against the Lord ; the lapsed would only be adding unto his sins were he to forget that it is written: *Cursed is the man that putteth his trust in man.†* To the Lord only must we pray ; the Lord must we appease by our satisfaction, Who has said that He denies those who deny Him, and Who alone has received all judgment from the Father. We believe, indeed, that the merits of Martyrs, and the works of just men may have much power with the Judge ; but not until the day of judgment is come, not until at the end of this life and world, His people stand before the tribunal of Christ.

XVIII. But if with unseemly hastiness any one rashly imagines he can grant remission of sins unto all, or dares to rescind the precepts of the Lord, he not only does not good, but doeth harm to the fallen. Not to keep God's will is to provoke His anger ; it is to forget that the mercy

Rev. ii. 5.

† Jer. xvii. 5.

of God must be first supplicated, and doing despite to the Lord to presume upon his own power. Under the altar of God the souls of the slain Martyrs cry aloud, saying: *How long, O Lord, Holy and True, dost Thou not judge, and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth. And it was said unto them, that they should have patience, and rest yet for a little season.\** And can one imagine, that any one would be privileged in opposition to the Judge, to grant general remission and pardon of sins; or that he could protect others, before himself was avenged? The Martyrs direct that something be done; but only if just, if lawful, if what is to be done by God's Priest be not against the will of our Lord Himself; if the ready and willing consent of the Donor be obtained, and the petitioner assign due limits to his request. The Martyrs direct something to be done; but if what they direct be not written in the law of God, it becomes us first to know that they have obtained of God what they ask, and then to comply. For it does not immediately appear, that what man has promised has been granted by the Majesty of God.

XIX. For Moses made entreaty for the sins of the people, and yet, when he asked pardon for the sinners, he obtained it not: *I pray Thee (said he to the Lord), this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin, forgive it; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of my book.†* That friend of God, who always spake face to face with the Lord, could not obtain what he asked, nor did he by his supplications appease the anger of an offended God. God praised and commended Jeremiah, saying: *Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee;*

\* Rev. vi. 10.

† Ex. xxxii. 31.



*and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and ordained thee a prophet unto the nations;\** and to him, oftentimes making intercession and prayers for the sins of the people, He said: *Pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them ; for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto Me for their trouble.†* And who more righteous than Noah, who alone was found righteous when the earth was full of wickedness? Who nobler than Daniel? Who stronger in the strength of faith to endure martyrdoms, or more blessed with the favour of God than he, who so often encountered and conquered, and survived his many conquests? Who more abounding in good works than Job? more strong in temptation, more patient in afflictions, more humbled in his fear, more constant in faith? Yet God declared that He would not grant their petitions, if they should entreat. For when the prophet Ezekiel prayed for forgiveness of the people's sins, He said: *When the land sinneth against Me, by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out My hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it. Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they only should be delivered themselves.‡* Thus we see that whatever is asked does not depend on the mind of the petitioner, but on the will of the Giver; neither can human counsel take or assume anything unto itself unless the Divine Will assent thereto.

XX. Our Lord speaks in the Gospel, and says: *Whoever shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father, Which is in Heaven. But he that denieth Me, him also will I deny.§* If He denieth not those who deny Him, neither does He confess those who

\* Jer. i. 5.

† Jer. xi. 14.

‡ Ex. xiv. 13.

§ S. Luke, xii. 8.

confess Him. The Gospel cannot hold good in one part, and fail in another. Either both must hold good, or both lose the power of truth. If those who deny are not obnoxious to the punishment due to their sins, neither will confessors receive the reward of their virtue. Besides, if the faith which conquered be crowned, then vanquished treachery must needs be punished. Thus, the Martyrs can avail nothing if the Gospel is to be annulled; or, if it cannot be, they who are become Martyrs of the Gospel can do nothing contrary to the Gospel. Let no one, dearest brethren, detract from the dignity of Martyrs, nor destroy their honours and crowns. The immoveable strength of their unimpaired faith remains; and he can neither say nor do anything against the will of Christ, whose hope, and faith, and virtue, and glory are all in Him. They who have themselves kept the commandments of God cannot advise the Bishops to do anything contrary to His will. Is any one greater than God, or richer in mercy than Divine Goodness, so that he should wish that undone which God has permitted to be done; or that he should imagine that the Church can be preserved by his assistance, as though God had not sufficient power to protect Her?

XXI. Perhaps it may be said, all these things have been done and come about without the knowledge or permission of God, whereas Holy Scripture teaches the ignorant, and reminds the forgetful, saying: *Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord, He against Whom they had sinned? for they would not walk in His ways, neither were they obedient unto His law. Therefore He hath poured upon them the fury of His anger.\** And in another place it testifies and says: *Is the Lord's hand shortened that it cannot save, or His ear heavy that it cannot hear? But your*

\* Is. xlii. 24.

*iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear.\** Let us rather reckon up our offences, and, reviewing our deeds and the secrets of our hearts, weigh the demerits of our consciences. Let it return into our hearts, that we have not walked in the ways of the Lord, and have cast aside the law of God, and have never been willing to keep His saving precepts and commands.

XXII. What good opinion can we entertain of him, what fear and faith do you think that he had, whom neither terror could correct, nor the persecution reform? His high and proud neck was not bowed down, even after his fall; nor was his swollen and haughty mind brought low after his defeat; fallen and wounded he threatens the steadfast and sound; and, because he cannot forthwith receive the Body of the Lord in his distainted hands, or drink with his polluted lips the Blood of Christ, he impiously threatens the Priests. And, oh! the excess of thy frenzy, thou madman, thou art angry with him who is striving to turn away from thee the anger of God; thou threatenest him who is entreating the mercy of God in thy behalf, who feels the wound of which thou art not sensible, and sheds tears for thee, which perchance thou dost not shed for thyself. Thou art still heaping up and aggravating thy offences; and whilst thou art inexorable towards the Bishops and Priests of God, dost thou think that the Lord can be reconciled unto thee?

XXIII. Rather attend and give heed to what we say. Why do not thy deaf ears hear the saving counsels which we offer? Why are thy eyes so blind as not to see the way of penitency which we show? Why is thy mind so foolish and infatuated as not to understand the healthy remedies which we learn and teach from the Heavenly Scriptures? Or if some are so weak as to have little faith

\* Is. lix. 1.

in the future, let them be terrified by the present. What punishment do we see them suffer who have denied God? What mournful ends do we bewail! And even here they cannot escape unpunished, although the day of punishment may not yet have come. Some meanwhile are punished that the rest may be corrected: the sufferings of the few are an example of all.

XXIV. One of these, who of his free will went up to the capitol in order to recant, was struck dumb, after he had denied Christ. The punishment began there, where the crime began, so that he could ask for nothing more, who had not words to offer a prayer for mercy. Another when in the baths—for this was wanting to her crime and evil deeds, that she should forthwith go to the baths who had lost the grace of the life-giving washing—being possessed by an unclean spirit, tore with her teeth her tongue, with which she had either eaten polluted food, or uttered the words of denial. After she had taken the accursed food her maddened mouth was armed for her own destruction. She became her own executioner, and did not long survive, but racked by internal sufferings she expired.

XXV. Hear further on my own statement, a circumstance that occurred, and at which I was present. Some parents who fled without arranging their plans, left their little daughter under the care of a nurse. The nurse carried the child thus left behind to the magistrates. As she could not eat flesh because of her tender years, they gave her, before an idol round which the people flocked, bread mixt with wine, which, however, was left after the sacrifices of perishing Christians. The mother afterwards received her daughter. But the little girl could no more speak, and discover the sin she had committed, than she could before either comprehend or prevent it. Through ignorance, therefore, it came to pass, that her mother took her with her when we were sacrificing. But the child,

mingling with the congregation of the faithful, was unable to bear our prayers and supplications, was now convulsed by weeping, now tossed about by various mental throes, and her unformed mind, in her yet tender years, confessed a consciousness of the deed, by the best signs she could, as though some torturer compelled her. When, however, the solemnities being completed, the deacon began to offer the cup to the communicants, and her turn came to receive it with the rest, the little child, under the instinct of Divine Majesty, turned away her head, and closing her mouth with pressed teeth, refused the cup. The deacon, however, persevered, and though against her wish, poured into her mouth somewhat of the consecrated element. Then followed sobbing and vomiting. The Eucharist could not remain in a polluted body and mouth; the draught sanctified by the Blood of the Lord burst forth from the defiled body. So great are the power and majesty of God. The secrets of darkness are unveiled by His light, and hidden crimes have not escaped the notice of the priest of God.

XXVI. This was the case of the infant, who was not yet of age to tell the crime of which, through others' fault, she was guilty. But besides this, another woman, of advanced age and more mature years, crept in unobserved when we were sacrificing, and took not bread, but a sword; and as if she had taken deadly poison into her mouth and body, she was afterwards seized with frenzy, and suffering the pangs, not of persecution, but of guilt, she fell down struggling and trembling. The sin of a concealing conscience was not long unpunished or undiscovered. She who had deceived man, found God her avenger. And when another woman was trying with polluted hands to open her box,\* in which was contained the Holy Thing of

\* This shows the custom, in the early Church, of the communicants taking home with them somewhat of the consecrated elements.

the Lord, she was frightened from presuming to touch it by the fire that rose therefrom. And when another, defiled by sacrifice, dared secretly to receive with the rest a part from the celebrating Priest, he could not eat and touch the Holy Thing of the Lord, but when he opened his hands he found in them nothing but ashes. Thus by the example of one it was shown, that the Lord forsakes men when He is denied; and that which is received profiteth not the unworthy to salvation, when, holiness departing, the saving grace is turned into ashes. How many are there who repent not, nor make confession of their sins, that are daily possessed by unclean spirits! How many, deprived of understanding, are driven to madness, and shaken by the fury of their frenzy! But it is unnecessary to quote the ends of individuals, since through the manifold ruins of the world the punishment of sins is as various as the offenders are many in number. Let each consider not what others have suffered, but what he himself deserves to endure; and let him not think that he has escaped, if meanwhile his punishment be deferred, since he ought to fear the more whom the anger of God his Judge has reserved for itself.

XXVIII. Neither let those flatter themselves into not entering on a course of penitency, who, although they have not defiled their hands by impious sacrifices, have nevertheless polluted their consciences by certificates. This profession of recantation was a proof of a Christian denying what he had been. By words he does what another has done by deeds; and whereas it is written, *Ye cannot serve two masters*, he who obeyed the edict served a worldly law, and obeyed the command of man rather than God. Let him consider whether the declaration of what he has done will be considered among others with either less infamy or less guilt. However this may be, he cannot flee from, and escape God his Judge, since the

Holy Spirit says in the Psalms: *Thine eyes beheld my imperfections, and in Thy book shall all souls be written.\** And again: *Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.†* The Lord also himself forewarns, and instructs us, saying: *And all the Churches shall know that I am He, which searcheth the reins and heart.‡* He clearly sees what is hidden, and regards what is secret and concealed, and none can escape the eyes of God, who says: *I am a God at hand, and not a God afar off: Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? Do not I fill heaven and earth.§* He sees the hearts and breasts of all; and He, Who will judge us not only by our deeds but also by our words and actions, beholds the minds and desires of all, whilst only concealed in the secret places of the closed breast.

XXVIII. Finally, how much better proof of faith and fear do they give, who, though guilty neither of sacrificing nor receiving certificates, yet, because they thought of doing so, confess this with sorrow and sincerity to God's Priests, unburden their consciences by a public confession, throw off the load from their souls, and seek for a healing medicine for their wounds, though light and trifling; knowing that it is written: *God is not mocked.||* God cannot be mocked nor deceived, nor deluded by any crafty stratagem. Nay, rather he the more deeply sins who, judging God after the manner of men, imagines that he can escape the punishment of his offence, because he did not openly commit it. Christ, in His precepts says: *Whoever shall be ashamed of me, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed.\*\** And does he think that he is a Christian who is ashamed, or afraid to confess that he is one? How can he be with Christ, who either blushes

\* Psalms, cxxxix. 16. † 1 Sam. xvi. 7. ‡ Rev. ii. 23. § Jer. xxiii. 23.

|| Gal. vi. 7.

\*\* S. Mark viii. 38.

nor fears to belong unto Him? We may concede that it is an extenuation of his guilt, that he has not been before the idols, nor violated the sanctity of the faith in the presence of the collected and insulting people, nor polluted his hands with fatal sacrifices, nor tainted his mouth with the ungodly food. But yet this only amounts to this much, that his sin is less, not that his conscience is pure. He may the more easily obtain pardon of his sin, yet is he not free from guilt. Let him not abate his acts of penitence, or cease to intreat the mercy of God, lest what seems less in the measure of his sin, should be filled up by his neglecting to make satisfaction.

XXIX. Let each one, I entreat you, most beloved brethren, confess his sin, whilst he who has sinned is yet in this world, whilst his confession can be heard, and the satisfaction and remission given by the Priests are acceptable unto the Lord. Turn we unto the Lord with all our hearts, and expressing repentance for our sins with grief unfeigned, entreat we the mercy of God. Let our souls be prostrate before Him; let penitential sorrow pacify Him; on Him let all our hopes rest. Himself teaches us in what spirit we ought to ask: *Turn ye (saith he) unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts, and not your garments.\** Return we unto the Lord with all our hearts; appease we, according to His teaching, His anger and indignation, by fasting, and weeping, and mourning.

XXX. Can we think that he sorroweth with his whole heart, and entreats the mercy of the Lord with fastings, and weeping, and mourning, who from the very first day of his sin daily bathes with women, and feeding on splendid feasts, and surfeited with superfluous delicacies, vomits the crude remains of yesterday, and shares not his meat

\* Joel ii. 12.



and drink with the needy poor? How does he bewail his fall, who walks with light and joyous steps? And whereas it is written: *Ye shall not mar the corners of your beards*;\* he thins his beard, and dresses his hair. And does he, who has displeased God, strive to please others? Or does she bewail, and mourn, who has leisure to adorn herself in gorgeous apparel, and not to think about the garment of Christ, which she has lost; and to receive costly ornaments and curiously wrought necklaces, and not to bewail the loss of the divine and heavenly adornment? Put thou on as thou wilt foreign dresses, and silken robes, thou art naked; adorn thyself with gold, and pearls, and gems, thou art deformed, whilst thou hast not the comeliness of Christ. Thou who dyest thy hair, cease now at least in these days of sorrow; and thou who drawest a black painted line over thine eyebrows, now at least wash thy eyes clean with thy tears. If thou hadst lost any dear friend by death, thou wouldst in sorrow have bewailed and wept for him, and have given proofs of thy grief with saddened countenance, changed garment, dishevelled hair, sorrowing look, and down-cast face. Hapless wretch! thou hast lost thy own soul; spiritually dead thou survivest to thyself, and moving, bearest death about with thee; and yet thou be-moanest not bitterly, thou groanest not incessantly, nor dost thou withdraw thyself through shame for thy guilt, or for prolonging thy lamentation. Behold here are still deeper wounds of sins, and more heinous offences; to sin and not to make amends; to have fallen away, and not to bewail thy crime.

XXXI. Those illustrious and noble youths, Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, rested not from making confession unto God, even in the midst of the flames and heat of the burning fiery furnace. Although they had a good con-

\* Lev. xix. 27.

science, and have oftentimes gained the favour of the Lord by faithful obedience, and lowly fear, yet they continued to maintain their humility, and to appease the Lord in the midst of their glorious and triumphant Martyrdoms. The Divine Scripture saith: *Azarias stood up, and prayed, and opening his mouth, made confession before God, together with his companions, in the midst of the fire.\** Daniel also, notwithstanding the manifold graces of his faith, and innocency, and the favour of the Lord frequently shown unto his virtues, and praises, yet endeavoured to gain acceptance with the Lord by fastings, and clothed himself in sackcloth and ashes, sorrowfully making his confession, and saying: *O Lord God, great, and strong, and mighty, keeping Thy covenant, and mercy to them that love Thee, and to them that keep Thy commandments; we have sinned and committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have transgressed, even by departing from Thy precepts, and from Thy judgments, neither have we hearkened to the words of Thy servants, the Prophets, which they spake in Thy name to our kings, and all the people, and all the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of faces.†*

XXXII. Thus acted the lowly, single-minded, and innocent, in seeking mercy from the majesty of God; and now they who have denied the Lord, refuse to make amends, and entreat His pardon. I beseech you, brethren, assent to wholesome remedies; hearken unto better counsels; mingle your tears, and join your lamentations, with mine. We entreat you, to enable us to entreat God for you; we first turn to you the prayers with which we supplicate God to have mercy upon you. Offer up a full repentance, and evidence the sorrow of a grieved and troubled mind.

\* Song of 3 Children v. 1.

† Dan. ix. 4.

XXXIII. And be not influenced by the reckless error, or foolish senselessness of some, who, although involved in so fearful a sin, have been struck with such blindness of mind, as neither to see nor bewail their offences. This is the greater visitation of an angry God, as it is written: *God gave them a spirit of deadness* ;\* and again: *They received not the love of truth, that they might be saved; and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*† Pleasing themselves in unrighteousness, and mad in the distractions of a deadened mind, they despise the precepts of the Lord, neglect the medicine for their wound, and refuse to repent. They were reckless before the commission of the sin, and are obstinate after it; unstable before, unsubmitive afterwards; when they ought to have stood, they fell away; when they should fall down and prostrate themselves before God, they imagine they stand. None giving them peace, they have voluntarily taken it; led away by false promises, and linked with apostates, and the faithless, they receive error in the stead of truth; they hold the communion of the excommunicate as valid; and they who believed not God in opposition to men, believe men against God.

XXXIV. Men such as these avoid as much as you can; shun with healthy caution those who adhere to their deadly intercourse. *Their word doth eat as doth a canker*; their conversation spreads as a pestilence; their hurtful and poisoned words of persuasion inflict a worse death than the persecution itself. In the latter case penitency may make satisfaction. But they who take away repentance for sin, close the way to satisfaction. Thus it happens, that whilst by the rashness of some a false sal-

\* Isaiah xxix. 10.

† 2 Thess. ii. 10.

vation is either promised or believed, the hope of true salvation is taken away.

XXXV. But do you, most beloved brethren, who cherish a ready fear towards God, and whose mind even in the midst of its calamity feels a sense of its misery, with penitency and sorrow discover your sins, recognize the most grievous burden upon your conscience, and open the eyes of your heart to a clear apprehension of your offence, neither despairing of the mercy of God, nor yet claiming pardon as a right. As God is ever indulgent and good with the love of a father, so is He dreadful with the majesty of a judge. Let us then weep much, as we have sinned much. Let a careful and long course of healing be adopted for our deep wound, and let not our repentance be less than our sin. Dost thou think that the Lord can be speedily appeased, Whom thou hast denied by faithless words, to Whom thou chosedst to prefer thy estate, and Whose temple thou hast desecrated by sacriligious contagion? Dost thou think that He will readily have mercy upon thee, Whom thou hast denied as thine? Most fervently must men ask; they must be instant in prayer; they must pass the day in grief, spend their nights in watchings and tears, and occupy all their time in mournful lamentations. They should be prostrate on the ground in dust, sackcloth, and ashes, choose no other garment after the garment of Christ has been lost; after having eaten the food of devils they should choose fasting, give themselves up to good words, by which sins are cleansed, and be diligent in frequent almsgivings, by which souls are freed from death. What the adversary desired to take from you let Christ receive; the possessions, through which any has been deceived and worsted, should not be retained or loved. Wealth should be shunned as an enemy, avoided as a robber, and dreaded as a sword or poison by its possessors. Only to this will

what remains be of any avail for the redeeming of the guilt and sin. Exercise yourselves, without delay, in large charitable works; let all our fortune be expended in healing our wound, and all our wealth and possessions put out as loans to the Lord, Who shall be our Judge. Thus was it that faith flourished in the times of the Apostles; thus that the first company of believers obeyed the commands of Christ. They were ready and liberal; they offered their all to be distributed by the Apostles, and yet they had not to redeem sins grievous as ours.

XXXVI. If any one pray with his whole heart; if he bemoan with the lamentations and tears of true penitency; if he entreat of the Lord pardon of his sin by repeated acts of righteousness and charity, He, Who has declared His mercy in these words, may have compassion upon him: *When you turn and lament, then shall you be saved, and know where you have been.*\* Again: *I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, saith the Lord, but that he turn from his way and live.*† And the Prophet Joel declared the loving kindness of the Lord, by the Lord's own command: *Turn ye, saith he, unto the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil which He hath inflicted.*‡ He can grant you forgiveness; He can mitigate His sentence denounced against you. He can graciously pardon the penitent, who doeth good works, and entreats; He can render available whatever for such the Martyrs may ask and the Priests may do. Or if any one move Him yet more by his satisfaction, if by due entreaty he have appeased the anger and indignation of an offended God, He again gives to him weapons, by which conquered he may be armed, He recruits and confirms his strength by which his renewed faith is

\* Is. xxx. 15.

† Ez. xxxiii. 11.

‡ Joel ii. 13.

invigorated. The warrior will renew the contest, commence again the engagement, challenge the enemy, and by his sufferings be the stronger for battle. He who has thus appeased God, who by penitency for his deeds, and shame for his sin, has received greater accessions of virtue and faith from his fall, heard and assisted by the Lord, will render joyful the Church he had made sad, and gain from God not pardon only but a crown.



## ON GOOD WORKS AND ALMS.

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The following Homily, written about 254, contains a forcible exposition of the blessedness of alms-giving, and the doctrine of good works. However providential may have been its first appearance, it is very necessary indeed for these evil days, when faith is withered, love waxed cold, sympathy for the poor and afflicted members of Christ's Body but little felt, and men, neglectful of their soul's best interest, are immersed in worldly cares, and engrossed by the acquisition of wealth, fear not to rob God of that which is His due, even a tenth part of their possessions. Happily the records of our Branch of the Catholic Church, show that She has been a watchful keeper of the trust committed unto Her, and has provided that on every Sunday, should the faithful be exhorted to works of charity, and urged to offer upon His Altar, that which has of His goodness been bestowed upon us. In Her Homilies, too, She has stated, and enforced the subject of this treatise, in the following words :—

“And thereupon that Holy Father, Cyprian, taketh good occasion to exhort earnestly to the merciful work of giving alms, and helping the poor, and there he admonisheth to consider how wholesome and profitable it is to relieve the needy, and help the afflicted, by which we may purge our sins, and heal our wounded souls. But some will say unto me, if alms-giving, and our charitable works towards the poor be able to wash away sins, to reconcile us to God, to deliver us from the peril of damnation, and make us the sons and heirs of God's kingdom, then are Christ's merits defaced, and His Blood shed in vain; then are we justified by works, and by our deeds may we merit heaven; then do we in vain believe that Christ died to put away our sins, and that He rose for our justification, as St. Paul teacheth. But ye shall understand, dearly beloved, that neither those places of the Scripture before alleged, neither the doctrine of the Blessed Martyr Cyprian, neither any other godly and learned man, when they, in extolling the dignity, profit, fruit, and effect of virtuous, and liberal alms, do say that it washeth away sins, and bringeth us to the favour of God, do mean that our work and charitable deeds is the original cause of our reception before God, or that for the dignity, or worthiness thereof our sins may be washed away, and we purged and cleansed of all the spots of our iniquity; for that were indeed to deface Christ, and to defraud Him of His glory. But they mean this, and this is the understanding of those and suchlike sayings, that God of His mercy, and special favour towards them, whom He hath appointed to everlasting salvation, hath so offered His grace especially, and they have so received it fruitfully, that although, by reason of their sinful living outwardly, they seemed before to have been the children of wrath and perdition, yet now the Spirit of God, mightily working in them unto obedience of God's will and commandments, they declare, by their outward deeds, and life, in the shewing of mercy and charity (which cannot come but of the Spirit of God and His special grace), that they are the undoubted children of God appointed to everlasting life.”—*Homily on Alms Deeds, Part II.*

The following remarks, penned by one whose learning is only equalled by his piety, may well be reprinted here, as a valuable introduction to the treatise itself:—“It is, then, undoubtedly a true and Catholic doctrine, found in all antiquity, that fastings, tears, alms-deeds or deeds of mercy, self-affliction, as parts of



a godly penitence, wrought through the grace of Christ and His spirit, and accepted through His precious bloodshedding, are appointed means for the restoration of the sinner ; available, not in themselves, but because they are appointed ; not to any out of Christ (although there also, as in the case of Cornelius, they have drawn down God's favour) but in Him ; not as meritorious causes, but as instruments ; not, as our Homily says, 'that our work and charitable deed is the *original* cause of our acception before God, or that for the dignity or worthiness thereof our sins may be washed away, and we purged and cleansed of all the spots of our iniquity ;' but still, as it quotes from 'that Holy Father Cyprian,' that thereby 'we *may* purge our sins and *heal* our wounded souls.' 'Man doth not live by bread alone,' but 'God feedeth' him, and 'giveth' (as our 'graces' before meals often mentions) 'to His creatures strength to nourish us.' They have an inherent power to nourish, but that power is through the continual will of God. They are means, not causes, of life. Much more, in the spiritual life which is through His spirit, the means which He appoints, avail only as His gifts to them who are in Christ ; and not only so, but, on account of our imperfection, are accepted, at their best, over and above, for Him. They are fruits of the redemption, in the redeemed, accepted for the Redeemer. Still, as we say that fire burns, water cleanses, food nourishes, although they have this power from the will of the Creator, and we mean not that they do this of themselves, or of any will of their own (which they have not), but acknowledge by this language that He employeth means in bestowing His benefits upon us, and that those means have an assigned efficacy towards their end ; so, when it is said, 'By mercy and truth sins are purged away,' and 'As water quenqueth fire, so alms quench sin,' and 'Redeem thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy on the poor,' it is meant to inculcate upon us, that these are means appointed by His mercy, although having their efficacy from His will, Who giveth them their value, and from the dispensation of His love in Christ our Saviour. In objects of sense, the fear is that we ascribe the efficacy to the things themselves ; in spiritual things, lest we deny it. Abundant and self-denying alms-giving and works of mercy, persevering penitence and sorrow, continued 'hardness,' are, at least when combined (as any will have found who has tried), no easy duties ; and so, while we fix our minds on the opposite temptations of formalists and insincere persons to take satisfaction in the mere acts, and forget the awful holiness of God, before Whom we are still sinners, we deceive ourselves : on the plea that the acts have no intrinsic efficacy, we hide from ourselves that they are means of God's appointment, to which He has in His mercy assigned a value, which in themselves they have not. And thus we are in yet greater danger of unreality and self-deceit, in that they who do make sacrifices and who cross the desires of the flesh and the natural man, and (most of all) seek to do what God has appointed, are more in the way to be guided aright than they who persuade themselves it is their duty to neglect such discipline. For indeed the very strongest words used in the ancient church—'sins are purged away,' 'redeem thy sins,' are the very words of God himself. 'The remedies of propitiating God,' says S. Cyprian, 'are given in the words of God Himself. What sinful men ought to do, the Divine lessons have taught ; that God is satisfied by exercises of righteousness, that sins are purged by the merits of mercy.' To shrink from these words is to shrink from God's truth ; and however it may be a part (if it be so) of religious reserve (at any time, or any where, or for a time) to withhold them, it must be with the humiliating consciousness, that truth and evangelic motives to devout action and deep penitence have been so long suppressed among us, that we dare

not, as yet, 'pour the new wine into old bottles, lest the wine be spoiled and the bottles perish;' trusting that God (as He is doing) will so renew us by His spirit that the 'new wine' being poured 'into new bottles,' both shall be 'preserved.'"  
 —*Dr. Pusey's Preface to Avrillon's "Guide for Passing Lent Holyly."*

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L. **Manifold and great, dearest brethren, are the divine mercies, whereby the plentiful and abundant kindness of God our Father, and Christ have both already been, and ever will be, employed for our salvation, inasmuch as the Father sent the Son to save and quicken us, that He might renew us; and the Son was willing to be sent, and called the Son of man, that He might make us the Sons of God; He humbled Himself to raise those who aforesaid were fallen; He was wounded to heal our wounds; He served that He might deliver from bondage, and ensure freedom to, those who were enslaved; He suffered death to bestow upon us mortals the gift of immortality. These are manifold and great blessings of divine compassion. But more than this, of what kind is that care, and how great that loving-kindness, since it is provided in a saving way, that fuller measures should be devised for preserving those who have been redeemed. For when the coming of the Lord had healed those wounds which Adam brought, and had cured the poison of the old serpent, He gave a law to him who was made sound, and enjoined him *to sin no more, lest a worse thing should come upon him.* We were hemmed in and shut up in straits by the law of innocency; and there would have been nothing which the infirmity and weakness of man's frailty could have done, had not divine mercy again stepped forward, and opened unto us a way of ensuring our salvation, by showing unto us works of righteousness and compassion, to the intent that we might wash out by alms whatsoever stains we should hereafter contract.**

II. The Holy Spirit speaks in the Divine Scripture and says: *By alms and faith sins are cleansed.\** Not, indeed, those sins which had been contracted aforetime, for these are washed away by the blood and sanctification of Christ. So, again, it says: *As water quencheth fire so alms quencheth sin.†* Here also it is shown and proved, that as in the laver of the life-giving water the fire of hell is quenched, so by alms and works of righteousness the flames of sins are set at rest. And as remission of sins is given in baptism once for all, so continual and ceaseless almsgivings, like unto baptism, bestow upon us again the favour of God. This also our Lord teaches in the Gospel. For when His disciples were censured for eating without first washing their hands, He answered and said: *He that made that which is within made also that which is without. But give alms, and behold all things are clean unto you;‡* hereby teaching and showing that not the hands are to be cleansed but the breast, and that internal rather than external defilements are to be removed; but that he who cleansed that which is within, has cleansed also that which is without, and that he whose mind is purified, has begun to be clean in skin and body. Moreover, teaching and showing us, how we may be made clean and pure, He added that we must practice giving of alms. He mercifully teaches and admonishes us to exercise mercy; and because He seeks to save those whom He redeemed at so great a price, He teaches that those who have become defiled after the grace of baptism may be again cleansed.

III. Recognise we, dearest brethren, the saving gift of Divine long-suffering, and, since we cannot be without some wound of conscience, let us heal our wounds by spiritual remedies, for the cleansing and washing away of

\* Prov. xvi. 6.

† Ecc. iii. 30.

‡ S. Luke xi. 40.

our sins. And let none so flatter himself because of a pure and unsullied heart, as to rely upon his innocency, and so think that no medicine must be applied to his wounds, since it is written : *Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from sin.\** And again in his Epistle S. John setteth it forth and says : *If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.†* But if we cannot be without sin (and whoever affirms that he is, is either proud or foolish), how necessary, how gracious is the Divine compassion, which, knowing that those who are healed must hereafter be subject to some wounds, has given saving remedies for again healing and curing them !

IV. Never, dearest brethren, has the Divine teaching been silent ; never has it failed either in the Old or New Testament, always and in all places to excite the people of God to works of mercy ; and whosoever by the teaching and exhortation of the Holy Spirit is taught to hope for the kingdom of heaven, is commanded to be liberal in alms-giving. God thus directs and commands Isaiah : *Cry aloud, saith He, in strength, and spare not. Lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.‡* And when He had enjoined that they should be reproached with their sins, and had set forth their misdeeds in the full force of His indignation, and said that they could not make satisfaction for their sins, though they betook themselves to supplications, and prayers, and fastings, nor appease the anger of God though clothed in sackcloth and ashes : yet, in the conclusion, showing that God can be appeased by alms only, He added these words : *Break thy bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are cast out into thy house. When thou seest the naked cover him, and hide not thyself from thine*

\* Prov. xx. 9.

† 1. S. John i. 8.

‡ Isaiah lviii. 1.

*own flesh. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy garments shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall surround thee. Then shalt thou cry, and God shall hear thee. Whilst thou art still speaking He shall say: Here I am.\**

V. The remedies for propitiating God have been given in the words of God himself. The Divine instructions have taught, what sinners ought to do; that God is satisfied by righteous deeds, and that sins are cleansed by the merits of mercy. And in Solomon we read: *Shut up thine alms in the heart of the poor, and these shall intercede for thee from all evil.†* And again: *He that stoppeth his ears against the poor shall call on God, and there shall be none to hear him.‡* For he, who has not himself been merciful, cannot win the mercy of the Lord; nor will he obtain anything in his prayer from Divine goodness, who has disregarded the entreaties of the poor. And this again the Holy Spirit declares and proves in the Psalms, saying: *Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy; the Lord will deliver him in the time of trouble.§* Daniel, mindful of the Divine commands, when king Nebuchadonosor was affrighted and distressed because of an evil dream, gave him a remedy to obtain the divine assistance for averting evil, saying: *Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and redeem thy sins by alms-deeds, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, and God will be merciful to thy transgressions.||* The king obeying him not suffered those sad and fearful things which he had seen, and which he could have escaped and avoided had he redeemed his sins by alms-deeds. The angel Raphael also testifies the same things, and exhorts us to practice alms-

\* Isaiah lviii. 7.      † Sir. xxix. 12.      ‡ Prov. xxi. 13.

§ Psalms xli. 2.      || Dan. iv. 24.

giving, willingly and bountifully, saying: *Prayer is good with fasting, and alms; for alms doth deliver from death, and purge away sins.\** He shows that our prayers and fastings are of less avail, if they are not aided by alms; and that our supplications alone serve but little towards gaining our requests, unless they are attended by the addition of good works and deeds. The angel reveals, and declares, and proves that by alms prayers are rendered effectual; by alms the life is redeemed from danger; and by alms souls are freed from death.

VI. And I do not, dearest brethren, bring forward these things to avoid proving on the testimony of truth what the angel Raphael said. The truth of this is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles; and it is shown by the evidence of a past and completed transaction, that souls are set free by alms not only from the second, but also from the first death. When Tabitha, who was much given to works of righteousness and charity, fell sick and died, S. Peter was sent for to her lifeless corpse; and when he, with the kindness of an Apostle, came without delay, there stood around him widows weeping and entreating, showing cloaks, and coats, and all the garments, they had heretofore received of her, praying for her when dead, not by their voices, but by her deeds. S. Peter knew that what was so requested could be granted, and that Christ's aid would not be denied to the supplicating widows, since when they were clothed He Himself was clothed also. When, therefore, he had kneeled down, and prayed, and, fitting advocate for the widows, and the poor, had offered unto the Lord the prayers entrusted to him, he turned to the body, which lay already washed in an upper room, and said: *In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Tabitha arise.†* And He Who has said in the Gospel that what

\* Tob. xii. 8.

† Acts v. 50.

ever is asked in His name shall be granted, immediately rendered assistance unto Peter. A reprieve from death is granted, and the spirit given back, and, to the wonder and amazement of all, the living body is requickenened beneath the light of this world. So powerful were the merits of mercy! So much availed righteous deeds! She, who had administered the means of living to widows in distress, gained, through the widows' petition, restoration to life.

VII. Therefore, in the Gospel, our Lord, the Teacher of our life, and Master of eternal salvation, giving life to the company of the faithful, and consulting for their eternal interests when gifted with life, among His Divine precepts and Heavenly doctrines, commands and enjoins nothing more frequently, than that we be instant in alms-giving, and fix not our hearts upon earthly possessions, but rather lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. *Sell, saith He, that ye have and give alms.\** And again: *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break not through and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.†* And when He would show to one, who had kept the law, how to be perfect and entire, He said: *If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell all that thou hast, and give unto the poor, and come and follow me.‡* So in another place He says that the merchant of heavenly grace, and the trader for eternal salvation, ought to dispose of all that he hath, and from his possessions purchase the pearl of price, that is, life eternal bought by the blood of Christ. *The kingdom (saith He) of heaven*

\* S. Luke xii. 33.

† S. Mat. vi. 19.

‡ S. Mat. xix. 21.

*is like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls, who, when he has found a pearl of price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.\**

VIII. Those, lastly, He calleth also the sons of Abraham, whom He sees diligent in assisting and feeding the poor. For when Zaccheus had said: *Behold, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any man of anything, I restore unto him four-fold.\** Jesus answered and said: *This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.†* For if Abraham believed in God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness, he, doubtless, who giveth alms according to the commandment of the Lord, believeth in God; and he who hath the true faith, preserveth the fear of God; but he who preserveth the fear of God, thinketh on God in showing compassion to the poor. He, therefore, abounds in good works, because he believes; because he knows that those things are true which have been declared before in the words of God; that Holy Scripture cannot lie, and that unfruitful trees, that is, barren men, are cut down and cast into the fire, but the merciful are called into the kingdom. He, in another place, calleth those the faithful who are rich in good works and fruits, and stigmatizes as unfaithful, the unfruitful and barren, saying: *If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to you that which is true? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?‡*

IX. If you are alarmed, and fear lest, if you practice plentiful alms-giving, your patrimony should be exhausted by reason of your abundant alms, and you perchance reduced to want, be fearless, and without any apprehension on this respect. That cannot be ended, from which anything is expended in the service of Christ, and whence the hea-

\* S. Mat. xiii. 45.

† S. Luke xix. 8.

‡ S. Luke xvi. 11.



venly work is celebrated. Neither do I make this assurance to you upon my own word, but upon the faith of the Holy Scriptures, and the authority of the Divine promise. The Holy Spirit speaks by Solomon, and says: *He that giveth unto the poor shall never lack ; but he that turneth away his eye shall be in great poverty ;\** showing that those who are merciful and rich in good works cannot want, and that the parsimonious and barren will be the rather reduced. So the blessed Apostle S. Paul, full of the grace of the Lord's inspiration, saith: *He that ministereth seed to the sower shall both minister bread for the food, and shall multiply the seed sown, and shall increase the growth of the fruits of righteousness, that in all things ye may be enriched.†* And again: *The administration of this service shall not only supply the wants of the saint, but shall be abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God.‡* Because whilst thanks are offered unto God for our alms, and good deeds in the prayers of the poor, the means of the doer are increased by the recompense of God. And our Lord in the Gospel, even then seeing the hearts of such men, and with prophetic voice denouncing the faithless and unbelieving, bears witness and says: *Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after these things do the Gentiles seek). For your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you.§* He saith that all things shall be added and given unto those who seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness. For our Lord saith, that, when the day of judgment is come, they who have been rich in good works in His Church shall be admitted into His kingdom.

\* Prov. xxviii. 27. † 2 Cor. ix. 10. ‡ 2 Cor. ix. 12. § S. Mat. vi. 31.

X. You fear lest, perchance, your property should fail, were you from it to deal out abundant alms ; and yet you know not, unhappy man, that, whilst you fear lest your possessions fail you, life itself is failing, and salvation is at stake ; and whilst you are solicitous that your worldly goods be not diminished, you do not consider that you yourself are being wasted, being a lover of Mammon more than your own soul ; so that whilst you fear, on your own account, the loss of your estate, yourself are perishing because of your patrimony. And therefore well doth the Apostle cry out and say : *We brought nothing into this world, and we shall carry nothing out. Having therefore food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, who drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which, whilst some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.\**

XI. Are you fearful lest haply your patrimony should fail you, if you begin to give large charities therefrom ? When, I would ask, was it known that the righteous wanted the necessaries of life ? since it was written : *The Lord will not suffer the souls of the righteous to famish.†* Elijah was fed in solitude by the ministering ravens ; and a meal was by Divine interposition prepared for Daniel, when shut up in the den as a prey to the lions ; and you fear, lest giving alms, and gaining the favour of the Lord, you should want food, whereas Himself in the Gospel reproaching those of wavering mind, and little faith, testifies and says : *Behold the fowls of the air ; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye much better than they ?* God feeds the birds, and daily food is pro-

\* 1 Tim. vi. 7.

† 1 Tim. vi. 7.

‡ Prov. x. 3.

vided for the sparrows, and those who have no perception of things divine lack neither drink nor meat. Do you think that a Christian, God's servant, given to good works, and dear unto his Lord, will ever come to want?

XII. This cannot be, unless you think that he who feedeth Christ, is not himself fed by Christ, or that they will not have earthly things, to whom the heavenly and divine are granted. Whence rises this unbelieving thought? Whence this impious and unholy reflection? What hath the unbelieving breast to do in the house of faith? Why is he who does not believe at all in Christ, called and regarded as a Christian? The name of Pharisee is far better suited unto you. For when our Lord in the Gospel was discoursing of alms, and faithfully and savingly advised us by provident charities to make to ourselves friends of our earthly gain, who should afterwards receive us into everlasting habitations, the Scripture subjoined these words thereto: *But the Pharisees also, who were very covetous, heard all these things, and derided Him.\** Some of like spirit, we see, are now in the Church, whose closed ears and blinded hearts admit no light from divine and saving precepts; concerning whom we cannot wonder that they despise the treatises of His servant, since we see that by such the Lord himself is treated with contempt.

XIII. Why do you deceive yourself with these vain and foolish thoughts, as if fear and anxiety for the future withheld you from acts of charity? Why gather around you these shadows and wiles of a pretended excuse? Rather confess the truth; and, since you cannot deceive Him who knows it, bring forth the hidden and secret thoughts of your heart. The shadows of barrenness have besieged your soul, and, the light of truth withdrawing thence, the thick and impenetrable darkness of avarice has

\* S. Luke xvi. 14.

blinded your carnal breast. You are the captive and slave of your money ; you are bound down by the chains and fetters of avarice ; and you, whom Christ had already set free, are again in bondage. You are saving wealth, which, though saved, cannot save you. You are amassing a fortune, which sinks you under its burden ; and you remember not the answer which God made to the rich man, who was boasting with foolish exultation of the plentifulness of his superabundant wealth : *Thou fool, said he, this night shall thy soul be required of thee ; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ?*\* Why sit brooding alone over your wealth ? Why amass a heap of riches for your own punishment, so that the richer you become in this world's goods, the poorer you are to God ? Divide your returns with the Lord your God ; share your profits with Christ ; make Christ a partaker of your earthly possessions, that He also may make you joint-heir with Him of the heavenly kingdom.

XIV. You err and are deceived, whoever think that you are rich in this world. Hear the voice of your Lord in the Apocalypse, chiding such men with just reproaches : *Thou sayest, saith He, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing ; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich ; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear ; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.*† You therefore who are rich, and abounding, buy for yourself of Christ gold tried in the fire, that, your defilements being cleansed away as by fire, you may become as fine gold, purging away your sins by works of charity and righteousness. Buy you white raiment, that you who after Adam were naked, unsightly,

\* S. Luke xii. 20.

† Rev. iii. 17.

and deformed, may be clothed with the white garment of Christ. And do you who are a rich and wealthy matron, in the Church of Christ, anoint your eyes, not with the colouring of the devil, but the eye-salve of Christ, that you may at length be admitted to see God, having gained God's favour by your good deeds, and conduct.

XV. But you cannot, remaining such as you are, do good deeds in the Church. For your eyes, overspread with the shadows of darkness, and shrouded in night, cannot see the poor and needy. Do you, who are wealthy and rich, think that you celebrate the Holy Eucharist aright, when you have no regard unto the offering; who, coming into the Lord's house without a sacrifice, take a part out of the sacrifice which the poor have offered.\* Consider the case of the widow in the Gospel, who, mindful of the heavenly commands, gave alms in the midst of the pressure and straits of poverty, and cast into the treasury those two mites, which were all that she had. When our Lord perceived and saw her, weighing her deed not by her means, but her intention, and considering not how much, but from how much she had given, He answered and said: *Of a truth I say unto you, that this widow hath cast in more than they all. For all these out of their abundance have cast in unto the offerings of God; but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.*† Most blessed and glorious woman, who even before the day of judgment gained the praise of the Judge! Let the rich be ashamed of their barrenness, and unfaithfulness. A widow, and a poor widow, is found rich in charity; and whereas all that is given is generally bestowed upon the

\* Reference is here made to the goodly custom which obtained in the early Church, of the communicants presenting their oblations in kind as well as in money. "Out of these oblations," says Marshall, "the poor were provided for, the bishop and his clergy maintained, the edifices belonging to them kept in repair, and they were enabled moreover to be hospitable to strangers, in another guise, than any legal establishment now enables them to do."

† S. Luke xxi. 3.

orphan and widows, she who ought to receive gives, that we may know, how fearful a punishment awaits the unfruitful rich, since from this example even the poor are bound to exercise charity. And that we may be convinced that these works are given to God, and that whosoever doeth them gains the favour of the Lord, Christ calls this *the offerings of God*, and giveth us to understand that the widow cast her two farthings into *the offerings of God*, that it may be more and more manifest, *that he who hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto God.*

XVI. But, dearest brethren, let not this restrain, and keep back a Christian from good, and works, because one thinketh he can be excused on the plea of providing for his children; since, in expenditures of a spiritual kind, we should think of Christ, Who has said that He receiveth them; and though we prefer not our fellow servants, yet our Lord we should prefer to our children, as Himself instructs and teaches us: *He that loveth, saith He, father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me.\** Likewise, in Deuteronomy, to strengthen our trust in God, and increase our love to Him, the like things are written: *They that say, saith He, to their father and mother, I know thee not, and have not acknowledged their children, these have obtained My words, and kept My covenant.†* For if we love God with all our heart, it is our duty to prefer neither parents nor children to Him. And this S. John also sets forth in his Epistle, that the love of God dwelleth not in them, whom we see unwilling to exercise charity towards the poor: *Whoso, saith He, hath this world's goods, and seeth that his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in Him.‡* For if alms to the poor are a lending unto the Lord; and if what

\* S. Matt. x. 37.

+ Deut. xxxiii. 9.

‡ 1. S. John iii. 17.

is given to the least, is given unto Christ, there is no reason why one should prefer things earthly to heavenly, or set a higher value on things human than on divine.

XVII. So when that widow (of whom we read in the third book of Kings) having consumed all during scarcity and famine, had baked in the ashes bread made of the little wheat and oil that remained, intending, after she had eaten it, to die with her children; Elijah visited her, and begged that something might be first given him to eat, and then that she and her children should be fed with what remained; she neither hesitated to comply, nor did the mother prefer her children to Elijah. That which was pleasing to God, was forthwith done in sight of God; promptly and willingly was that given which was asked for; she gave not a part of her abundance, but the whole out of her small pittance; whilst her children were hungry, another was fed before them; and even in penury and famine, food was not thought of before compassion, so that, whilst, carnally life was despised in salutary works, spiritually her soul was saved. Elijah, herein a type of Christ, and showing what recompense He will make unto all for works of mercy, answered, and said: *Thus saith the Lord, the barrel of meal shall not fail, and the cruse of oil shall not fail, until the day that the Lord giveth rain upon the earth.\** According to the faith of the Divine promise, what she had given was multiplied, and increased unto the widow; and her righteous works, and the merits of her compassion, receiving augmentation and increase, her vessels were filled with meal and oil, and the mother took not from her children what she gave unto Elijah, but her bounteous and pious deeds conferred the more upon them. And yet she knew not Christ; she had not heard His commandments, nor been redeemed by His cross and passion. She gave meat and

\* 1. Kings xvii. 14.

drink, in return for blood; so that hence it may be seen, how grievously he sinneth in the Church, who, preferring himself and his children to Christ, hoards up his riches, and does not share his ample possessions with the needy poor.

XVIII. But yet you have many children in your house, and the number of them prevents your being given to liberal acts of charity. And yet, on this very account, your works of mercy should be greater, because you are the father of many pledges. There are more for whom you should entreat the Lord; the sins of many must be redeemed; the consciences of many purged; and the souls of many set free. As, in this world's life, the greater the number of children, the greater the expense of providing for and sustaining them; so in the spiritual and heavenly life, the outlay of works ought to be greater in proportion to the number of pledges. Thus also Job offered up many sacrifices for his children, and the number of sacrifices given unto God, was proportionate to the number of pledges he had in his house. And since it could not but be that sins should daily be committed in the sight of God, daily sacrifices were offered up, whereby their sins might be blotted out. The Divine Scripture proves this saying: *Job, a perfect and upright man, had seven sons and three daughters, and he cleansed them, offering for them victims, according to their number, and for their sins a calf.\** If, therefore, you truly love your children, and show unto them the full and fatherly sweetness of affection, you should the more abound in works of charity, that, by your righteous deeds, you may commend your children unto God.

XIX. You should not think of him as a father for your children who is mortal and insecure; but secure Him for them, who is the eternal and abiding Father of His

\* Job i. 5.



spiritual children. Make over to Him that wealth which you are hoarding up for your heirs. Let Him be the guardian, and trustee for your children; and let Him, by His Divine Majesty, be their protector against all the injuries of this world. The state seizes not, the treasury taxes not, legal proceedings take not away property trusted unto God. A heritage, preserved by the guardianship of God, is in safe keeping. This is indeed to make after provision for your dear pledges; this is to consult, with fatherly affection, the true interest of future heirs, according to faith of Divine Scripture, which says: *I have been young, and now am old: yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful and lendeth: and his seed is blessed.\** And again: *Whoso walketh blameless in righteousness, shall leave his children blessed after him.†* As a father then, you are a betrayer and traitor to your children, unless you faithfully consult their interests; unless, with true religious affection, you provide for their well-being. You who are solicitous for an earthly, rather than a heavenly possession, and entrust your children to the care of the Devil rather than to God, sin twice, and are involved in two-fold, and double guilt; both, because you ensure not for your children the aid of God as their Father, and teach them to be in love with this world's goods more than with Christ.

XX. Rather be you to your children such a father as was Tobit. Give to your pledges useful and wholesome counsel, such as he gave to his son; leave to your children such commands as he left to his son saying: *And now, my son, I command thee, serve the Lord in truth, and do before Him what is pleasing in His sight; and command thy children to exercise and alms; and be mindful of God, and bless His name always.* And again,

\* Ps. xxxvii. 25.

† Pro. xx. 7.

*All the days of thy life, my dearest son, be mindful of God, and transgress not His commandments. Do righteousness all the days of thy life, and be unwilling to walk in the way of unrighteousness, for if thou deal truly, respect shall be had unto thy works. Give alms of thy substance, and turn not away thy face from any poor man. So shall it be that the face of the Lord shall not be turned away from thee. As thou hast, my son, so do; if thou hast abundance, give the more alms of it; if thou hast little give of that little. And fear not, bestow thine alms; for thou layest up a good reward for thyself against the day of necessity. Because alms doth deliver from death, and suffereth not to go into hell. For alms is a good gift to all that give in the sight of the God Most High.\**

XXI. Of what kind, dearest brethren, is that bounty, the setting forth of which is celebrated in the presence of God! If in the bounties of the Gentiles it is accounted a great and noble thing to be graced with the presence of Proconsuls or Emperors, and more extensive preparations are made, and greater expense incurred by those who present, in order to please the great; how much more illustrious and greater is the glory of that bounty of which God and Christ are spectators! How much more sumptuous should be the preparation, and greater the expenditure in a case where the powers of heaven assemble to the sight, and all the angels vouchsafe their presence; when the presenter is not a candidate for a four-horse chariot or a Consulship, but is gifted with eternal life; when he is not seeking the empty and transitory applause of the people, but is to receive the everlasting reward of a heavenly kingdom.

XXII. And, further, that the slothful and barren who, from love of money have brought forth no fruits

\* Tob. xiv. 10.

of charity unto salvation, may be the more ashamed; and that the consciousness of their disgrace and dishonour may the more deeply wound their defiled and covetous conscience, let each one place before his eyes the devil leaping forth into the midst with his children, that is the people of perdition and death, and in these words provoking a comparison with the people of Christ, Himself being present, and judging, "I for these whom Thou seest with me never received a blow, was never scourged and crucified, nor shed my blood; nor purchased I my family with the price of my cross and passion; neither do I promise them a heavenly kingdom, nor call them again unto paradise by restored immortality; but yet the entertainments they provide for me, how costly, how great are they; got up with what excessive and protracted toil, and with the most costly preparations, to provide which they even mortgage or sell their estates; and should not a handsome display be the result, they are spurned with revilings and hissings, and sometimes all but stoned by the enraged people. Show, O Christ, such as these among Thy people, (I mean the rich and those who abound in wealth), who are instructed by Thy teaching, and are to receive things heavenly for earthly, show whether in that Church of Which Thou art the Head, and Which is under Thy eye, they would mortgage and dispose of their estates to practise bounties as magnificent as these; yea, though changing them for the better into heavenly treasures. In those fleeting and earthly shows of mine none is fed or clothed, none is supported by the comfort of either meat or drink. Between the madness of the giver and the error of the spectator, all is lost in the profane and foolish vanity of cheating pleasures. There in Thy poor Thou art fed and clothed, and Thou promisest eternal life to those who are diligent in good works; and yet Thy followers, who are honoured by Thee

with divine wages and heavenly rewards, are scarcely as many as mine who perish.”

XXIII. What answer, dearest brethren, can we make to this? With what apology are we to defend the rich, guilty of unholy barrenness, and whose minds are blinded by a night of shadows? With what excuse acquit them, seeing that we are so far inferior to the servants of the Devil, as to make no return, even the slightest, to Christ, for the cost of His Passion and Blood? He has given us commands, and taught us, what His servants ought to do; promising a reward to the bountiful, and threatening the unfruitful with punishment. He has declared His sentence, and told us beforehand, what judgment He will pass upon us? What excuse, then, will the inactive plead—what defence the unfruitful make—since if the servant perform not what is commanded, the Lord will do what He threatens? Who also says: *When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand: Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed Me; I was sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying: Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? when saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee?*

*or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them: Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me. Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand: Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungred, and ye gave Me no meat; I was thirsty, and, ye gave Me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; naked, and ye clothed Me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not. Then shall they also answer Him, saying: Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying: Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.\** What greater declaration could Christ make unto us? How could He more forcibly call forth works of righteousness and mercy than by saying, that whatever is given to the poor and destitute is given unto Him, and that He is offended if nothing be given unto the needy and poor; to the intent he who in the Church is moved by no regard for his brother, may yet be moved by looking on Christ; and he who thinks not of his fellow-servant in labour and poverty may think of Christ, Who dwelleth in that very man whom he despises.

XXIV. Therefore, dearest brethren, let those of us who cherish a ready fear towards God, and whose minds have been upraised to things heavenly and divine, by a contempt for and victory over this world, render obedience and gain the favour of the Lord by full faith, devoted-

\* S. Matthew xxv. 31—46.

ness of soul, and ceaseless good works. Let us give our earthly garment to Christ, so that we may be *clothed from heaven*. Let us give the food and drink of this world, so that we may come to the heavenly banquet with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. That we may not reap but little, let us sow abundantly. Whilst we have opportunity, let us consult for everlasting safety and salvation, as the Apostle S. Paul teacheth us, saying: *As we have opportunity, therefore, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. But let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap.\**

XXV. Let us reflect, dearest brethren, upon what the company of the faithful did in the Apostles' time, when in the Church's infancy the mind was endued with greater virtues, and the believers burnt with the yet new ardour of faith. Then they sold their houses and farms, and willingly and liberally offered the amount to be distributed amongst the poor; selling, and thus disposing of their earthly estates, they transferred their property, where they would receive the fruits of eternal possession, and prepared for themselves houses wherein they were to live for ever. Then their abundance in works of charity was such, as was their unanimity in love, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles: *The multitude of them who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither was there any difference between them; nor did they account as their own anywhat of the goods which belonged unto them, but they had all things in common.†* This is to become really sons of God by spiritual birth; this is, by a heavenly law, to imitate the equity of God the Father. For the gifts of God are common for our use; and no one is excluded from His benefits and gifts, to the intent that

\* Gal. vi. 9.

† Acts iv. 32.

the whole race of man may equally enjoy the goodness and bountifulness of God. Thus, for instance, equally for all does the day beam, the sun shine, showers give moisture, the wind blow; the sleepers enjoy one sleep, and the lustre of the stars and moon is common unto all. And according to this example of equality, the earthly possessor, who shares his profits and gains with the brotherhood, being free, and just in his voluntary largesses, imitateth God the Father.

XXVI. What, dearest brethren, will be the glory of the merciful! How great and perfect their joy, when the Lord beginneth to count up His people, and assigning to our merits and good works the promised rewards, will repay heavenly things for earthly, eternal for transitory, great for little; and will present us to His Father to Whom He has restored us by His own sanctification; give us eternity and immortality, to which He renewed us by His all-quickenning blood; bring us back again into paradise, and open unto us the kingdom of heaven according to the faith and truth of His promises! Let these things be deeply fixed in our thoughts and understood with full faith; let these things be loved with all our heart, and be attained by the greatness of never-ceasing good works. A noble and divine thing, dearest brethren, are saving alms; they are a great comfort of the faithful, the mighty defence of our security, defence of hope, guardian of faith, healing of sin; a thing placed in the power of the doer, both great and easy; the crown of peace without the danger of persecution; the true and greatest gift of God; necessary to the weak, full of honour to the strong; aided by them the Christian obtaineth spiritual grace, gains the favour of Christ his Judge, and makes God his debtor. Willingly and readily contend we for this palm of saving works; run we all with God and Christ for our spectators, in the race

of righteousness; and let not us who have begun to be above this life and world, hinder our course by any carnal fleeting and worldly lusts. If the day either of peaceful departure or persecution, find us girt, speedy, and running in this race of good works, never will the Lord fail to reward our merits; to those of us who conquer in peace He will give a white crown according to our works; to those who prevail in persecution a purple one, for our passion.





## ON THE PLAGUE.

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The following Treatise was written to console the Christians when a fearful plague was raging, and they were subject to all the distressing calamities of a famine, and were, moreover, in fear of persecution.

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I. Although, dearest brethren, the most of you possess a sound mind, firm faith, and devout soul, which is not moved because of the manifold excess of the present mortality, but, like a bold and steadfast rock, rather repels than is injured by the swollen storms of this world, and the raging floods of time, and is not overcome but proved by temptations; yet because I perceive that some among the people, either from weakness of mind, or want of faith, or love for the pleasures of life, or delicacy of sex, or (what is more than all) through wandering from the truth, are less steadfast, and do not evince the divine and invincible energy of their mind, there must be no dissembling nor concealing of the matter; but, so far as my weakness permits, the cowardice of a softened mind must be repressed by full vigour, and discourses taken from the words of our Lord, that he, who has begun to be a servant of God and Christ, may be esteemed worthy of God and Christ.

II. For he, dearest brethren, who fights for God, and, stationed in the heavenly camp, hopes for things divine, ought to consider what he is, that we may not be harassed by fears and alarms amidst the storms and tempests of this world, since our Lord foretold that these things would come. By the exhortation of His warning voice, instructing, and teaching, and preparing, and confirming the people of His Church to an endurance of what shall come, He foretold and declared that wars, and famines,

and earthquakes, and plagues should arise in every place. And lest any sudden and unexpected fear of distressing evils should alarm us, He told us beforehand that distresses should increase more and more in the last days. Lo! what was spoken is come to pass; and as what was foretold is come to pass, so also whatever was promised will follow, the Lord Himself assuring us, and saying: *When ye see all these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is at hand.\** The kingdom of God, dearest brethren, has begun to be at hand: the reward of life, the joy of everlasting salvation, never-ending happiness, and the possession of Paradise lately lost, are drawing nigh; whilst the world passes away, now are things heavenly succeeding to the earthly, great to small, and eternal to transient. What place is there here for anxiety or misgiving? Who, in the midst of these things, is fearful and sad, but he whose hope and faith are wanting? He should be afraid of death who is loth to go to Christ. It is for him to be loth to go to Christ who does not believe that he will reign with Christ.

III. For it is written that the just lives by faith. If thou art just, and livest by faith, if thou truly believest in Christ, why dost thou not, as one who will be with Christ, and in full reliance on the promise of the Lord, embrace the call which Christ has given, and rejoice that thou art delivered from the devil? Simeon in truth that just man, who was really just, and with full faith kept the commandments of God, when it had been divinely answered to him that he should not die before he had seen Christ, and the Infant Christ came into the temple with His mother, acknowledged in spirit that Christ was now born, of Whom it had been prophesied unto him; and when he had seen Him, he knew that

\* S. Luke xxi. 31.

he must quickly die. Joyful, therefore, in the expectation of death now near at hand, and secure of a speedy departure, he took the child into his arms, and, blessing the Lord, cried out, and said: *Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation*;\* proving, thereby, and testifying that the servants of God will then have peace, and unbroken and uninterrupted rest, when, delivered from the storms of the world, we reach the haven of eternal rest and safety, and, death being swallowed up, attain unto immortality. For this is our peace; this faithful tranquility; this is steadfast, and firm, and everlasting safety.

IV. But as to this world, what is it but a daily warfare against the devil, and a struggling by ceaseless encounters against his darts and weapons? We are engaged in a contest with avarice, incontinency, anger, and ambition; we have a constant and tiresome wrestling with carnal appetites and worldly allurements. The mind of man, besieged and surrounded on all hands by the assaults of the devil, scarcely meets, and opposes each. If avarice be overthrown, lust springs forth. If lust be restrained, ambition takes its place. If ambition be despised, anger enrages, pride puffs up, drunkenness entices, envy breaketh concord, and jealousy rends friendship. You are compelled to curse, which the divine law forbids: you are forced to take oaths, which is unlawful.

V. So many persecutions daily assault the mind, by so many dangers is the breast beset; and yet it delights to remain long in the midst of the swords of the devil, whereas one ought the rather to desire ardently and long, by death coming more speedily, to hasten unto Christ, as Himself instructs us, when He says: *Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow*

\* S. Luke ii. 29.

*shall be turned into joy.\** Who would not long to be freed from sorrow? Who would not hasten to attain unto joy? But the time when our sorrow shall be turned into joy our Lord again declares in these words: *I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you.†* Since, then, to see Christ is to rejoice, and this our joy cannot be, until we have seen Him, what blindness of mind, or madness is it, to love the straits and pains, and tears of this world, and not rather hasten unto that joy, which can never be taken away.

VI. But these things are so, dearest brethren, because faith is wanting, and none believes that those promises are true which are given by God, Who is true, and Whose word is eternal, and sure to those that believe. Were a man of weight and respectability to make you any promise, you would doubtless have faith in him that promised, and would not believe that you would be either imposed upon or deceived by him of whose faithfulness in word and deed you were well assured. Now, when God speaks with you, are you, with unbelieving mind, in faithless suspense? God promises you, when you depart out of this world, immortality and eternity, and do you doubt? This is not to know God at all; this is to offend, by the sin of unbelief, Christ the Lord and Master of the faithful; this is for one who is in the Church to have no faith in the House of faith.

VII. Christ Himself, the Teacher of salvation, and all good, showeth, how great an advantage it is to depart out of this world; for when His disciples were sorrowful because He had said that He was about to depart, He spake unto them in these words: *If ye had loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I go unto the Father;‡* hereby teaching and showing, that we should rather joy than grieve when the dear ones whom we love depart out of this

S. John xvi, 20.

† S. John xvi. 22.

‡ S. John xiv. 28.

world. Mindful of this, the blessed Apostle S. Paul, in his epistle, speaketh on this wise: *For me to live is Christ, to die is gain*;\* reckoning it as greatest gain to be no longer ensnared in the meshes of this world; no more to be liable to any sins and fleshly lusts; but, freed from painful tribulations, and delivered from the poisoned jaws of the devil, to depart, when Christ calleth, to the joy of everlasting salvation.

VIII. Some, however, are moved, because the contagion of this distemper spreads amongst our people as much as amongst the Gentiles, as though the end of a Christian's faith were that he might happily enjoy this life and world free from the contact of evil; and not suffering here all these distresses to be reserved for future joy. Some are moved, because this mortality is common to us and the rest. And what have we not in common with the rest, so long as, according to the first law of our nativity, this common flesh belongs unto us? As long as we are here in this world, we are by reason of equality of flesh joined with the human race, but separate in spirit. Until, therefore, *this corruptible put on incorruption, and this mortal obtain immortality*, and the Spirit lead us to God the Father, whatever are the troubles of the flesh are common to us with the whole human race. Thus, when the earth is sickly with unfruitful barrenness, famine makes no distinction; when a city is stormed by the enemy, the captivity destroys all alike. And when the cloudless sky withholds rain, all without exception feel the drought; and when the dangerous rocks dash a ship in pieces, all who sail therein suffer one common shipwreck. Disease of eyes, the rage of fevers, and pains in the limbs are common to us with the rest, so long as we carry about with us in this world this common flesh.

\* Phil. i. 21.

IX. Moreover if a Christian were to consider and recognise the terms and conditions on which he became a believer, he would see that he must endure more than others in this world, since he has more fierce struggling with the assaults of the devil. The Divine Scripture teaches and forwarns us, saying: *My son, when thou comest to serve the Lord, stand before Him in righteousness and fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation.\** And again: *In pain endure, and in humility have patience; for gold and silver is tried in the fire, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation.†*

X. Thus Job, after the loss of his estate and the death of his children, and moreover grievously afflicted by wounds and worms, was not conquered, but approved, since in the midst of his distresses and sufferings he evinced the patience of a religious mind, and said: *Naked came I out of my mother's womb, naked shall I return under the earth. The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away: the Lord hath done what seemed good unto Him. Blessed be the name of the Lord.‡* And when his wife would have persuaded him, impatient in the agony of grief, to utter words of complaint and envy against God, he answered and said: *Thou hast spoken as one of the foolish women. If we have received good of the Lord, wherefore shall we not endure evil? In all these things which happened unto him, Job sinned not with his lips before the Lord.§* Therefore the Lord God gave His testimony unto him in these words: *Hast thou considered my servant Job? for there is none like him upon earth, a man without complaint, and a true worshipper of God.||* Tobit also, after his noble deeds, and the many and glorious praises of his mercy, when deprived of his sight, fearing and blessing God in the

\* Eccl. ii. 1. † Sir. ii. 1. ‡ Job. i. 21. § Job. ii. 10. || Job i. 8.

midst of his afflictions, increased his praises by his bodily sufferings; and him his wife endeavoured to corrupt, saying: *Where are thy righteous deeds? Behold what things thou sufferest!*\* But he, stedfast and firm in the fear of God, and armed by religious faith to the endurance of all suffering, yielded not in pain to the temptation of his unstable wife, but rather gained more the favour of God by greater patience, whom afterwards the angel Raphael commends in these words: *It is honourable to reveal the works of God. Now, therefore, when thou didst pray, and Sara thy daughter in law, I did bring the remembrance of your prayers before the Holy One; and when thou didst bury the dead, I was with thee likewise. And when thou didst not delay to rise up, and leave thy dinner, to go and cover the dead, thy good deed was not hid from me; but I was with thee. And now God hath sent me to heal thee and Sara thy daughter in law. I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the presence of the Holy One.*†

XI. Righteous men in all ages have evinced this power of endurance; this rule the Apostles kept according to the command of the Lord; not to murmur in distress, but with constancy and patience, to bear whatsoever may happen in this world. For the people of the Jews always sinned in this respect, in that they too frequently murmured against God, as the Lord God bears witness in the book of Numbers, saying: *Let their murmurings against me cease, and they shall not die.*‡ We must not, most beloved, murmur in adversity, but bear with firmness and patience whatsoever may happen unto us, since it is written: *The sacrifice of God is a troubled*

\* Tob. ii. 14. † Tob. xii. 7,—12—15. ‡ Num. xvii. 25.



*spirit; a broken and a contrite heart God will not despise.\** In Deuteronomy, also, the Holy Spirit teaches us, by Moses, and says: *The Lord thy God will vex thee, and will lay hunger upon thee, and it shall be known in thine heart, if thou hast well kept His commandments or not.†* And again: *The Lord your God proveth you, that He may know whether you love the Lord your God, with all your heart, and all your soul.‡*

XII. Herein Abraham pleased God, because to please Him, he neither feared to lose his son, nor refused to destroy him by his own hands. Thou who canst not bear to lose thy son, according to the law, and lot of mortality, what wouldst thou do, if thou wert commanded to slay thy son? The faith and fear of God ought to make thee prepared for every thing. What though thou lose thy estate; though thy limbs be rackt by the fixt, and painful harassings of disease; though there be a sad, and mournful separation by death, from thy wife, and children, and friends; let not these be stumbling blocks unto thee, but an engagement; let them not weaken nor break a Christian's faith, but rather show forth his valour in the encounter, since all the injury of present evils must be despised in the confident expectation of future good. Unless the engagement precede, there can be no victory; when victory has been won in the battle's strife, then is the conqueror crowned. For the pilot's skill is proved in the storm, and a soldier's valour in battle. It is a trifling contest when there is no danger. Encounter with adversity is a proof of what is true. A deeply-rooted tree is not moved by the fury of the winds, and the ship fastened by its cable is lashed, not broken by the waves; and when corn is beaten on the thrashing floor, the strong and heavy grain despises the winds, but the light chaff is swept away by the breeze.

\* Psal. li. 17.

† Deut. viii. 2.

‡ Deut. xiii. 3.

XIII. So also the Apostle S. Paul, after shipwrecks, and stripes, and after many and grievous torments of the flesh, and body, says that he was not distressed, but amended by adversity, so that the more bitterly he was afflicted, the more surely was he proved. *There was given me, saith he, a thorn in my flesh, the angel of Satan, to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me; and He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.\** When, therefore, we are assailed by weakness, and sickness, and devastation, then is our virtue perfected; then our faith, if it have stood the trial, is crowned, as it is written: *The furnace proveth the potters' vessels, and just men the trial of tribulations.†* This in fact is the great difference between us, and the rest who know not God, that, whereas they complain and murmur in adversities, afflictions do not wean us away from true virtue and faith, but make us stedfast in the day of grief.

XIV. This visitation, of the strength of the body impaired by inward flux, of fire in the marrow breaking out into wounds on the jaws, the intestines shaken by continual vomiting, the eyes bloodshot with fever's heat, the feet of some, or other members of the body, removed by the ravages of putrid disease, whilst languor breaking out because of this wasting, and maiming of the body, either the walking is enfeebled, or hearing obstructed, or sight lost; this avails to proof of faith. What magnanimity is it, to contend with the constancy of an unmoved soul, against so many attacks of devastation, and death! How glorious is it to stand unflinching in the midst of the ruins of the human race, and not to lie prostrate with those who have no hope in God. Rather does it behove

\* ii. Cor. xii. 7

† Ecc. xxvii. 5.

us to rejoice, and embrace the gift presented by the occasion, namely, that whilst we firmly bring forth our faith, and by labour borne are going to Christ in Christ's way, we are receiving the reward of His life and faith, which Himself will give. Let him, doubtless, fear death who, not newborn of water and the spirit, is given up to the flames of hell. Let him fear to die, who has no claim to the cross and passion of Christ. Let him fear to die, who will pass from this to a second death. Let him fear to die, whom, when he departs, eternal fire will rack with everlasting pangs. Let him fear to die, who, by long delay, receives the boon of having his torments and groans put off for awhile.

XV. Many of us die in this pestilence, that is, many of us depart from this world. This pestilence, as it is a plague to Jews and Gentiles and the enemies of Christ, so is it to the servants of God, a departure unto life. But because the just and the unjust die without any difference, there is no reason why you should conclude that the good and the bad have one common end. The righteous are called unto the place of refreshment, the wicked are hastened off to punishment; the faithful are the more speedily gifted with safety, and the faithless are visited with more immediate punishment. We are thoughtless, dearest brethren, and unthankful, touching the divine bounties, and do not recognise the blessing conferred upon us. Behold virgins with their unsullied honours depart in safety, and have no fear of the threats, and corruptions, and abominations of the coming anti-Christ. Boys escape the perils of their dangerous time of life, and happily attain unto the reward of continency, and innocence. No longer does the delicate matron fear any torments, having by her early death won freedom from fear of persecution, and the hands and torments of the executioner. Through fear of mortality and the times the lukewarm are enspirited, the careless

awakened, and the slothful aroused; apostates are compelled to return, and the Gentiles to believe; the old company of the faithful is called to rest, and new and numerous forces are banded together with undaunted courage, who, when the battle comes, will fight without fear of death, since they have come to warfare in the time of death.

XVI. Moreover, dearest brethren, of what kind, how fitting and necessary is this result; that this plague, and pestilence, which seems so fearful, and deadly, tries the righteousness of each, and weighs the minds of men; proving whether the healthy will attend to the sick; where relations dutifully love their kindred; whether masters will have compassion upon their languid servants; whether the physicians will not desert the sick who entreat their assistance; whether the angry will abate their violence; whether the rapacious will, even through fear of death, quench the ever insatiate desires of raging covetousness; whether the proud will bend low the neck; whether the wicked will appease their audacity; whether, having lost those dear to them, the rich, who are to die without heirs, will even in such a juncture bestow any thing in charity. And though this mortality have conferred none other benefit upon us, it has been of the utmost service to Christians and the servants of God, inasmuch as we have begun willingly to desire martyrdom, whilst we have learnt to know no fear of death. This is to us an exercise of virtue, not destruction; it imparts to the mind the glory of courage, and by contempt of death prepares it for the crown.

XVII. But, perchance, some one may object, and say: "This then, in the present mortality, is the cause of my sadness, that I, who had been prepared for confession, and with my whole heart, and full virtue, had devoted myself to the endurance of my passion, am deprived of

my martyrdom, being anticipated by death." In the first place, martyrdom is not in thy own power, but is of God's gift; and thou canst not say thou hast lost that, which thou knowest not thou wast worthy to receive. Besides, God, the searcher of the hearts, and reins, and the discernor and beholder of hidden things, both sees, praises, and approves thee; and He, who sees thy virtue ready in thee, will assign a reward according to thy virtue. Had Cain, when he was offering his gift unto God, already slain his brother? And yet God, foreseeing, condemned beforehand the murder conceived in his heart. Therefore, as in this case, the wicked design and malicious intention were seen by a foreseeing God, so also in the servants of God, who think of confession, and contemplate martyrdom, the will devoted to what is good, is crowned by God the Judge. It is one thing for the will to be wanting, when martyrdom is offered; and another for the will to exist without an opportunity for martyrdom. Such as the Lord finds thee when he calls, so also He judges thee, as Himself testifies and says: *All the Churches shall know that I am He, Which searcheth the heart, and reins.\** For God requireth not our blood, but our faith. For neither Abraham nor Isaac nor Jacob was slain; and yet honoured because of the merits of their faith and righteousness, they were esteemed first among the Patriarchs; to whose banquetting are summoned all those that are found faithful, and righteous, and praiseworthy.

XVIII. We should bear in mind, that we are bound to do not our own will, but the will of God, as our Lord has commanded us daily to pray. How absurd and inconsistent is it for us (since we pray that God's will may be done) not immediately to obey the command of His will, when He calls and summons us out of this world! We are reluctant, and oppose, and, like obstinate servants,

\* Rev. ii. 23.

are led into the presence of our Master with sorrow, and grief, departing hence by the constraint of necessity, not the ready obedience of the will; and we desire to be honoured with heavenly rewards by Him, to Whom we have reluctantly come. Why then pray we, and entreat, that the kingdom of heaven may come, if worldly captivity charms us? Why do we ask and entreat with frequently repeated prayers, that the day of His kingdom may be hastened, if we have more intense yearnings, and greater desires to serve the Devil here, than to reign with Christ?

XIX. Furthermore, that the marks of Divine Providence might be more clearly shown, that the Lord, foreknowing the future, consults for the true salvation of His people, when one of our colleagues, and co-priests, worn out by infirmity, and now anxious at the near approach of death, begged that a respite might be granted him; there stood beside him whilst praying, and nigh unto death, a youth, venerable for honour, and majesty, tall in stature, and shining in appearance, and such as man with mortal eyes could scarce endure to behold, except that about to depart from this world he could now bear to look upon him. And he, not without some indignation of feeling and voice, cried out and said: "You are afraid to die, and unwilling to depart, what shall I do for you?" These are the words of correction, and instruction, from one who, when men are anxious regarding persecution, and careless of their summons, does not grant them their present desire, but consults for the future. Our brother and colleague about to die heard what he should declare unto others. For he who was nigh unto death heard it for the express purpose of declaring it; he heard it not for himself, but for us. For what could he, who was now on the point of departure, learn for himself? Yea, he learnt it for the benefit of us who remain; that, seeing a

Priest of God rebuked for having requested a respite, we might learn what was profitable for us all.

XX. How often has it been revealed to me, the least and lowest of God's servants ! how frequently and distinctly have I, of God's goodness, been commanded continually to bear witness, and publicly declare, that we ought not to mourn for those brethren who, by the Lord's summons, have been delivered from this world ; since we know that they are not sent away from us but before us ; that departing they are leading the way, as is the case with men on a journey, or a voyage ; that we ought to love, not bewail them ; and should not wear here black garments, since they have already taken white raiment there ; and that we must give the Gentiles no opportunity of rightly and justly reproaching us, in that, whilst we affirm that men are alive in God, we bewail them as dead, and lost, and do not prove, by the testimony of our heart and breast, the faith which we utter with our lips, and in our words. Thus are we traitors to our faith and hope ; counterfeit, unreal, hypocritical, seem the words we utter. It is no advantage to make a show of virtue in words, and uproot the truth by our deeds.

XXI. Moreover, the Apostle S. Paul reproves, rebukes, and censures those who are cast down at the departure of their friends. *I would not, saith he, have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.\** He says that they who have no hope sorrow at the departure of their friends. But we who live in hope, and believe in God, and are told that Christ suffered for us, and rose again, who abide in Him, and hope to rise again through Him and in Him, why are we either ourselves loth to

\* 1 Thess. iv. 13.

depart hence out of this world, or why mourn and lament we for our departed friends, as though they were lost, when Christ Himself our Lord and God instructs us, saying: *I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.\** If we believe in Christ, let us place full reliance upon His words and promises, and, since we shall not die for ever, let us go with cheerful confidence unto Christ, with Whom we shall live and reign for ever.

XXII. In that here were die, we pass by death unto immortality; and eternal life cannot follow, unless it be our lot to depart hence. It is not departure, but a transition; and when the course of this life is run, an entrance into eternal things. Who, then, would not hasten unto better things? Who would not ardently desire to be changed, and made anew into the image of Christ, and more quickly enter into the grandeur of heavenly glory, as the Apostle S. Paul teaches us in these words: *But our conversation, saith he, is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.†* Such also Christ our Lord promises we shall be, when He prays unto His Father for us in the following words, that we may be with Him, and live with Him in His everlasting abode, and rejoice in the heavenly kingdoms: *Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me, where I am; that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given me, before the foundation of the world.‡* He that is to come to the seat of Christ, to the glory of the heavenly kingdoms, should not mourn and bewail, but rather, according to the promise of the Lord, and in reliance on the truth, should rejoice in this his departure and translation.

\* S. John xi. 25.

† Phil. iii. 20.

‡ S. John xvii. 24.



XXIII. Thus, finally, we read that Enoch, who pleased God, was translated, as Holy Writ bears witness in Genesis, and says: *And Enoch pleased God, and was not afterwards found, because God translated him.\** Because he was pleasing in the sight of God, he won translation from the contagion of this world. Moreover, the Holy spirit teaches us also by Solomon, that those who please God, are sooner taken hence, and more speedily delivered, lest by longer tarrying in this world, they should be polluted by the contagion of the world. *He was taken away* (says he) *lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, for his soul pleased God; wherefore hastened He to take him away from the midst of wickedness.†* So also in the Psalms, the soul devoted by spiritual faith unto its God, hastens unto the Lord saying: *How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O God of Hosts! My soul longeth, and hasteth unto the courts of God.‡*

XXIV. He may wish to remain long in the world, whom the world delights, and whom the flattering and deceitful world allures by the charms of earthly pleasure. Besides, since the world hates the Christian, why lovest thou that which hateth thee, and dost not rather follow Christ, Who both redeemed and loves thee? S. John, in his epistle cries out, and speaks, and exhorts us not to follow carnal lusts, and love the world. *Love not,* says he, *the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever, even as God abideth for ever.§* Rather, dearest brethren, let us with upright mind, firm faith, and indomitable courage,

\* Gen. v. 24. † Wis. iv. 11. ‡ Ps. lxxxiv. 1. § 1 S. John ii. 15.

be prepared to do all the will of God, and casting aside all fear of death, think we of the immortality that follows. Thus let us prove that we are what we are, namely, by not lamenting the departure of those dear unto us, and by going without reluctance, and with joy unto Christ, when He calls, and the day of our own summons arrives.

XXV. And, whereas, thus ought the servants of God always to act, how much more should it be the case when the world is already going to decay, and is beset by storms of devastating evils; so that we who see that heavy calamities have begun, and still heavier are impending, should account it greatest gain, more speedily to depart hence. Suppose that in this dwelling place of yours, the walls were tottering through age, the roof was shaking above you, and the house now wasted away and destroyed, was threatening immediate ruin to the time-worn buildings, would you not with all speed depart? If, when you were on a voyage, a swollen and raging storm with violently agitated waves, should foretell impending shipwreck, would you not quickly make for the port? Behold the world totters and is passing away, and telling its ruin, not because of the old age of things, but because of its appointed end; and dost not thou return thanks unto God, dost thou not felicitate thyself because removed by an earlier departure thou art delivered from the impending ruin, and shipwrecks, and plagues.

XXVI. We, dearest brethren, should consider, and at the same time bear in mind that we have renounced the world, and are here for awhile as strangers and pilgrims. Embrace we that day which assigns each to his own home, and restores us, snatched hence, and freed from the meshes of the world, to paradise and the kingdom. Who, wandering in foreign climes doth not hasten back unto his native country? Who, hastening to sail

unto his own, would not most ardently long for favouring gales, that he might be permitted the sooner to embrace those dear unto him? We are to look upon Paradise as our native country; we have now begun to have the Patriarchs for our parents; why do we not speed onwards and run that we may see our country and salute our parents? There a great many of those dear unto us await our coming; a vast and numerous company of parents, brothers and children, assured of their own safety, and yet anxious for our salvation, longs for us. How great the delight, common to them and us, of coming to their presence and embrace? How rich the joy of those heavenly realms where there is no fear of death, and life can never end? Oh! perfect and never-ending bliss! There is the glorious band of the Apostles; there the assembly of the jubilant Prophets; there the innumerable multitude of Martyrs, crowned because of their victorious contest and passion; there the triumphant Virgins, who through the power of continency subdued the lust of the flesh and body; there the merciful are rewarded, who did works of righteousness in giving food and alms unto the poor, and, obeying the commandments of the Lord, transferred their earthly possessions to heavenly treasures. To these, dearest brethren, hasten we with intense desire, that we may soon be with them; hope we that our lot may be speedily to go to Christ. May God see these thoughts of ours! May Christ our Lord behold this resolve of our mind and faith, Who will give the greater rewards of His glory unto those who have felt intenser yearnings after Him.

## ON THE BLESSINGS OF PATIENCE.

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I. As I am to speak to you, dearest brethren, of patience, and set forth its profits and advantages, how should I rather commence that by remarking that even now is your patience necessary to hear me? since ye can neither hear nor learn without exercising patience. For then, in a word, every salutary discourse and reasoning are learnt with success, if what is delivered be listened to with patience. And I do not find, dearest brethren, among all the other ways of the heavenly discipline, by which persons of our school are divinely directed to the attainment of the rewards of our hope and faith, anything more useful in this life, or that tendeth more to glory than for us, who with lowly devotion and fear obey the Lord's commandments, to observe patience with all carefulness.

II. The philosophers also profess to follow this, but then their patience is as false as is their wisdom. For how can one be either wise or patient who knoweth neither the wisdom nor patience of God, since Himself warns us concerning those who seem to themselves to be wise in this world, when He says: *I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the prudence of the prudent?\** So likewise the blessed Apostle S. Paul, full of the Holy Spirit, and sent for the calling and establishing of the Gentiles, bears witness and instructs us in these words: *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.†* And in another place he says: *Let*

\* Isaiah xxix. 14.

† Col. ii. 8-9.

*no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise that they are vain.\** Wherefore if they possess not true wisdom, neither can they have true patience. For if he is patient who is humble, and meek; and if we find that these philosophers are neither humble, nor meek, but well-pleased with themselves, and therefore, for this very reason, displeasing unto God; it is evident from this that true patience cannot exist, where there is the presumptuous daring of affected liberty, and the shameless boastfulness of a bared, and naked breast.

III. But we, dearest brethren, who are philosophers not in words, but in deeds; who profess wisdom not in appearance, but in reality; who are conversant with the practise rather than the boasting of virtues; who do not say, but live great things; let us as servants and worshippers of God evince, by spiritual obedience, that patience which we learn in the heavenly commands. For this is a virtue common to us, and to God. From Him patience commences; from Him its glory, and honour take their rise. The origin and greatness of patience proceed from God its author. That, which is dear to God, man should love; what the Divine Majesty loves, it commends as good. If God is our Lord and Father, let us follow after the patience of our Lord and Father; for it behoveth servants to be obedient, and sons should not be degenerate.

IV. How glorious and how great, then, is the patience of God, in that bearing most patiently the insults offered to His Divine Majesty, and honour, the unholy temples,

\* 1 Cor. iii. 18.

and earthly images, and sacrilegious rites instituted by men, He causes day to arise, and the beams of the sun to shine equally on the good and bad; and when He moistens the earth with showers, none is shut out from His bounties, but alike on the just and unjust He pours the undistinguished showers. Thus we see by the impartial equality of his patience, that by the nod of God the seasons obey, the elements minister, the winds blow, fountains flow, the crops of the harvest increase, the fruits of the vineyards ripen, trees are laden with apples, groves are clothed with verdure, the meadows flower, for all alike, the guilty and the innocent, the religious and the ungodly, the thankful and the unthankful. And when God is exasperated by frequent, nay, continual sins, He moderates His anger, and patiently waits for the appointed day of retribution. And when He has vengeance in His power, He wishes rather to exercise patience for a long time; that is, compassionately bearing, and putting off, that, if possible, the long protracted wickedness may at length be changed, and man, involved in the contagion of errors and wickedness, may even, though late, be turned unto God, as Himself teaches and says: *I wish not the death of him that dieth, but rather that he should return and live.\** And again: *Return unto me, and I will return unto you.†* And again: *Turn unto the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.‡* And the blessed Apostle, S. Paul, mentioning this, and recalling the sinner to repentance, affirms, and says: *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness and patience of God lead thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against*

\* Ezech. xxxii. 18.

† Mal. iii. 7.

‡ Joel ii. 13.

*the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his works.\** He said that the judgment of God is righteous, because it is late, and is much and long deferred, that man's eternal interest may be consulted by the exceeding patience of God. Punishment is then revealed to the wicked and sinner, when repentance for the sin can now no longer be of any avail.

V. And, dearest brethren, that we may more fully understand that patience is a property of God, and that whosoever is meek and patient imitateth God the Father, when our Lord in His Gospel was giving precepts for salvation, and, drawing forth his divine admonitions, was instructing His disciples unto perfection, He set forth and said: *Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father, Which is in Heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just, and on the unjust. For if ye love them, which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father Which is in Heaven is perfect.†* Thus He said that we become perfect sons of God, thus He showed and taught that we who have been new-born by spiritual birth are complete, if the patience of God the Father abide in us, if the Divine likeness, which Adam by sin had lost, be manifested, and shine forth in our deeds. What glory is it to be made like unto God, of what kind and how great is the bliss of having among our virtues, what may be compared with divine praises.

\* Rom. ii. 4.

† S. Matt. v. 43.

VI. And, my dearest brethren, Jesus Christ our God and Lord did not only teach us this in word, but fulfilled it also by His deeds. And because He said that He came down for this very purpose, to do the will of the Father, among the manifold and wonderful examples of His virtues, by which He expressed the proofs of Divine Majesty, He preserved also His Father's patience by His long forbearance. In fact, all His deeds, immediately from His very advent, were stamped by patience as their companion; because first descending from His heavenly glory to earthly places, He, the Son of God, disdains not to assume the flesh of man, and whilst Himself was not a sinner, to bear the sins of others. Divesting Himself for a while of His immortality, He permits Himself to become mortal, that He the innocent might be slain for the salvation of the guilty. The Lord is baptized by the servant; and He, who was to give remission of sins, vouchsafed to wash his body in the laver of regeneration. For forty days He fasts, by Whom all others are fed; He hungers, and suffers famine, by Whom those who had been in famine of the word and grace, are filled with heavenly bread. When He encounters the tempting devil, He is content with having conquered him, and attempts no more than by words. He presided not over His disciples with lordly power, as over servants, but kind and meek, He loved them with brotherly love. He even condescended to wash the feet of His Apostles, that, whilst the Lord is such towards the servants, He might teach them by His example, how a fellow-servant should demean himself towards his fellows, and equals. And we need not wonder that He so acted towards the obedient, Who could with every patience bear with Judas even to the last; Who took food with an enemy, knew and did not openly expose a domestic foe, and refused not the betrayer's kiss. But how great His equanimity, how great His patience, in bearing with the



Jews! By persuasion, He drew in unbelievers to the faith; by indulgence He cherished the ungrateful; mildly He answered the gainsayers; humbly He yielded to His persecutors; and even in the hour of His cross and passion He wished to gather in the murderers of the Prophets, and those who were ever rebels against God.

VII. And at the very time of His passion and cross, before that they came to the cruelty of death, and bloodshedding, what reproachful taunts were patiently heard! what bitter scoffs endured, so that He received the spittings of revilers, Who a little before by His spittle had made eyes for the blind man; and He in Whose name the devil and his angels are scourged by His servants, Himself endured scourgings; He, Who crowns martyrs with eternal flowers, was crowned with thorns; He, Who assigns true palms to the conquerors, was smitten on His face with palms; He, Who clothes others with the garment of immortality, was stripped of His earthly vestment; He, Who giveth food from heaven, was fed with gall; He, Who reaches to us the cup of salvation, had vinegar given Him to drink; He, the innocent, and righteous, nay, rather innocency and righteousness itself, is numbered among transgressors; the truth is overpowered by false testimony; He Who shall judge is judged; and the Word of God is led in silence to the slaughter. And while at the crucifixion of our Lord the stars are confounded, the elements disordered, the earth trembles, night shuts out the day, and the sun (that He might not be compelled to witness the wickedness of the Jews) withdraws both his light, and eyes, He neither speaks, nor is moved, nor even at the very time of His passion, avows His Majesty; even to the last all things are patiently and continually endured, to the end that in Christ full and perfect patience might be consummated.

VIII. Nay further, after all these things, He receives His murderers, if they turn and come unto Him, and bountiful to save, with saving patience He closes His Church against none. Those adversaries, those blasphemers, those ever the enemies of His name, if they repent of their sin, and acknowledge the crime committed, He admits not only to pardon of sin, but also to the rewards of His heavenly kingdom. What more patient, or bountiful can be named? Even he, who shed the blood of Christ, is gifted with life by Christ's blood. Such and so great is the patience of Christ; and had it not been such and so great, the Church would never have had the Apostle S. Paul.

IX. And if, dearest brethren, we too are in Christ; if we have put Him on; if He is the way of our salvation, who follow Christ in His saving footsteps, let us walk after the example of Christ, as the Apostle S. John instructs us in these words: *He that saith he abideth in Christ ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.\** So also S. Peter, upon whom of the Lord's mercy the Church was founded, sets forth in his epistle and says: *Christ suffered for us leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: Who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but delivered Himself to Him that unjustly judged Him.†*

X. Finally, we find that both the Patriarchs and Prophets, and all righteous men, who by a foregoing image were shadows of Christ, guarded nothing more in the praise of their virtues, than that they exercised patience by firm and unvarying equanimity. Thus Abel, who was the first to commence, and consecrate martyrdom, and the sufferings of a righteous man, neither contends against, nor resists the fratricide, but, humble and

\* 1 S. John ii. 6.

† 1 S. Peter ii. 21.

meek, is patiently slain. Thus Abraham believing in God, and first laying the root and foundation of faith, when tried touching his son, neither hesitates nor delays, but with all the patience of devotedness obeys the commands of God. Isaac also, a type of our Lord's sacrifice, when offered to be sacrificed by his father, is found patient. And Jacob, driven away by his brother, patiently quits his country, and afterwards with greater patience brings back to reconciliation, by peaceful gifts, him who as a suppliant was more wicked and a greater persecutor than ever. Joseph sold, and sent away, by his brethren, not only patiently forgives them, but bountifully, kindly, and freely, gave them supplies of corn when they came. Moses is oftentimes despised, and well-nigh stoned by a thankless and faithless people; and yet gentle, and meek, he entreats the Lord in their behalf. In David too (from whom according to the flesh the birth of Christ had its rise) how great, and wonderful, and Christian was his patience, to have had it oftentimes in his power, to kill King Saul, who persecuted him, and desired to put him to death, and yet to wish rather to preserve him when subdued, and delivered up to him; not rendering evil to an enemy, but even avenging him when afterwards killed. In a word, so many prophets were slain; so many Martyrs honoured with glorious deaths: all of whom attained heavenly crowns by the praise of patience. For the crown of grief and suffering cannot be received, unless there first be patience in grief and passion.

XI. But that, dearest brethren, it may be more clearly and fully seen how useful, and necessary patience is, let us consider the sentence which, in the first beginning of the world, and the human race, God passed upon Adam, unmindful of the command, and transgressor of the given law. Thence shall we know how patient we ought to be in this world, who are so born, as to be pressed by dis-

tresses, and conflicts here. *Because, says He, thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake in all thy labours; in sorrow and moaning shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.\** We are all of us fastened, and bound by the chain of this sentence until, death being done away, we depart from this world. In sorrow and groaning we must of needs be all the days of our life, and our bread must we eat with sweat, and labour.

XII. Whence each one of us, when he is born and received into the hostelry of this world, takes his commencement from tears, and unexperienced though he be, and ignorant of all else, yet in his first birth he knows nothing but weeping. By natural foresight he bewails the anxieties and distresses of mortal life; and in the very commencement the unformed soul bears witness by its lamentations and moanings to the storms of this world on which it is entering. For men must labour and toil, so long as they live here: and no consolations can more effectually assist those who are labouring and toiling, than those of patience. And as these are well suited and necessary for all in this world, so still more are they for us, who are more shaken by the assaults of the devil; who daily standing in battle array are wearied by engagements with our inveterate, and practised enemy; and who, besides the various and continual battles of temptation, must in the contest of persecutions relinquish our patrimonies, undergo imprisonments, wear chains, give up life, and

\* Gen. iii. 17.

in the faith and strength of patience endure sword, wild beasts, fires, crosses, and, in a word, all kinds of torments, and pains, our Lord Himself instructing us, and saying: *These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world.\** But if we who have renounced the devil and the world suffer more frequently and violently tribulations, and the assaults of the devil and the world, how much more should we exercise patience, with which as our helper and companion we can endure all evil.

XIII. It is the saving precept of our Lord and Master: *He that endureth to the end, saith He, shall be saved.†* And again He saith: *If ye continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.‡* We must endure, dearest brethren, and persevere, that we who have been admitted to the hope of truth, and liberty may attain unto truth and liberty itself, inasmuch as the fact that we are Christians is a ground of faith and hope. But that faith and hope may attain unto fruit, we have need of patience. For we follow after not present but future glory, according to that which the Apostle S. Paul teaches us saying: *We are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.§* Waiting, therefore, and patience are necessary that we may perfect what we have begun to be, and receive, when God gives it, what we believe, and hope for. Lastly, in another place the same Apostle thus instructs and teaches those who are righteous and merciful, and are laying up for themselves treasures in heaven in the increase of divine usury, that they should be patient

\* St. John xvi. 33.

† S. Matthew, x. 22. ‡ S. John viii. 31 § Romans viii. 24.

always: *As we have opportunity therefore let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap.\** He admonishes us, that none faint in well doing; that none either weaned away or overcome by temptations stop midway in his path of praise and glory, and what has been done be lost, by leaving unfinished, what had been begun, as it is written: *The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression;†* and again: *Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.‡* These words exhort us to perseverance with patience and constancy, that he who now presses unto the crown with nearest praise, may be crowned through continuance of patience.

XIV. But patience, dearest brethren, not only guards the good, but also averts evil. Favoured the Holy Ghost, and uniting the heavenly and divine by the fortress of its virtues, it contends against the deeds of the flesh and body by which the soul is besieged, and taken captive. Let us briefly examine a few of these, that from a few, the rest may be understood. Adultery, fraud, homicide, are mortal crimes. Let there only be in the heart firm and steadfast patience, and neither is the sanctified body and temple of God polluted by adultery, nor the consecrated innocency of justice vitiated by the contagion of fraud, nor, after the hand has borne the Eucharist, is it stained by the sword and blood.

XV. Charity is the bond of the brotherhood, the foundation of hope; the strength and stability of unity, which is greater than both hope and faith, and has the precedence both of good works and Martyrdoms, and will live with us for ever in the presence of God in the kingdoms of heaven. Take away patience from it, and, left alone,

\* Galatians vi. 10. † Ezekiel xxxiii. 12. ‡ Revelations iii. 11.

it cannot endure. Remove the power of bearing and enduring, and it has no roots and strength on which to depend. The Apostle, in fine, when he spake of charity, joined forbearance and patience unto it. *Charity, says he, suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.\** Herein he shows that it can continue stedfast, because it knows how to endure all things. And, in another place he says: *Forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.†* He proved that neither unity nor peace can be preserved, unless the brethren treat each other with mutual forbearance, and, by the intervention of patience, preserve inviolate the bond of concord.

XVI. How further, not to swear nor curse; not to demand again what has been taken away from thee; when thou hast received a blow, to offer the other cheek unto the striker; to forgive one who sinneth against thee, not only seventy times seven, but all his sins; to love thy enemies, and offer up prayers for thy adversaries and persecutors; how canst thou perform all these, except by exercising constant patience and forbearance? And this we see exemplified in S. Stephen, who, when the Jews put him to violent death by stoning, entreated not vengeance for himself, but pardon for his murderers, saying: *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.‡* Such was it fitting that the first Martyr of Christ should be, who, forerunning subsequent Martyrs in a glorious death, not only proclaimed the Lord's passion, but also imitated His most patient meekness. Why should I speak of anger, and discord, and hatred, which should not exist in

\* 1 Cor. xiii. 4.

† Eph. iv. 2.

‡ Acts vii. 30.

a Christian. Only let there be patience in the breast and these things cannot have a place therein ; or, if they essay to enter, they are quickly shut out and depart, so that in the heart there may remain a peaceful home, where it may delight the Lord of peace to dwell. Finally, the Apostle admonishes and teacheth us, saying: *And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you.\** For, if a Christian has gone out from carnal fury, and strife, as from the storms of a sea, and has already reached, tranquil and meek, the port of Christ, he, who is not permitted to return evil for evil, or to hate, should not admit either anger or discord within his breast.

XVII. Moreover, patience is also necessary for the various diseases of the flesh, and the many and severe torments of the body, by which the human race is daily wearied and shaken. For since in that first transgression of the command the strength of the body departed with its immortality, and weakness came on with death, and strength cannot be recovered, unless immortality be first regained, it behoves us in this bodily frailness and infirmity ever to wrestle and contend ; and this struggle and contest cannot be sustained but by the support of patience. And in order to try and prove us many pains are had recourse to, and manifold temptations employed, such as loss of possessions, raging fevers, tormenting wounds, and loss of those dear unto us. Nor does anything distinguish more clearly the righteous and the wicked than this ; that whereas in adversity the wicked through impatience complains and blasphemes, the righteous is proved by patience, as it is written: *In pain endure, and in thy low estate have patience, for gold and silver are tried in the fire.†*



XVIII. Thus was Job tried, and proved, and by the virtue of patience advanced to the highest summit of praise. What darts of the devil were shot out against him! What fearful tortures employed! Loss of possessions is inflicted upon him; bereavement of numerous offspring brought down upon him; he a lord rich in his estate, and a father richer far in his children, in an instant is neither lord nor father. The wasting of disease is added, and the devouring punishment of worms also consumes his wasting and decaying limbs. And that there might be nothing left, which Job should not experience in his temptations, the devil, having recourse to the old device of his wickedness, arms his wife also, as though he could deceive and ensnare all through a woman, as he had done at the beginning of the world. And yet Job is not broken down by these heavy and manifold struggles, so that in the midst of these straits and tribulations in the victory of patience the praises of God are seen. Tobit also, after the splendid works of righteousness and charity, when tempted by the loss of his eyes, greatly won the favour of the Lord, through the praise of patience, in proportion as he patiently endured blindness.

XIX. And, dearest brethren, that the blessings of patience may be the more manifest, let us consider what evils impatience on the other hand brings with it. For as patience is Christ's blessing, so on the other hand is impatience the devil's evil; and as he, in whom Christ dwells and abides, is found patient, so is he ever impatient, whose mind the wickedness of the devil possesses. Let us finally see its very rise. The devil impatiently brooked man made after the image of God. Hence he was the first that perished, and destroyed. Adam, impatient of the divine command touching the fatal food, fell into death, and preserved not, by the

guardianship of patience, the divinely received grace ; and Cain, impatient of his sacrifice and offering, was led to kill his brother ; and in that Esau descended from the greater to the less, he through impatience for the pottage lost his birth-right. How was it that the Jewish people were faithless and unthankful for divine mercies ? Was not their first departure from God a sin of impatience ? Whilst they could not endure the delay of Moses speaking with God, they dared to demand strange Gods, that they might call a calf's head, and a figure of earth, the leaders of their journey. Nor did they ever cease from this impatience, so that always impatient of instruction, and divine admonitions having put to death their prophets, and righteous men, they leapt forward unto the cross and blood-shedding of the Lord. Impatience also makes heretics in the Church, and drives them rebelling, (after the manner of the Jews,) against the peace and charity of Christ, to hostile and maddened hatred. And not to delay in mentioning particulars, impatience pulls down, and involves in ruin, whatever patience by its works builds up unto glory.

XX. Wherefore, dearest brethren, weighing diligently the advantages of patience, and the evils of impatience, let us with all constancy exercise patience, by which we abide in Christ, so that we may come with Christ unto God. This abundant and manifold patience is not confined in a narrow course, nor bounded by contracted limits. Far and wide does the virtue of patience extend ; and its plentifulness and abundance rise indeed from a fountain of one name, but are spread abroad in overflowing streams through various channels of glory ; and none of our actions can avail unto the perfection of praise, unless from this it receives the foundation of perfection. Patience it is which commends us to God, and preserves us. This it is which moderates anger, bridles the tongue,

governs the mind, guards peace, regulates discipline, abates the assault of lust, represses the violence of pride, extinguishes the fire of hatred, restrains the power of the rich, relieves the poverty of the poor, and preserves in virgins blessed integrity, in widows laborious chastity, and in the married and wedded oneness of affection. It makes men humble in prosperity, strong in adversity, meek in bearing injury and contempt. It teaches us speedily to pardon the offender; and when we sin, to offer up long and frequent supplication. It vanquishes temptation, endures persecutions, and perfects suffering and martyrdom. This it is which firmly guards the foundation of our hope. This it is which advances upwards the increase of our faith. This directs our actions, so that we can keep the way of Christ, whilst we follow His long-suffering. This enables us to continue sons of God, whilst we imitate the patience of our Father.

XXI. But since I know, dearest brethren, that many either under the pressure of painful injuries, or through grief, desire to be quickly avenged on those who assault and rage against them, and not to put off the retribution of evils unto the day of the last judgment; I exhort you, embrace meanwhile with me the blessings of patience, so that amidst the storms of a troubled world, and assailed by the persecutions of Jews, or Gentiles, or heretics, we may patiently wait for the day of vengeance, and not with complaining speed hasten to avenge our grief, since it is written: *Wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, in the day when I rise up for a testimony; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may take hold upon kings, and pour out upon them my anger.\** The Lord commands us to wait, and with unchanging patience to abide the day of future vengeance; Who also in the Apocalypse speaks and says: *Seal not the sayings of*

\* Zeph. iii. 8.

*the prophecy of this book ; for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still ; he that is filthy, let him be filthy still ; and he that is righteous, let him be more righteous still ; and he that is holy, let him be holier still. And behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his works shall be.\** Hence also the Martyrs crying out, and in the outbursts of grief hastening on to vengeance, are commanded still to wait, and to exercise patience, until the times are accomplished, and the number of the Martyrs complete. *And when, says he, He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held ; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, oh Lord, Holy, and True, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ? And white robes were given unto every one of them ; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season until the number of their fellow servants, and their brethren, that should afterwards be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.†*

XXII. But the Holy Spirit declares in these words by the Prophet Malachi, when the divine vengeance of righteous blood shall come : *Behold the day of the Lord cometh burning like an oven, and all aliens, and all the wicked, shall be stubble ; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord.‡* This also we read in the Psalms, where the advent of God the Judge, to be revered in the Majesty of His judgment, is foretold : *God, even our God, shall come manifest, and shall not keep silence ; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him ; He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Gather My saints together unto*

\* Rev. xxii. 10.

† Rev. vi. 9.

‡ Mal. iv. 1.

*me ; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare His righteousness; for God is Judge Himself.\* And Isaiah foretells the same things saying: For behold the Lord will come like a fire, and His chariot like a tempest, to render vengeance in anger. For with the fire of the Lord they shall be judged, and with His sword they shall be wounded.† And again: The Lord God of Hosts shall go forth, and shall crush the war, He shall stir up the battle, and shall cry out against His enemies with strength; I have held my peace; shall I be ever silent?‡*

XXIII. But Who is He that says He has heretofore kept silence, but will not always be silent? Doubtless *He Who was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as the lamb before his shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth;§* doubtless He, *Who did not cry, neither was His voice lifted up in the streets;||* He doubtless, *Who was not rebellious, neither contradicted, when He offered His back unto stripes, and His cheeks to the palms of the hand, neither turned away His face from the foulness of spitting;>\*\** He doubtless, *Who when He was accused by the Chief Priests and Scribes, answered nothing, and while Pilate wondered, kept a most patient silence.††* This is He, Who, though silent in His passion, will not afterwards be silent in judgment. This is our God, that is, the God not of all, but of the faithful, and believers, Who when He comes manifest in His second advent will not keep silence. For whereas before He was hidden in humility, He will then come manifest in power.

XXIV. Wait we for Him, dearest brethren, our Judge and Avenger; Who will avenge at the same time the people of His Church, and the number of all righteous men, from the beginning of the world, together with Himself. Let him, who speeds and hastens to vengeance,

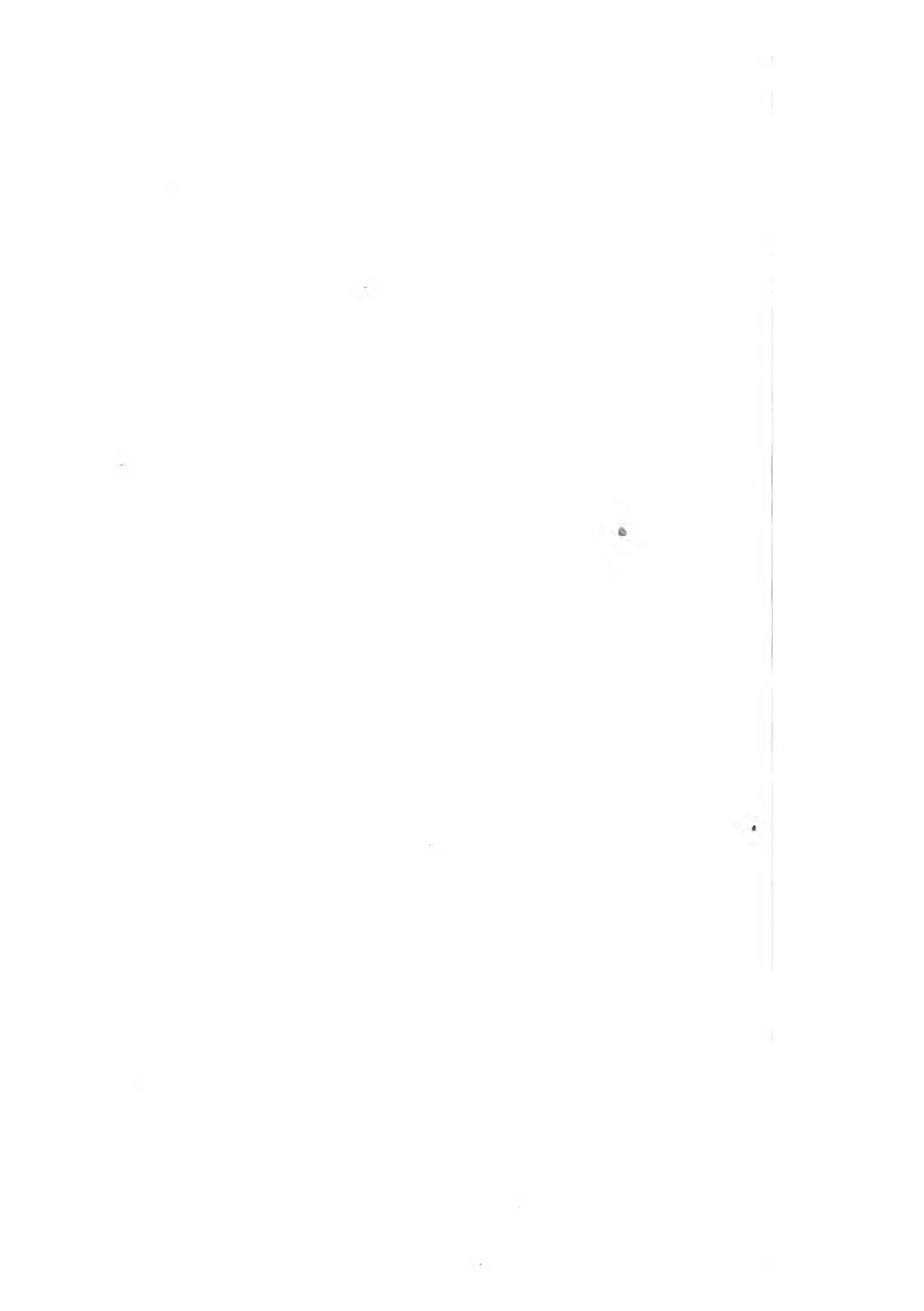
\* Ps. l. iii. † Isaiah lxvi. 15. ‡ Isaiah xli. 13.

§ Isaiah liii. 7. || Isaiah xlii. 2. \*\* Isaiah l. 5. †† S. Matt. xxvii. 12.

reflect, that He, Who is to avenge, is not yet Himself avenged. God the Father hath commanded that His Son be worshipped; and the Apostle S. Paul, mindful of the divine command, sets forth and says: *God hath exalted Him, and given Him a name, which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things beneath.\** And in the Apocalypse the Angel resisted S. John when desiring to worship him, and said: *See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren. Worship Jesus the Lord.†* How compassionate is Jesus, and how great His patience, that He, Who is worshipped in heaven, is not yet avenged on earth. Think we, dearest brethren, of this patience in our persecutions and sufferings. Let us offer to His advent an obedience full of expectation; nor let us, who are servants, hasten with unholy and immodest speed to be defended before the Lord. Rather let us press forward, and strive, and watching with all our heart, and stedfast to all endurance, let us observe the commands of the Lord, that when the day of anger and vengeance is come, we may not be punished with the wicked and sinners, but be honoured with the righteous, and those that fear God.

\* Phil. ii. 9

† Rev. xxii 9.



## ON JEALOUSY AND ENVY.

I. To be jealous of the good you see, and to envy those who are better than yourselves, is esteemed by some, dearest brethren, a light and trifling sin; and when it is thought light and trifling, it is not feared; unfeared, it is despised; despised, it is not easily shunned and it becomes a dark and hidden destruction, which, from being unperceived and unprovided against by the watchful, secretly injures thoughtless minds. Moreover, our Lord hath commanded us to be wise, and enjoined us to watch with careful solicitude, lest our adversary, ever watchful, and ever waiting to find an entrance into the breast, should kindle flames from sparks, and raise from little things the greatest; and whilst with softer gale and gentler breeze he deceives the negligent and unwary, should raise up storms and whirlwinds, and so achieve the ruin of faith and the shipwreck of salvation and life. Therefore must we, dearest brethren, be ever on the watch, and strive with all our powers to oppose with all careful vigilance a raging enemy, who directs his darts against all parts of the body, in which we may be stricken, and wounded; according to that which the Apostle S. Peter warns and teaches us in his epistle saying: *Be sober, be vigilant; for your adversary the devil goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.\**

II. He goeth about each one of us, and as an enemy besieging men shut up in a town, he examines the walls, and tries whether any part of our members be less steadfast and sure, that by threatening them he may penetrate into the inner places. To our eyes he offers enticing

\* 1 S. Peter i. 5.



forms, and easy pleasures, that we may destroy chastity by the sight. He tempts the ears by the richest music, that, by the hearing of delicious sounds, he may enfeeble and enervate our Christian vigor. The tongues he sharpens by revilings, and moves the hands by provoking injuries to the commission of murder. To make a man an extortioner he presents unjust gain; to ensnare a soul by money, he loads up destructive gatherings; to take away heavenly honours, he promises earthly; to steal away the true, he showeth things false; and in the case of those whom he cannot by stratagem deceive, he has recourse to undisguised and open threats, menacing the terrors of a fearful persecution, that he may subdue the servants of God; he is ever restless, ever an enemy; crafty in peace and violent in persecution.

III. Wherefore, dearest brethren, the mind should stand fully equipped, and armed against either the deceitful snares or open threats of the devil, and should ever be as ready to resist as the enemy is to attack. And since his weapons, which come upon us unobserved, are more numerous, and the more secret and hidden hurling of them inflicts upon us more and deeper wounds, because unperceived, let us be on the watch to discover and ward them off. Of these is the evil of jealousy and envy. And if any one examine this subject thoroughly, he will find that the Christian should be on his guard, and make greater provision against nothing more than his being ensnared by jealousy and hatred, lest entangled in the hidden meshes of his deceitful enemy, whilst brother is moved by jealousy to the hatred of brother, he be unawares killed by his own sword. That we may understand this more fully, and see it more plainly, let us go back to its source and origin. Let us see when, and whence, and how jealousy took its rise, for we shall then the more easily avoid so deadly an evil if we know its origin and magnitude.

IV. From this, at the very beginning of the world, the devil both first perished and destroyed. Though high in angelic majesty, and accepted, and dear to God, when he saw man made in the image of God, he burst forth through evil wrath into jealousy, not overthrowing another through the impulse of jealousy before he was overthrown by it; captive before he ensnared; destroyed before destroying; whilst under the spur of jealousy he takes away from man the grace of immortality which had been given, himself also lost that which he had had. Of what kind, dearest brethren, is that evil by which an angel fell; by which so high and exalted a nature could be encompassed and overthrown; by which he who deceived was himself deceived? Thence is it that envy makes its attacks on earth, whilst he who will perish through jealousy obeys the master of destruction, and imitates the jealousy of the devil, as it is written: *But through envy of the devil death came into the world; and they who are on his side imitate him.\**

V. Hence, in a word, sprung the first hatred of the new brotherhood; hence the wicked fratricide had its rise, in that unrighteous Cain was jealous of righteous Abel, and the wicked man persecuted the good through envy and jealousy. So much availed the madness of jealousy to the consummation of wickedness, that he thought not either of brotherly love or of the heinousness of the crime, or fear of God, or the punishment of the sin. He was unjustly oppressed who was the first to give proofs of righteousness; he suffered hatred who knew not how to hate; he was impiously killed, who when dying made no resistance. And jealousy was the cause of Esau's being the enemy of his brother Jacob; for, because the latter had received his father's blessing, the former was fired into persecuting hatred by the torches of jealousy. And when his brethren

\*Wisdom ii. 24.

sold Joseph, the cause of their selling him arose from jealousy. After he had in simplicity told them, as brother to brothers, the prosperity that had been shown him in his dreams, their ill-disposed minds burst out into envy. What else was it but the spur of envy that incited King Saul to hate David, and to seek to put him to death in oft-repeated persecutions; him who was innocent, merciful, gentle, and patient in meekness? Because when, after Goliath was killed, and by God's assistance so powerful an enemy destroyed, the admiring people burst with acclamation into the praises of David, Saul through envy conceived the madness of hatred and persecution. And not to delay in enumerating individual cases, let us mark the end of a people altogether destroyed. Did not the Jews perish for this very reason, because they would rather envy than believe in Christ? Disparaging the great works which He did, they were deceived and blinded by jealousy, and could not open the eyes of their heart to a knowledge of things divine.

VI. Considering these things, dearest brethren, let us watchfully and firmly fortify our God-devoted breasts against so deadly an evil; let the death of others tend to our salvation, and the punishment of the unwary confer health upon the watchful. There is no reason to infer that this evil is contained in one kind or confined in contracted limits, and narrow boundary. Far and wide does the manifold and fruitful destructiveness of jealousy extend. It is the root of all evils, the fountain of calamities the hot-bed of offences, and the material of sins. Hence springs hatred; hence comes forth enmity. Jealousy stirs up avarice; when one cannot be content with his own, when he sees another richer than himself. Jealousy excites ambition when a man perceives another advanced to higher honours than he. When jealousy blinds our senses, and reduces the secret springs of our mind into

its power, the fear of God is despised, the governance of Christ neglected, and no provision made for the day of judgment; pride puffs up, cruelty embitters, unbelief betrays, impatience disquiets, discord rages, anger burns, and he can now no longer restrain or govern himself, who has been delivered up to another power. Hence the bond of the peace of the Lord is broken; hence brotherly love is violated; hence truth is corrupted; unity rent; men rush into heresies and schisms, when Priests are misrepresented, and Bishops envied, and men either complain that they were not rather ordained, or brook not another set over them. Hence he who is proud through jealousy, and obstinate through envy, kicks and rebels; being through enmity and revenge, an enemy not of the man but the honour.

VII. But what mothworm of the soul, what corruption of thoughts; what a mildew of the breast, is it for men to be jealous of either another's virtue or happiness; that is, to hate in him either his own merits or the divine bounties; to convert another's good things into their own evil; to be harassed by the prosperity of the illustrious; to make other's glory their punishment, and to introduce, as it were, executioners into their own breasts, to apply torturers to their thoughts and designs, who rend with internal pains, and pierce the hidden places of the heart with the weapons of malevolence. Such have no joy in their food, nor is their drink pleasant unto them. They are ever sighing, and groaning, and bewailing; and since their rancour is never put off by the envious, the besieged breast is torn night and day without intermission. Other evils have their limit, and whatever sin is committed, is bounded by the consummation of the deed. An adulterer has done his crime where the adultery has been perpetrated; the crime of the robber is at rest when the murder has been committed; and the possession of the booty

bounds the rapacity of the thief, and the cheat ceases when his treachery is complete. Jealousy has no limit; it is a permanent, an unceasing evil, an endless sin; and the more he who is the object of envy increases in success, the more is the envious man inflamed to a greater heat by the fire of jealousy.

VIII. Hence the threatening countenance, lowering looks, pallid face, trembling lips, gnashing teeth, fierce words, reckless reproaches, a hand ready for the violence of murder, which, though it holds no sword, is yet armed by the hatred of an infuriated mind. And therefore the Holy Spirit says in the Psalms: *Be not jealous of him who prospereth in his way.\** And again: *The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. But the Lord shall laugh at him, for He seeth that his day is coming.†* These the blessed Apostle, S. Paul, intends and points out when he says: *The poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes.‡*

IX. Far lighter is the evil, and less the danger, when limbs are wounded by a sword. Cure is easy where the blow is seen; and the wound which is seen is quickly restored to soundness by the aid of medicine. The wounds of jealousy are concealed and hidden, and, as they are enclosed in secret grief within the recesses of the conscience, they admit not the remedy of the healing art. Whoever thou art that art envious and malignant, consider how treacherous, injurious, and hostile thou art to those whom thou hatest. Thou art not a greater enemy to any man's well-being than thine own. Whoever is the object of thy jealousy, can elude, and avoid thee. Thou canst not

\*Psalm xxxvii. 7.

†Ib. 12.

‡Rom. iii. 13.

fly from thyself. Wheresoever thou art thou hast thine adversary with thee; an enemy is ever in thy breast; thy destruction is enclosed within; thou art fettered and bound by an inevitable link of manacles; thou art the captive of jealousy that rules, and no consolation can aid thee. It is an abiding evil for a man to persecute one who has a participation in God's grace. It is an irremediable calamity to hate the happy.

X. Therefore, dearest brethren, our Lord counselling against the danger, lest any through envy of his brother should run into the meshes of death, when His disciples asked Him, who should be greater among them, said: *He that is the least among you shall be great.\** By this His answer He cut off all rivalry; He uprooted, and cut off all cause and matter of gnawing envy. A disciple of Christ may not indulge jealous or envious feelings. Among us there can be no contention for exaltation. From humility we grow up to the highest places; we have learnt how to please Him. Finally, the blessed Apostle S. Paul, also instructing and teaching us, that we who have been illuminated by the light of Christ, and have escaped the darkness of the conversation of night, should walk in the works and deeds of the light, thus writes and says: *The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast of the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying;†* If darkness has departed from thy breast; if the night has been driven thence; if the shadows have been wiped away; if the light of the day has illumined thy senses; if thou hast begun to be a man of light, wear what is Christ's; because Christ is light and day.

XI. Why dost thou rush into the shadows of jealousy? Why wrappest thou thyself in a cloud of malice? Why

\* S. Luke ix. 48.

† Rom. xiv. 12.

dost thou put out by the darkness of envy the light of peace, and charity? Why return unto the devil, whom thou hast renounced, and become like Cain. For the Apostle S. John, in his Epistle, declares in these words, that whosoever envies, and hates his brother, is guilty of the sin of murder: *He that hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.\** And again: *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness, and walketh in darkness even until now, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes. He that hateth his brother, saith he, walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth.†* For he goeth un-  
 aware to hell; ignorant and blind, he is hurried onwards to punishment; departing, that is, from the light of Christ, Who teaches, and says: *I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.‡* But he followeth Christ, who adheres to His precepts; who walketh in the way of His teaching; who followeth His footsteps, and ways; who imitates what Christ both taught, and did, according to that which S. Peter also exhorts, and teaches in these words: *Christ suffered for us; leaving you an example, that ye should follow His steps.§*

XII. We should remember by what word Christ names His people, by what title He calls His flock. He names them sheep, that the innocency of Christians may be like sheep. He calls them lambs, that their simplicity of mind may resemble the unsuspecting nature of lambs. Why lurks the wolf in the cloathing of sheep? Why does he, who falsely calls himself a Christian, scandalize the flock of Christ? To put on the name of Christian, and not to walk in the way of Christ, what else is it but a betrayal

\* 1 S. John iii. 15.

† 1 S. John ii. 9.

‡ S. John viii. 12.

§ 1 S. Peter ii. 21.

of the Divine name, and a desertion of the way of salvation? For Himself teaches, and says, that he cometh unto life who keepeth His commandments; and that he is wise, who hears His words, and doeth them; that that teacher also is called the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven who hath so done and taught; for what he had well and profitably preached will be of avail to the teacher, when the words he utters are fulfilled in subsequent works. But what did our Lord more frequently impress upon His disciples, what command them, among His saving commands and Heavenly precepts, more to preserve, and keep, than that we also should love one another, with the same love with which He loved His disciples? But how does he hold either the peace, or charity of the Lord, who through the instigations of jealousy, can be neither peaceable nor friendly?

XIII. Therefore, also, when the Apostle S. Paul set forth the merits of peace and charity, and firmly maintained and taught that neither faith nor alms, nor even the sufferings of confession and martyrdom could be of any avail, unless he kept the bonds of charity unbroken and inviolate, he subjoined these words and said: *Charity is generous, charity is kind, charity envieth not,\** hereby showing and teaching that he can maintain charity whosoever is of generous soul, and kind, and a stranger to jealousy and envy. Likewise, also, in another place when he taught, that the man who was full of the Holy Ghost and had been made by heavenly birth a Son of God, should follow none but things spiritual and divine, he proceeds and says: *And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat; for ye were not hitherto able, neither yet now are ye able, for ye are yet carnal: for whereas there are among you*



*jealousy, and contention, and strifes, are ye not carnal and walk as men?\**

XIV. We must, dearest brethren, destroy vices and carnal sins, and by spiritual vigour trample underfoot the fearful evils of the earthly body, lest relapsing into the conversation of the old man we be again entangled in the snares of death; as the Apostle has given us prudent and wholesome warning on this point. *Therefore, saith he, brethren, let us not live after the flesh; for if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live; for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*† If we are the sons of God; if we have already begun to be His Temples; if having received the Holy Spirit we are living righteously, and spiritually; if we have uplifted our eyes from earth to heaven; if we have raised our breast full of God and Christ to things that are above, and divine, let us do what is worthy of God and Christ, as the Apostle also awakens, and exhorts us: *If, says he, ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God; set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God; when Christ, Who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.*‡ Let us, therefore, who both died, and are buried in baptism, as far as the carnal sins of the old man are concerned; who have by regeneration from heaven risen together with Christ, both think, and do, as the same Apostle again teaches and instructs us in these words: *The first man is of the dust of the earth, the second man is from heaven; as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of*

\* 1 Cor. iii. 1.

† Rom. viii. 12.

‡ Col. iii. 1.

*the earthy, let us also bear the image of the heavenly.\** But we cannot bear the heavenly image, unless in that state in which we have begun to be, we show forth the likeness of Christ.

XV. For this is to have changed what you had been, and to begin to be, what you were not, so that the divine birth may shine in you, and Godlike discipline may reflect God the Father, and God be glorified in man by the honour and praise of living; as Himself exhorts and teaches us, promising a corresponding recompense to those that glorify Him: *Them, saith He, that glorify me I will glorify; and he that despiseth me shall be lightly esteemed.*† And our Lord, fashioning and preparing us for this glorification, and enforcing upon the sons of God resemblance to God the Father, saith in His Gospel: *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you; Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*‡ If it be joyous and glorious for men to have children like unto themselves, and they feel greater delight in having begotten them, when the grafted offspring reflects the father in like features, how much greater joy does God the Father feel, when any one is so spiritually born that in his actions and praises the Divine Majesty is expressed! What a palm of righteousness! What a crown is it to be such that God shall not say of you: *I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against me;*§ but rather such that Christ may approve, and invite to the reward, saying: *Come, ye blessed*

\* 1 Cor. xv. 47. † 1 Sam. ii. 30. ‡ Mat. v. 3—5. § Is. i. 2.

*of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.\**

XVI. By these meditations we should, dearest brethren, strengthen our minds, and by such like exercises arm them against all the darts of the devil. Let the word of God be before our eyes, good works in our hands, thoughts of the Lord in our minds. Let unceasing prayer be ever made, and saving good works persevered in. Be we ever occupied in spiritual deeds, that whensoever the enemy approaches, and endeavours to enter, he may find the breast closed and armed against him. For it is not the only crown of the Christian man, which is received in time of persecution. Peace also has its crowns, with which we are crowned, coming victorious from various and manifold encounters, in which the adversary has been overthrown and subdued. To have subdued lust is the palm of continency. To have resisted anger, and injury, is the crown of patience. To despise money is a triumph over avarice. To endure the adversities of the world through expectation of things future, is the praise of faith. And he that is not proud in prosperity, winneth glory from humility. And he who is ready to have compassion upon and to nourish the poor, gains the recompense of heavenly treasure. And he who knows not envy, and who in oneness and meekness loves the brethren, is honoured with the reward of love and peace. In this course of virtues we are daily running; without loss of time we are pressing forward to these palms and crowns of righteousness.

XVII. And that thou also who hadst been possessed of envy, and jealousy, mayest attain unto these, cast aside all that malice by which thou wast formerly held, and again return with saving steps unto the way of eternal life. Pluck out from thy breast the thorns, and briars, so that the seed of the Lord may enrich thee with abun-

\* S. Mat. xxv. 34.

dant produce, and the divine and spiritual corn may grow up in the plenteousness of a bountiful harvest. Disgorge the poison of gall; put out the venom of discord; let thy mind, which the jealousy of the serpent had defiled, be cleansed; let all the bitterness, which had settled therein, be softened down by the gentleness of Christ. If thou takest thy meat and drink from the sacrament of the cross, let the wood, which at Marah availed figuratively to sweeten the taste, really profit thee in bestowing the gentleness of a calm breast, and thou wilt not have to toil for medicine to restore thy health. Whence thou hadst been wounded, thence derive the cure. Love those, whom before thou didst hate; love those whom thou before didst envy, and unjustly disparage. Imitate the good, if thou canst follow them. If not, at all events joy together with, and felicitate those who are better than thyself. Make thyself partner with them in undivided love; make thyself coheir in the fellowship of charity and the bond of brotherhood. Thy debts shall be forgiven, when thou also hast forgiven; thy sacrifices shall be received, when thou comest in peace unto God. Thy thoughts and deeds will be divinely directed, when thou thinkest of things divine and righteous, as it is written: *Let the heart of a man consider righteous things, that his steps may be directed by God.\**

XVIII. But thou hast many things on which to think. Think on Paradise, to which Cain, who, through envy, slew his brother, does not return. Think on the heavenly kingdom to which the Lord admits none but those who are of one mind and heart. Think that they only can be called sons of God, who are peaceable; who are united by heavenly truth and the divine law, and resemble God the Father and Christ. Think that we are in the presence

\* Prov. xvi. 19.

of God ; that whilst He looks on and judges, we are running the course of our conversation and life ; and that we may at length have the blessedness of seeing Him, if, with our actions, we delight Him when He now sees us ; if we show ourselves worthy of His grace, and long suffering, and, if about ever to please Him in His kingdom, we first gain His favour here in this world.

## SELECT EPISTLES OF S. CYPRIAN.

### EP. I.

CYPRIAN TO THE PRESBYTERS, AND DEACONS, AND LAITY,  
AT FURNI, GREETING.

I. I, and my colleagues who were present with me, and our co-presbyters, who sat together with us, were much concerned, when we heard that our brother, Geminus Victor, when departing from this life, had, by his will, appointed Faustinus, a Presbyter, to be his executor; whereas it was long ago determined in a council of Bishops that no one should nominate any clerk, or minister of God, to be a guardian or executor, since every one who is honoured with the holy priesthood, and holds ministerial office, should serve only at the Altar, and Sacrifices, and be wholly devoted to prayers, and supplications. For it is written: *No man that warreth for God entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him, Who hath chosen him to be a soldier.\** Since this is said of all, how much more ought not they to be bound down by worldly cares, and allurements, who, engaged in divine and spiritual things, may not withdraw from the Church, and devote themselves to earthly and worldly avocations. The Levites of old, under the law, observed the type of this ordinance, and religious rule; so that when the eleven tribes divided the land, and portioned their possessions, the tribe of Levi, which was set apart for the Temple, and Altar, and Divine ministrations, took

\* 2 Tim. ii. 4.

no share in that division; but whilst the rest cultivated the earth, they cultivated only the worship of God, and received from the eleven tribes the tenth of the fruits which were produced, for their maintenance, and support. All this took place by Divine authority and appointment, that they who were especially devoted to Divine offices might be called away by nothing whatever, nor compelled to think and transact secular business. This principle and rule are now in force as regards the clergy, that they who by ordination are advanced to clerical offices in the Church of the Lord should not be in any manner drawn away from divine ministrations, nor bound down by the cares, and business of this world; but that receiving in the reverent contributions of the brethren, as it were, the tenth of the fruits, they should not withdraw from the Altar, and Sacrifices, but serve day and night in things divine and spiritual.

II. The Bishops, our predecessors, religiously considering this, and making wise provision, decreed, that no brother departing this life, should appoint a clergyman an executor or guardian; and that, if any one did so, no offering should be made for him, nor sacrifice celebrated on his falling asleep. For he, who would call away the Priests and Ministers from the altar, does not deserve to be mentioned in the prayers of the Priest at the Altar of God. And, therefore, since Victor, contrary to the rule lately laid down by the Priesthood in council, has dared to appoint Geminius Faustinus, a Presbyter, his executor, we cannot allow any oblation to be made for him on his falling asleep, or any prayers to be offered up in his name in the Church. And this we do, that the decree of the Priesthood, made for holy and needful ends, may be preserved by us, and at the same time a precedent established for the rest of the brethren, that no one may call

away to worldly cares, the Priests and Ministers of God, set apart for His Altar and Church. For it may hereafter prevent the like thing occurring again to the clergy, if what has now been done be censured. I bid you, dearest brethren, ever heartily farewell.

EP. II.

CYPRIAN TO HIS BROTHER, EUCHRATIUS, GREETING.

I. You have thought it right, dearest brother, because of the affection and regard you feel for me, to ask my opinion on the case of a certain actor, who, being settled among you, still perseveres in the same disgraceful profession, and, as a master and teacher, not for instructing, but for the destruction of boys, communicates to others what he has himself unhappily learnt; you desire to know, whether such a one ought to communicate with us. My opinion is, that it is dishonourable to the Divine Majesty, and contrary to the discipline of the Gospel, for the modesty and honour of the Church to be polluted by contagion so base and foul. For since, in the law, men are forbidden to put on a *woman's garment*, and they who do so are held accursed, how much more heinous a crime is it, not only to put on a woman's garment, but also, by exercising an immodest art, to express indelicate, soft, and effeminate gestures.

II. Nor let any one excuse himself by pleading that he has himself left the theatre, whilst he is still teaching others. For he cannot be said to have desisted, who places substitutes in his stead, and who, for his single self, furnishes many successors; instructing and teaching contrary to the institution of God, how a man may be changed into a woman, and his sex changed by art, and



how the devil, who stains every thing by the sins of a corrupted and enfeebled body, may be pleased by the sins of a corrupted and weakened body. But if such a one pleads wants, and the straits of poverty, his needs also may be relieved amongst the rest, who are supported by the contributions of the Church, if only he be content with more sparing food, and think not that he ought to be bought off from his sins by a pension, since this is for his advantage, and not for ours. But if he want more than this, he must seek it from such gains as separate men from the feast of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and lead down men, fattened to their hurt and destruction with this world, to the eternal punishment of hunger and thirst. And, therefore, as much as in you lies, reclaim this man from his depravity and disgrace, to the way of innocency, and the hope of eternal life, that so he may be content with the more sparing, but innocent provision made by the Church. But if the Church there be not able to afford maintenance to the needy, he may come over to us, and here receive whatever is needful for food and clothing; ceasing to teach others out of the Church what is destructive, but himself in the Church learning what will conduce to his salvation. I bid you, dearest brother, ever heartily farewell.

### EP. III.

#### CYPRIAN TO HIS BROTHER, ROGATIANUS, GREETING.

I. I, and my colleagues, dearest brother, who were present with me, were much and deeply pained when your letter was read, in which you complained of your Deacon, that, unmindful of your Priestly station, and forgetting his own office and ministry, he had provoked you by his reproaches and insults. You have indeed

acted with deference towards us, and, according to your wonted humility, in that you chose rather to complain of him to us, when, by virtue of your Episcopacy and the authority of your chair, you could have punished him at once; being fully certain that all we, your colleagues, would have been satisfied with whatever steps you had taken by virtue of your Priestly power against the insubordinate Deacon; having divine commandments touching such persons, since the Lord God says in Deuteronomy: *And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the Priest that standeth there to minister before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge even, that man shall die, and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.\** And that we may know that this voice of God came forth with His true and highest majesty, to honour and vindicate His Priests, when Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, three of the ministers, presumed to rebel against Aaron, the Priest, and to raise their neck, and make themselves equal to the Priest who was set over them, the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and so they paid at once the penalty of their sacrilegious presumption. And not only they, but the rest also, who had been partakers with them in their presumption, two hundred and sixty in number, were consumed by a fire sent down by the Lord; to the end that it might be shown that the Priests of God are avenged by Him, Who maketh Priests. In the Book of Kings also, when Samuel, the Priest, was despised by the people of the Jews, as you now are, because of his old age, the Lord, cried out, in anger, and said: *They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me.\** And, as a punishment for this, he raised up for them a king, named Saul, to afflict them with grievous wrongs,

\* Deut. xiii. 12, 13.

\* 1 Sam. viii. 7.

and to oppress and crush a haughty people, by all kinds of insults, and punishments, that a despised Priest might be avenged by divine wrath on a proud people.

II. Moreover, Solomon also, moved by the Holy Spirit, bears witness, and teaches what the authority and power of the Priesthood are, when he says: *Fear the Lord with all thy soul, and reverence His priests.\** And again: *Honour God with all thy soul, and honour His priests.†* The blessed apostle, St. Paul, also was mindful of these precepts, when, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, it was said to him: *Revilest thou God's high Priest so?* he answered and said: *I wist not, brethren, that he was the high Priest; for it is written, thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.‡* Even our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, our King, and Judge, and God, unto the day of His death, paid due honour to the high Priests, and Priests, although they neither feared God, nor acknowledged Christ. For when He had cleansed the leper, He said unto him: *Go, show thyself unto the Priest, and offer the gift.§* With that humility, by which He taught us to be humble, He still called him a Priest, whom he knew to be unholy. So also when, close upon His passion, He had received a blow, and it was said unto Him: *Answerest thou the high Priest so?* He spake nothing reproachfully against the person of the high Priest, but rather maintained His own innocency, by saying: *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me? ||* And all these things were done by Him thus humbly and patiently, that we might have an example of humility and patience. For, when He so demeaned Himself towards false Priests, He taught that true ones were to receive their lawful and full honour.

\* Eccl. vii. 29.

† Eccl. vii. 31.

‡ Acts xxiii. 4, 5.

§ St. Matt. viii. 4.

|| St. John xviii. 23.

III. But Deacons ought to remember that the Lord chose the Apostles, *i.e.* Bishops and Rulers; but that the Apostles, after the Ascension of our Lord into heaven, appointed Deacons for themselves, as ministers of their **Episcopacy, and the Church.** Wherefore, if we can dare to do anything against God, Who maketh Bishops, so may Deacons against us, by whom they are made. And, therefore, the Deacon, touching whom you write, is bound to do penance for his presumption, and acknowledge the honour of the Priest, and make amends in all humility to the Bishop that is set over him. For these things, namely, pleasing themselves, and treating their rulers with haughty contempt, are the beginning of heretics, and the rise and first essays of disaffected schismatics. Thus men depart from the Church; thus is a profane altar established without; thus do they rebel against the peace of Christ, and the ordinance, and unity of God. If, therefore, he still further anger, and provoke you by his insults, you must exercise against him the power of your order, by deposing, or excommunicating him. For, if the apostle, S. Paul, writing to Timothy, said: *Let no man despise thy youth,\** how much more should thy colleagues say to thee: *Let no one despise thy old age!* And since you have written that another has joined this Deacon of yours, and become partaker of his pride, and presumption, him also, and all others who may so act, and do anything against God's Priest, you should either restrain or excommunicate. Only we exhort, and advise them rather to acknowledge that they have sinned, and to make amends, and permit us to maintain our own course. For we wish, and desire rather to overcome the insults and affronts which others may offer us, by meek forbearance, than to avenge them by Priestly power. I bid you, dearest brother, ever heartily farewell.

\* 1 Tim. iv. 42.

## EP. IV.

CYPRIAN TO HIS PRESBYTERS AND DEACONS, HIS  
DEAREST BRETHREN, GREETING.

I. By God's goodness, dearest brethren, I salute you in safety, rejoiced in that I have learnt that all things as regards your safety are well. And since the state of the city does not suffer me to be present with you, I entreat you, by your faith and religion, to discharge both your duties and mine, that so there may be nothing wanting either as to discipline or care. But, as regards providing supplies for the needs either of those, who, having confessed the Lord with glorious voice, are now in prison, or of those who are pressed by poverty and want, and yet continue in the Lord, I entreat that nothing be wanting; inasmuch as the whole sum that was collected was distributed among the clergy there for such emergencies, that many might have the means wherewith to relieve the necessities and distresses of all.

II. Moreover, I entreat that your prudence and anxiety be not wanting in procuring quiet. For although the brethren, because of their love, are eager to meet together, and visit the good confessors, on whom the Divine mercy has already shed its light by glorious beginnings, yet this, I think, should be done cautiously, and not in crowds, or great numbers collected together at once; lest from this circumstance alone jealousy should be excited, and liberty of access denied, and, whilst greedily we wish for much, we should lose all. Advise therefore, and make provision, that, by moderation, this may be done more safely; so that the Presbyters also, who there celebrate the Eucharist with the confessors, may attend in turns with a different Deacon; because both the change of persons, and the variety of those who come together, diminish suspicion. For being in all things meek, and humble, as becometh the

servants of God, we ought to yield to the times, to take thought for quietness, and exercise care for the people. Dearest brethren and much longed for, I bid you ever heartily farewell, and would have you remember me. Salute the whole brotherhood. Victor, the Deacon, and those who are with me, salute you. Farewell.

EP. V.

CYPRIAN TO SERGIUS, ROGATIANUS, AND TO THE OTHER  
CONFESSORS OF GOD, EVERLASTING GREETING.

I. I salute you, dearest and most beloved brethren, desiring also myself to be present with you, if the state of the city permitted me to come unto you. For what more desirable and joyous thing could happen unto me than to be beside you, that ye might embrace me with those hands, which, pure and innocent, and maintaining the faith of the Lord, have refused compliance with sacrilegious sacrifice. What more joyous, and sublime, than now to kiss your lips, which have confessed the Lord with glorious voice; and to be looked upon by those eyes, which, despising the world, have been approved worthy of beholding God? But since I have no means of enjoying this happiness, I send these letters to your ears, and eyes, as substitutes for me, in which I alike congratulate and exhort you to persevere strong and steadfast in the confession of heavenly glory; and, having entered on the way of the Lord's favour, to go on in the strength of the Spirit until you receive the crown, having the Lord for your protector and guide, Who has said: *Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.\** Oh! happy prison, which your presence has flooded with light! Oh! happy prison, which sends the men of God to heaven!

Oh! darkness brighter than the sun himself, and more glorious than the light of this world, where the temples of God are now placed, and your members are sanctified by divine confessions.

II. Nor let anything now occupy your hearts and minds but the divine precepts, and heavenly commands, by which the Holy Spirit hath always prepared you for the endurance of suffering. Let none think of death, but of immortality, not of temporary punishment, but of everlasting glory, since it is written: *Dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.\** And again: *A broken spirit is a sacrifice unto God; a broken and contrite heart God will not despise.†* And again, when divine Scripture speaketh of the torments which consecrate the Martyrs of God, and sanctify them in the very trial of suffering: *Though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality. And having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded: for God proved them, and found them worthy for Himself. As gold in the furnace hath He tried them, and received them as a burnt offering. And in the time of their visitation they shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the stubble. They shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people, and their Lord shall reign for ever.‡*

When then you bear in mind that you are to judge, and reign with Christ our Lord, ye must needs rejoice, and, through joy of the future, trample underfoot present afflictions; knowing that so it was ordained from the beginning of the world, that righteousness should here suffer in conflict with the world, since, at the very first, righteous Abel was killed; and from that time all righteous men, and Prophets, and Apostles, who have been sent. To all these our Lord also gave an example in Himself,

\* Psalms cxvi. 15.

† Ps. li. 19.

‡ Wisdom iii. 4, 8.

teaching that they only can attain unto His kingdom, who follow in His steps, when He says: *He that loveth his life in this world, shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal.\** And again: *Fear not those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him, Who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.†* S. Paul also exhorts us, that those of us who desire to attain unto the promises of the Lord, should imitate the Lord in all things: *We are, says he, children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.‡* He hath, moreover, added a comparison between the present life and future glory, saying: *The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.§* Considering the brightness of this glory, it behoveth us patiently to endure all afflictions and persecutions; inasmuch as though *the afflictions of the righteous be many, yet they who trust in God are delivered out of them all.||* Blessed also are the women, who are sharers with you in the same glorious confession; who, holding fast the faith of the Lord, and evincing courage above their sex, are not only themselves nearest to the crown of glory, but have also, by their constancy, set an example to other women also! And that nothing might be wanting to the glory of your company, that both sexes, and every age might share the honor with you, the divine mercy hath united children also with you in your glorious confession; showing forth such things as the illustrious youths, Ananias, Azarias and Mishael once did; from whom, when they were shut up in the furnace, the fire retreated, and the flames gave them a place of refreshment, the Lord

\* S. John xii. 25.

† S. Matt. x. 28.

‡ Rom. viii. 15.

§ Rom. viii. 18.

|| Ps. xxxiv. 19.



being present with them, and showing that the fires of hell can nothing avail against His confessors and martyrs, but that they, who believe in God, shall ever remain uninjured, and safe under all trials. I entreat you then, as befitteth your religion, to consider more carefully, what was the faith of those children which could gain for them fuller measures of God's favour. For, prepared for every thing, as we all should be, they said unto the king: *O, Nebuchodonoser, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter; for our God, Whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thy hands, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.\** Though they believed, and by reason of their faith knew that they could be delivered even from their present punishment, they did not, however, boast of this, nor claim it for themselves, saying: *But if not;* lest the virtue of their confession should be diminished without the testimony of suffering. They added that God could do all things, but yet they did not so trust in this, as to desire deliverance for the present, but thought of the glory of eternal liberty and safety.

IV. Do you also, retaining this faith, and meditating thereon night and day, with all your heart given unto God, despise the present and think only of the future, that so ye may attain unto the fruit of the eternal kingdom, the embrace, and kiss, and presence of the Lord. That so ye may follow in all things that glorious old Presbyter, Rogatianus, who, to the honour of our times, by his holy constancy, and the divine favour, is paving the way for us; and who, with our brother, Felicissimus, ever calm, and mild, bearing the first attack of a maddened people, prepared for you a place in prison, and marking out, as it were, the ground for you,

\* Dan. iii. 16, 18.

still leads you onwards. And that this may be perfected in you, I pray the Lord with unceasing supplications, that these beginnings going on to the end, He would grant to those, whom He has made confessors, to be crowned. I wish you, dearest and most blessed brethren, ever heartily farewell in the Lord, and pray that you may attain to the crown of heavenly glory. Victor, the Deacon, and those who are with me, salute you.

EP. VI.

CYPRIAN TO THE PRESBYTERS AND DEACONS, HIS  
DEAREST BRETHERN, GREETING.

I salute you, dearest brethren, by God's grace in safety, desiring to come speedily unto you, that both my longings, and yours, and those of the brethren, may be satisfied. I must, however, consult for the peace of all, and sometimes, although distressing to my feelings, be absent from you, lest my presence should excite the jealousy and indignation of the Gentiles, and I, who am the rather bound to consult for the quiet of all, should be the means of breaking the peace. When, therefore, ye write that things are settled, and I may come, or if before that God condescend to show that I may, I will then come unto you. For where could I more profitably or joyfully be present, than where God willed that I should believe, and grow in grace? I entreat you diligently to take care of the widows, and the infirm, and all the poor. Moreover, supply the wants of strangers, if any are in distress, from my own portion, which I left with Rogatianus, our co-presbyter. And lest the whole of this has been already expended, I have sent to the same, by Naricus, the Acolyte, another portion, that the distressed may be more plentifully and promptly relieved. I wish you, dearest brethren, ever heartily farewell.

## EP. VII.

## THE ROMAN CLERGY TO THE CLERGY OF CARTHAGE.

I. We have learnt from Crementius, the sub-deacon, who came from you to us for this purpose, that the blessed Pope Cyprian hath retired for a while, and that herein he acted rightly, because he is a remarkable person, and the contest was fast threatening which God hath sent at this time, as a cause of conflict between the adversary and His own servants. Wishing that this contest may prove, both to angels and men, that he who conquers shall be crowned, and that he who shall be conquered shall bring upon himself the sentence which has been made known unto us. And since it is incumbent upon us, who seem to be placed over you, to watch over the flock instead of the shepherd; if we be found negligent, the same will be said to us, as was said to our predecessors, who were negligent of their charge, that *We have not sought that which was lost, and have not brought back that which was driven away; and have not bound up that which was broken; but have eaten their milk, and have clothed ourselves with their wool.\** Moreover, our Lord Himself, fulfilling what is written in the Law and the Prophets, teaches, saying: *I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them and scattereth the sheep.†* Thus also He speaketh to Simon: *Lovest thou me? He answered unto Him, "Yea, Lord." He saith unto Him, "Feed my Lambs."‡* That this word was fulfilled we know from the act of his departure,§ and the other disciples acted in like manner.

II. We would not, therefore, dearly beloved brethren, that you should be found hirelings, but good shepherds,

\* Ezek. xxxiv. 4. 3.

† S. John x. 11, 12.

‡ S. John xxi. 15.

§ i. e. His martyrdom.

since you know that no slight peril threatens you if ye exhort not the brethren to stand fast in the faith, lest the brotherhood, going headlong to idolatry, be wholly uprooted. For we do not exhort you with words alone, but ye can learn from many coming to you from us, how we, by God's help, both have done and do all these things with all solicitude and worldly risk; having before our eyes the fear of God and His eternal punishments, rather than the fear of men and brief suffering; not deserting the brotherhood, but exhorting them to stand fast in the faith, and to be ready to go with the Lord. Moreover, we have called back those who were compelled to sacrifice, even as they were going up. The Church standeth steadfast in the faith, although some, overpowered by the terror itself (either because they were of eminent station, or were seized with the fear of men), have fallen away; whom, however, though separated from us, we have not cast away, but have exhorted, and still exhort, to do penance, if by any means they may receive pardon from Him Who can grant it, lest, if they be given up by us, they become worse and worse. Ye see therefore, brethren, that ye ought to do the same, that even those who have fallen, amending their minds by your exhortation, if they are seized, may, in a fresh trial, confess Him, and so be able to correct their former error.

III. Other things also which are incumbent upon you we subjoin, that if any who have fallen into this temptation, begin to be seized with sickness, and do penance for their deed, and desire communion, they should assuredly be assisted. Whether there be widows or any sick who cannot maintain themselves, or whether they be in prison, or driven from their houses, they too should have some to minister unto them. Moreover, Catechumens seized with sickness should not be deceived, but assisted. And what is greatest of all, if the bodies of the Martyrs,

or of others, be not buried, great peril hangeth over those to whom this belongeth. By whomsoever therefore of you on any occasion this work is done, it is certain that he will be regarded as a good servant, and he who has been faithful in a *very little, shall be set over ten cities*. And may God, Who giveth all things to those that trust in Him, grant that all of us may be found in these works. The brethren who are in bonds, and the Presbyters, and all the Church, which now with greatest anxiety watches for all who call upon the name of the Lord, salute you. And we also desire that you in turn will be mindful of us. Know also, that Bassianus has come to us, and we beseech you who have a zeal for God, to send a copy of this letter to as many as ye can, as occasion offers, or make occasions for yourselves, or send messengers, exhorting them to stand fast and immovable in the faith. We wish you, dearest brethren, ever heartily farewell.

EP. VIII.

CYPRIAN TO HIS BRETHREN, THE PRESBYTERS AND  
DEACONS THAT ARE AT ROME, GREETING.

I. When, dearest brethren, there was among us a doubtful rumour touching the death of that good man, my colleague (Fabian), and I knew not what to think, I received your letter sent to me by the hand of Crementius, the sub-deacon, in which I was most fully certified of his glorious departure: and I rejoiced that his end had been as honourable as befitted the integrity of his administration. And herein I most of all congratulate you, that ye honour his memory with so public and illustrious a testimony, as to make known to me what is so glorious to yourselves as regards the memory of your bishop, and may give me also an example of faith and virtue. For exactly in the same degree as the fall of a Bishop is destructive in that it tends to the lapse of his followers, so, on

the other hand, it is alike useful and salutary when a Bishop, through the strength of faith, makes himself an example for the imitation of his brethren.

II. I have also read another letter, in which it is not distinctly stated either who wrote it, or to whom it was written. And since in this letter both the writing, and the purport, and the paper itself, led me to fear that something had either been taken away, or altered; I have sent back to you the very epistle itself, that you may ascertain whether it is the same which you entrusted to the care of Crementius, the sub-deacon. For it is unquestionably a grievous matter, if the truth of a clerical letter has been corrupted by falsehood or fraud. That, therefore, I may know this, examine whether the writing and signature be yours or not, and write back to me what is the truth of the case. I bid you, dearest brethren, ever heartily farewell.

#### EP. IX.

CYPRIAN TO THE MARTYRS AND CONFESSORS PERPETUAL GREETING IN CHRIST OUR LORD, AND GOD THE FATHER.

I. I rejoice greatly and am beyond measure glad, brave and blessed brethren, to hear of your faith and virtue, in which the Church, our Mother, glories. She gloried indeed lately when that punishment, which made the servants of Christ exiles, was endured with confession that never failed. The present confession, however, in the same degree that it is more bold under suffering, is so much more noble and greater in honour. The struggle has increased, the glory of the combatants hath increased also. Neither have ye kept back from the conflict through fear of torture, but by those very sufferings ye were more and more thereunto incited to the conflict; brave and firm, ye returned with eager devotedness to the most fearful

struggle of all. Some of you are, I hear, already crowned, and some are already on the point of gaining the crown of victory; but all whom the prison hath shut up in one glorious band are animated with one and the same ardour of courage to endure the contest, as behoves the soldiers of Christ in His holy camp—that so neither blandishments may deceive, nor threats alarm, nor pains nor tortures overcome the uncorrupted stedfastness of faith; for *greater is He That is in us than he that is in the world*; neither can earthly punishment avail more to cast down than Divine protection to lift up. This has been proved in the glorious struggle of the brethren who, leaders of the rest to victory over tortures, gave an example of courage and faith, having maintained the contest until the contest was overcome and sunk.

II. With what praises shall I speak of you, oh, brethren, most brave? With what herald voice adorn the courage of your heart and the perseverance of your faith. You have borne the hardest trial even to the consummation of glory; and yielded not to suffering, but suffering hath rather yielded to you. The crown has given what your sufferings did not give—namely, an end to your pains. For this purpose the sad trial lasted so long, not to cast down your stedfast faith, but to send the servants of God more quickly to the Lord. The multitude of them that stood by, witnessed in wonder the heavenly conflict, the conflict of God, the spiritual encounter, the battle of Christ. They saw His servants stand forth with unfettered voice, with uncorrupted minds, with heavenly courage, naked indeed as to the weapons of this world, but mailed and trusting in the whole armour of faith. The tortured stood forth bolder than the torturers, and the racked and torn limbs overcame the hooks that racked and mangled them. The oft-repeated blow, though it raged long, could not overcome their invincible faith, although, the closure of their

bowels being opened, and not limbs, but wounds were tortured in the servants of God. Blood flowed that might extinguish the blaze of persecution, and put out the flames and fires of hell. Oh, how great was this spectacle in the sight of God; how sublime, how great, how acceptable in the eyes of God are this steadfastness and devotion of His soldiers; as it is written in the Psalms, speaking and admonishing us at the same time, the Holy Spirit saith: *Right dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.* Right dear indeed is that death which bought immortality at the price of its blood, which received a crown from the consummation of its valour.

III. How did Christ joy there—how gladly did He fight and conquer in such servants of His,—the Guardian of their faith, and giving to them that believe on Him so much as he that taketh believes he receives. He was present at His own conflict—them that battled for and professed His name He lifted up, He strengthened, and animated. He, Who once conquered death for us, always conquereth it in us: *For, saith He, when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but your Father Which speaketh in you.\**

The present encounter hath given us a proof of this. A voice full of the Holy Spirit burst forth from the Martyr's mouth when the blessed Mappalicus, in the midst of his torture, said to the Proconsul: To-morrow thou shalt see the struggle. And what he spake in the full assurance of faith and courage, the Lord fulfilled. A heavenly struggle was seen, and the servant of God was crowned in the very conflict of the promised fight. This is the struggle which the prophet Isaiah foretold, saying: *Is it a small thing that ye should struggle with men, and yet*

\* S. Matt. x. 19, 20.



*will ye struggle with my God?* And to show what kind of a struggle it would be, he addeth more, saying: *Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emanuel.\**

This is the fight of our faith by which we war, by which we conquer, by which we are crowned with victory. This is the struggle which the blessed Apostle S. Paul shows to us, in which he saith we must run and attain unto the crown of glory: *Know ye not, saith he, how they that run in a race run all; but one obtaineth the prize. So run that ye may obtain. And they run that they may obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible.†* Showing forth also the struggle which was before him, and saying that he should soon be a sacrifice to the Lord, he saith: *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them that love His appearing.‡* This struggle, therefore, predicted by the Prophets, appointed by our Lord, and undergone by the Apostles, Mappalicus, in his own name and that of his colleagues, prophesied once more to the Proconsul. Neither hath that voice of faith deceived us in its promise. The battle which he promised he hath beheld, and the palm which he deserved he hath received.

V. Now this blessed Martyr, and the others who have been partakers of the same struggle, steadfast soldiers and comrades in the faith, patient in grief, victorious in trial, I beseech and exhort you that all the rest of you do ever imitate; that those whom the bond of a joint confession and the communion of a prison have united together, may likewise be united in the triumph of virtue and the crown

\* Isa. vii. 13, 14. † 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25. ‡ 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8.

of heaven, so that you may wipe away by your joy the tears of our Mother the Church (Which already weepeth for the fall and death of many), and by the powerful force of your example may confirm the steadfastness of those that still remain faithful. If the battle claim you, if the day of your struggle shall come, fight bravely, bear yourselves valiantly, knowing that you fight before the eyes of the very God, that by the confession of His name ye will come to His glory; for He is not one who looks idly upon His servants, but Himself fighteth in us, Himself engages in our ranks, Himself at the end of our struggle both crowns us and is crowned Himself.

VI. But if, before the day of your encounter, through the mercy of God, peace should arrive, still continue firm in your intention, and let your conscience glory. Nor let any of you be cast down, because he is less than those who having endured tortures before you, and having conquered, and trampled upon the world, are gone to the Lord in the path of glory. The Lord searcheth the heart and reins; He knoweth things secret, and perceiveth those that are hidden. To gain the crown which he hath promised, His witness alone is sufficient Who is to judge. Both conditions, therefore, dearest brethren, are alike noble and illustrious. The one is the more safe to hasten to God by the consummation of victory; the other is the more joyous, having a furlough after glory, to flourish in the praises of the Church. Oh blessed Church of ours Which the greatness of divine favor illumines, Which the glorious blood of the Martyrs in our days floods with light! Before, She was white with the good works of the brethren; now, She has become purple with the blood of Martyrs. Her garlands lack neither lilies nor roses. Let each now strive for the fullest dignity of either honour; let them seek and gain their crowns, either white because of their works, or purple because of their suffering. In the heavenly

warfare both peace and war have their garlands, with which the soldier of Christ is crowned for victory. Oh brethren, most steadfast and blessed, I bid you all ever heartily farewell in the Lord, and that ye be mindful of me. Farewell.

EP. X.

CYPRIAN TO THE PRIESTS AND DEACONS, HIS BRETHREN,  
GREETING.

I. Although I know, dearest brethren, that from the fear which all of us owe to God, you are always instant in ceaseless prayers and earnest supplications, yet, notwithstanding your godly solicitude, I must remind you that, to appease and entreat the Lord, we should bewail ourselves not with words only, but with fastings and tears and every kind of entreaty. For we must feel and confess that the troublous wasting of this persecution (which hath so wasted the greatest part of our flock, and still wastes it) hath come upon us through our own sins, because we have not kept the way of the Lord, nor obeyed His heavenly commandments, which were given for our salvation. Our Lord fulfilled the will of His Father, and we fulfil not the will of our Lord; eager for our property and gain, following the dictates of pride, and giving ourselves up to emulation and dissensions; careless of singlemindedness and faith, renouncing the world in words only, and not in deeds, every one pleasing himself and displeasing others. We are, therefore, smitten as we deserve, since it is written: *And that servant which knoweth his Lord's will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.\** But what blows, what stripes, do we not deserve, when even confessors, who should be an example of good conduct to others, do not themselves observe discipline? Therefore, whilst the swollen, and

\* S. Luke xii. 47.

immodest boastfulness of their confessions puffed up some beyond measure, torments came upon them, torments without any end of torture, without escape of condemnation, without even the consolation of death: tortures which do not easily dismiss them to their crown, but rack them until they cast down the faith; except that some few escaped, withdrawn by the divine favor, in the midst of the tortures themselves—receiving glory, not by the full termination of suffering, but by the suddenness of death.

II. These things we suffer for our sins and deserts, as the divine warning foretold, saying: *But if they forsake My law, and walk not in My judgments; if they break My statutes and keep not My commandments, I will visit their offences with a rod, and their sins with scourges.\** These rods and scourges, therefore, we now feel, because we have neither pleased God by our good works, nor done satisfaction for our sins. Let us from our inmost hearts, and with our whole mind, implore the mercy of God; since He also hath added: *Nevertheless, My loving kindness will I not utterly take from them.†* Let us ask, and we shall obtain; and if we receive slowly, and after a time, because we have grievously sinned, let us knock; because to him that knocketh it shall be opened, if only we knock at the door by our prayers, and groans, and tears, in which we should be instant and persevere, as becometh united prayer.

III. For (and this has rather persuaded and impelled me to write this letter to you) you ought to know (as the Lord thought fit to manifest and reveal) that it was thus declared to me in a vision: “Ask and ye shall have.” Then after this the people who stood by were commanded to pray for certain persons pointed out to them; but, as they asked each for himself, there were discordant voices and opposite wishes. And this greatly displeased Him

\* Psalm lxxxix. 31-33.

† Ps. lxxxix. 34.

Who said, "Ask and ye shall have," when there were these differences among the people; nor was there among the brethren one mind in blended harmony, as it is written: *God, Who maketh men to be of one mind in a house.\** And in the Acts of the Apostles we read: *But the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.†* And our Lord Himself with His own voice hath commanded, saying: *This is my commandment, that ye love one another.‡* And again: *But I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in Heaven.§* Now, if two that agree can avail so much, what would be the case when all agree together? If the whole brotherhood should act together in that peace which the Lord hath given us, we should ere this have obtained of the Divine mercy what we seek, and we should not have been tossed about so long in this peril of our faith and salvation. Yea, and these evils would not have come upon the brethren, if all the brotherhood had been of one mind and of one spirit.

IV. For this is what was shown unto me, how there sat a father of a family, with a young man seated at his right hand. The young man, sorrowful and angry, sat down, with downcast looks, and supported his face on his hands. Another, on the left hand, held a net, and he made as though he would cast it to catch the people that stood around. And when he that beheld these things wondered what this might be, it was said unto him: That the young man who sat thus on the right hand was grieved and sorrowful because His commandments were not obeyed; but he on the left hand rejoiced, because that to him was given an opportunity of receiving from the Father of the family power to destroy. This vision was shown unto me

\* Psalms xyiii. 6.

† Acts iv. 32.

‡ S. John xv. 17.

§ S. Matthew xviii. 19.

long before the storm of this present desolation arose. And we have seen fulfilled what had been shown to us, that whilst we despise the commandments of God, and do not keep the saving precepts of His law, the enemy gains power to hurt us, and by casting his net encloses us, whilst we are less armed and unprepared to resist him.

V. Let us pray instantly and groan with constant supplication. For not long ago I was reproached of this also by a vision that we were slothful in our supplications, not watching in prayer. And verily God, Who *chasteneth whom He loveth* when He chasteneth, chastens to amend, and amends to save. Let us therefore rouse ourselves, and cast off the bonds of sleep, and pray watchfully and instantly, as the Apostle S. Paul teacheth, saying: *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same.*\* For the Apostles ceased not to pray day or night; and our Lord Himself the Maker of our rule of life, and the Way of our example, frequently watched and prayed, as we read in the gospel: *He went up into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.*† And in that He prayed, He prayed for us, since He Himself was not a sinner, but bore the sins of others. And He so prayed for us, that we read in another place: *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.*‡ And if for us and for our sins He both laboured, and watched, and prayed, how much more ought we to be instant in prayer and supplications, and first of all to entreat our Lord Himself, and then through Him to make satisfaction unto God the Father. We have an Advocate and an Intercessor for our sins, Jesus Christ our Lord and God, if only we repent of our past transgressions, and confess and acknowledge our sins whereby we now offend our Lord, and resolve for the

\* Col. iv. 2.

† S. Luke vi. 12.

‡ S. Luke xxii. 31-32.

future to walk in His ways and stand in fear of His commandments. Our Father corrects and protects us, if we are steadfast in the faith through tribulations and distress, clinging closely unto Christ, as it is written: *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?\** None of these things can separate the believer. Nothing can tear away them that cling to His Body and Blood. Persecution is the trying and searching of our breasts. God wills us to be tried and proved, as He hath always proved them that are His; and in such trials His aid hath never been wanting to them which believe.

VI. Even to the least of all His servants, though encompassed by very many sins, and unworthy of His favour, He hath thought worthy, through His goodness towards us, to give this direction. "Tell him," saith He, "to be secure, for peace will come, but as to the intervening time, some remain to be tried." But we are admonished by these divine mercies to use but sparing food and moderate drinking, lest the allurements of the world enervate our breasts now raised on high by heavenly strength, and the mind, weighed down by sumptuous banquetings, be less watchful unto prayer.

VII. I ought not to conceal these things, nor keep them in my own breast, for by them every one of us may be both instructed and guided. Nor should you keep this letter concealed, but should send it to be read by the brethren. For to intercept those things with which our Lord hath thought fit to admonish and instruct us, is the part of such as are unwilling for their brother to be admonished and instructed. Let them know that we are now being proved by our Lord, and let them never, because of the severity of the present distress, fall away from the

\* Rom. viii. 35.

faith whereby we once believed in Him, but let them acknowledge their transgressions, and put off the conversation of the old man: *For no man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.\** And Lot's wife, who, having been delivered, looked back, contrary to the commandment of God, lost the benefits of her past escape. Let us look, not upon the things that are behind, whither the devil calls us back, but upon those that are before, where Christ calls. Let us uplift our eyes to heaven, so that the earth seduce us not by its delights and enticements. Let each of us pray to God, not for himself alone, but for all the brethren, even as the Lord taught us to pray, when He commanded not to each a private prayer for himself, but enjoined us, when we pray, to pray for all in one common prayer and unanimous supplication. If the Lord shall see us humble and peaceable, united one to another, fearful of His anger, corrected and amended by the present tribulation, He will keep us safe from the attacks of the enemy. Discipline has gone before, and pardon will follow.

VIII. Let us therefore pray to the Lord without ceasing, in all simplicity and oneness, and in the full confidence of receiving, beseeching Him with tears and groans, as those ought to beseech who are placed between the ruins of the fallen and a remnant yet fearful,—between the numberless slaughter of the languishing and the little company of them that still stand. Let us ask that peace be speedily restored, that we may be soon assisted in our hiding-places and dangers, and that those things which the Lord has deigned to show His servants may be fulfilled,—the restoration of the Church, the security of our salvation; after rain, a clear sky; after darkness, light; after storms and whirlwinds, peaceful calm; the holy aid of our Father's love, the wonted effects of divine power—

\* S. Luke ix. 62.



whereby both the blasphemy of persecutors may be repressed, the penitence of the lapsed perfected, and the firm and steady faith of the persevering may glory. I bid you, dearest brethren, ever heartily farewell.

EP. XI.

CYPRIAN TO THE PRESBYTERS AND DEACONS, HIS  
BRETHREN GREETING.

I. Although I know, dearest brethren, that you have been frequently admonished in my epistles to show all diligence to those who have confessed the Lord with glorious voice before men, and are now shut up in prison; yet I would again and again press it upon you, that nothing be wanting of care to those to whom nothing is wanting of glory. How I wish that the state of the city and my position would permit me to be now present with you! How gladly would I fulfil in my wonted ministering every kindly office of love towards our brave brethren! But let your diligence supply the place of my duty, and do every thing that should be done towards those on whom the Divine favour hath poured light by such deserts of faith and courage. And I pray that more prompt watchfulness and care be shown to the bodies of those who, though they were not tortured in prison, depart by a glorious death. For their courage or honour is not the less, so that they too should not be ranked amongst the blessed Martyrs. As much as in them lay, they endured whatever they were prepared and ready to endure. He who hath offered himself to torments and death under the very eyes of God, suffered whatever He was willing to suffer. For they were not wanting to the tortures, but rather the tortures to them. *Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father*

*which is in heaven,\** saith the Lord. They have confessed. *He that endureth to the end shall be saved,†* saith the Lord. They have endured, and the unstained and uncorrupted merits of their courage carried them even unto the end. And again it is written: *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.‡* They have continued faithful unto death, steadfast and unconquered. When to the willingness and to the confession of His name in prison and in bonds, is added also the termination of death, the glory of the Martyr is perfected.

II. Moreover, I would have ye mark the days on which such depart, that we may celebrate them among the commemorations of the Martyrs; although Tertullus, our most faithful and devoted brother, besides the care and anxiety which he shows to the brethren in every kind of service, and who neglecteth not the care of the dead bodies there, has written and continues to write to me the days on which our blessed brethren in prison depart by the way of a glorious death to immortality; and the oblations and sacrifices are celebrated here by us in commemoration of them, which, if the Lord protect us, we will soon celebrate with you. To the poor also, as I have often written, let not your care and diligence be wanting, least of all to those, who, standing in the faith and fighting bravely with us, have not deserted the camp of Christ; to whom, indeed, we should now show greater love and care, since, neither driven by poverty, nor cast down by the storm of persecution, they serve faithfully with the Lord, and have given also an example of faith to the rest of the poor. I bid you, dearest brethren and much longed for, ever heartily, farewell, and that ye be mindful of me. Salute the brethren in my name. Farewell.

\* S. Matt. x. 32.

† S. Matt. x. 22.

‡ Rev ii. 10.

## EP. XII.

CYPRIAN TO ROGATIAN, THE PRESBYTER AND THE OTHER  
CONFESSORS, HIS BRETHREN, GREETING.

I. I have both heretofore, dearest and most valiant brethren, sent you epistles, in which I congratulated your faith and courage in words of exultation; and now my voice speaketh nothing more joyously than with glad heart to be continually and always declaring the glory of your name. For what greater or better wish can I cherish, than to see the flock of Christ illumined by the honor of your confession? For, inasmuch as all the brethren must rejoice herein, the Bishop hath the greater share in this common joy. For the glory of the Church is the glory of the Bishop. And as we lament for those whom the storms of the enemy have cast down, so in like measure do we rejoice over you whom the devil hath been unable to overcome.

II. I, however, exhort you, by our common faith, by the true and sincere love which I have towards you in my heart, that you, who have conquered the adversary in this first assault, hold fast your glory by strong and courageous perseverance. We are still in the world, still engaged in warfare, we daily fight for our lives. Ye must give labour, that these beginnings come to increase, and that that may be perfected in you which ye have now so happily commenced. It is a trifling thing to have been able to gain a thing. It is more to be able to preserve what you have gained. Just as both faith itself and the saving birth give life, not only when received, but when kept; so it is not the obtaining, but the completing, which keeps a man for God. The Lord hath taught this, saying: *Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing*

*happen to thee.\** Suppose Him speaking on this wise to a Confessor: Behold thou art made a Confessor; sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto thee! Solomon and Saul, and many others, as long as they walked in the ways of the Lord could hold the faith that was given to them; when the discipline of the Lord was left by them, grace also left them.

III. We must persevere in the strait and narrow path of praise and glory; and since peace and humility and the even course of good living are suitable to all Christians according to the word of the Lord, Who regardeth no one but him that is humble and meek, that trembleth at and feareth His word, so it especially behoves you Confessors to observe and fulfil this, who have been made examples to the rest of the brethren, and whose conduct all should be moved to imitate in their lives and deeds. For as the Jews, *through whom the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles*, are aliens from God, so on the other hand, they are dear to God, through whose obedience the name of God is magnified by a laudable testimony, as it is written: *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in Heaven.†* And the Apostle S. Paul says: *Ye shine as lights in the world.‡* And S. Peter also similarly exhorts us: *I beseech you, saith he, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshy lusts which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works which they shall behold glorify God in the day of visitation.§* And to my joy, the greater portion of you pay attention to this, and, being made better by the honor of confession itself, both guard and maintain its glory by peaceable and holy lives.

\* S. John v. 14.

† S. Matt. v. 16.

‡ Phil. ii. 15.

§ 1 S. Pet. ii, 11, 12.

IV. But I hear that some persons disgrace your number and destroy the praise of your glorious name by their evil conversation ; whom ye also yourselves, as lovers and preservers of your praise, should reprove and check and amend. For, with how great shame is your name disgraced, when one wastes his time in drunkenness and lasciviousness, or another returns to the country whence he was banished, so that he is taken and perishes, not as a Christian, but as a criminal. Others, I hear, are puffed up and swollen, though it is written ; *Be not high minded, but fear, for if the Lord hath not spared the natural branches, neither perchance will He spare thee.\** Our Lord *was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before her shearers is dumb, so opened not He His mouth, He was not rebellious, neither turned away His back, He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. He hid not His face from shame and spitting.†* And dare any one, living by Him and in Him, set himself up and be proud, unmindful both of the acts which He did and of the commandments which He delivered to us either by Himself or by His Apostles ? But if the servant is not greater than his lord, they who follow the Lord must humbly and meekly and silently tread in His footsteps, for [the more any one humbleth himself the more he shall be exalted, as our Lord saith : *He that is least among you all, the same shall be great.‡*

V. But what in the next place is that ? and how abominable should that appear to you which I have learnt with deepest grief and pain of mind, that there are not wanting among your number those who, by foul and disgraceful concubinage, defile their bodies, the living temples of God, and their members which have been sanctified and enlightened after holy confession, by promiscuously mingling their beds with women's ! And even if their conscious-

\* Rom. xi. 20, 21.

† Is. liii. 7.

‡ Luke ix. 48.

ness were free from uncleanness, yet this is a grievous sin, that by their offence examples are given for the ruin of others. Moreover, there should be no contentions and strivings among you, for the Lord left us His peace, and it is written: *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; but if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.*\* From reproaches and revilings, I beseech you, abstain; because revilers shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven; and the tongue which hath confessed Christ must be kept pure and unspotted in its own honour. For he, who speaketh peaceable and good and righteous things according to the commandment of Christ, daily confesseth Christ. We had renounced the world, when we were baptized; but now truly we have renounced the world, when, tried and proved by God, leaving all our goods, we followed the Lord, and stand and live in His faith and fear.

VI. Let us confirm and strengthen one another with mutual exhortations, and more and more advance in the Lord, that (when through His mercy He shall give us that peace which He promised that He would), new and almost changed, we may return to the Church, and both our brethren and the Gentiles may find us corrected and reformed in all things; and they who before admired our glory in our courage, may now admire the obedience shown in our lives. I bid you, dearest brethren, ever heartily farewell.

#### EP. XIII.

CYPRIAN TO THE MARTYRS AND CONFESSORS, HIS DEAREST BRETHREN, GREETING.

The anxiety of my station and the fear of the Lord compel me, most courageous and blessed brethren, to

\* Gal. v. 14, 15.

admonish you by my letters, that they who have so devotedly and courageously kept the faith of the Lord, should equally also maintain the law and discipline of God. For as it behoves all the soldiers of Christ to keep the orders of their Captain, it is especially fitting that you should obey His precepts, because ye have been made an example to the rest, both of firmness and fear towards God. And I had trusted, indeed, that the Presbyters and Deacons who were present with you were admonishing and fully instructing you in the law of the Gospel, as was done in times past by my predecessors; that the Deacons who ministered in prison governed the requests of the Martyrs by their advice and the precepts of the Scriptures. But now I hear with the utmost grief of mind that so far from the Divine precepts being set before you, they are rather withheld from you, so that those things which are done by you, both carefully as regards God and honourably as regards the Priest of God, are made of none effect by certain Presbyters who neither entertain the fear of God nor give honour to the Bishop. For when you had sent letters to me in which you desired that your requests might be examined and reconciliation granted to certain of the lapsed, as soon as at the end of the persecution we should meet our clergy and be collected together again; they, contrary to the law of the Gospel, contrary to your deferential petitions, before penance had been done, before confession of their most grievous and extreme sin had been made, before the imposition of hands by the Bishop and Clergy, as a sign of their repentance, dared to make oblations for and to give the Eucharist to the lapsed you have mentioned in your letters—that is, to profane the sacred Body of our Lord, as it is written: *Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.\**

\* 1 Cor. xi. 27.

II. Now in this matter the lapsed may be forgiven. For who that is dead would not hasten to be made alive? Who would not speed unto salvation? But it is the duty of those that are set over them to keep the commandments, and to correct their haste and instruct their ignorance, lest those who should be the shepherds of the sheep become their slayers. For to grant those things which turn to destruction is to deceive, and the lapsed are not thus lifted up again, but rather, through the offence against God, cast headlong into ruin. Let them therefore learn even from you what they should have taught you. Let them keep your petition and requests for the Bishop, and await for a seasonable and settled time for granting reconciliation upon your asking it. The Mother must of needs first obtain peace from the Lord, and then, afterwards, your desires for the peace of Her sons be considered.

III. And since I hear, bravest and dearest brethren, that you are pressed by the recklessness of some persons, and that your modesty suffers violence, I entreat you most earnestly to be mindful of the Gospel, and, considering what kind of concessions the Martyrs, your predecessors, made, and how anxious they were in all cases, you also should anxiously and cautiously weigh the requests of those that ask you; since as friends of the Lord, hereafter to judge with Him, you must look unto the conduct and the works and the merits of each; you must consider the kind and quality of their sins, lest if anything should be either promised by you or done by us hastily and unworthily, our Church may be brought to the blush before the Gentiles. For we are often taught by visions and are rebuked, to keep the commandments of God pure and inviolate, which indeed I know ceaseth not among you, so that the Divine judgment may instruct very many of you also in the discipline of the Church. But all this



can be done, if you regulate the requests made to you by religious regards, finding out and repressing those who, having respect to persons, either distribute your favours partially or receive profit from unlawful traffic:

IV. Concerning this matter, I have written letters to the Clergy and the people, and I have desired them both to be read to you. But I would also have you diligently correct and amend one thing, namely, to mention by name those to whom you desire peace to be granted. For I hear that your tickets are made out by some in such a form as this: Let such a one with his friends communicate. Now this is a thing which has never been done by the Martyrs, so that an uncertain and blind petition like this may hereafter bring ill will upon us. For great licence is given when it is said, "Such a one and his friends;" for twenty or thirty, or more may be, by its means, presented to us, who may be asserted to be neighbours and connexions, freed men and servants of him who receives the ticket. And so I beg that only those whom you yourselves see and know, and whose penitence you observe to approach near to satisfaction, you mark out by name in the ticket, and so in accordance with the faith and discipline direct your letters to us. I wish, most beloved brethren, that you ever fare well in the Lord, and that ye be mindful of me. Farewell.

#### EP. XIV.

CYPRIAN TO THE PRESBYTERS AND DEACONS, HIS  
BRETHREN, GREETING.

I. For a long time, dearest brethren, I have exercised great patience, thinking that my modest silence might tend to preserve quiet. But since the immoderate and

hasty presumption of some among you by its rashness attempts to disturb the honour of the Martyrs, the modesty of Confessors, and the tranquillity of the whole people, I cannot be longer silent, lest too long silence should entail danger both upon us and the people. For what danger should we not fear from the displeasure of our Lord, when some of the Presbyters, mindful neither of the Gospel nor their own station, and making no account of the future judgment of the Lord, nor of the Bishop who is now set over them, do what was never done under our predecessors, with contempt and dishonour to their Bishop, and claim everything to themselves?

II. Would that they did not claim everything to themselves to the sad destruction of the salvation of our brethren! Contempt of my Episcopal authority I could conceal and bear, as I have ever concealed and borne it. But now this is no place for dissembling, when the brotherhood is deceived by some of you; who desire to gain favour, having no means of restoring salvation, and so deceive the lapsed more and more. For that is the highest crime which the persecution caused to be committed, which they know who committed it, as our Lord and Judge hath said: *Whosoever, therefore, shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me, him will I also deny.\** And again He has said: *All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies; but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, shall not have forgiveness, but is guilty of eternal sin.†* The blessed Apostle also hath said: *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.‡* He who keepeth these sayings from our brethren, deceiveth them miserable; so that they who by doing full

\* S. Mat. x. 32.

† S. Mark iii. 28.

‡ 1 Cor. x. 21.

penance might, by their prayers and good works, have appeased God the Father and Merciful, are led away, so that they perish more utterly ; and they who might have raised themselves fall still lower. For inasmuch as in lesser sins sinners do penance for a certain time, and according to the rules of discipline come to confession, and regain the right of communion by the laying on of the hands of the Bishop and Clergy ; now whilst the time is not passed, and the persecution still continues, and the peace of the Church Herself has not been as yet restored, they are admitted to Communion, and their names are offered, and, ere penance has been done, or confession made, or hands laid upon them by the Bishop and Clergy, the Eucharist is given unto them ; whereas it is written : *He that eateth the bread or drinketh the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.\**

III. They, however, are not guilty of this, who have but little knowledge of the law of the Scripture ; but they will be guilty who are invested with authority, and do not suggest these things to the brethren, so that, instructed by their rulers, they may do all things in the fear of the Lord, and with the observances given and enjoined by Him. Besides, they expose to envy the blessed Martyrs, and set the servants of God at variance with the Priests of God ; so that, though mindful of my station, they have written to me, and requested that their desires may be then examined into, and peace be granted, after that our mother the Church has first through God's mercy received peace, and the Divine protection has brought us back to His Church. Yet these, setting aside the honour which the blessed Martyrs with their Confessors preserve towards me, and despising the law of the Lord and the rules which these same Martyrs and Confessors charge them to keep,

\* 1 Cor. xi. 27.

before the fear of persecution is assuaged, before my return, and almost before the departure of the Martyrs themselves, communicate with the lapsed, and make the oblations and deliver unto them the Eucharist; though even if the Martyrs, in the height of their glory, should look less intently on the words of Scripture, and desire somewhat more, they should be reminded by the suggestions of the Presbyters and Deacons, as was always the case heretofore.

IV. Therefore the Divine censurh not to chastise us, night and day. For besides nightly visions, by day also the innocent age of children among us is filled with the Holy Ghost; for in ecstasies they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, those things by which the Lord deigns to admonish and instruct us. And ye shall hear all things, when the Lord, Who commanded me to withdraw, bringeth me back again to you. Meanwhile, let certain rash, incautious, and proud persons among you, who regard not man, nor fear God, know that if they thus continue longer in the same, I will use that admonition which the Lord commandeth me to use; so that they may be meanwhile forbidden from offering, and plead their cause before me, and the Confessors themselves, and all the people, when by the Lord's permission, we begin to be again collected together in the bosom of our Mother the Church. Upon this subject I have written to the Martyrs and Confessors, and have commanded that both my letters be read to you. I bid you, dearest brethren, and most longed for, ever heartily farewell in your Lord, and be mindful of us. Farewell.

## EP. XV.

CYPRIAN TO THE PRESBYTERS AND DEACONS, HIS  
BRETHREN, GREETING.

I have read, dearest brethren, your letter wherein you write that you have not failed to give salutary counsel to our brethren, that, laying aside all rash haste, they should patiently await the Lord's time; so that, when through His mercy we have come together, we may consult on all points according to Ecclesiastical discipline, especially since it is written: *Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent.* But he repents, who mindful of the Divine precept, meek and patient, and obeying the Priests of God, gaineth the favour of the Lord by submission, and righteous works.

II. Since, however, ye have intimated that some are impetuous, and press for a speedy restoration of Communion, and desire me to give you directions touching this matter; I think that I wrote in sufficiently express terms upon this subject in my last letter to you, that those who have received tickets from the Martyrs, and may by their aid gain access to God amid their sins, if they begin to be pressed by any sickness, or peril, may (after they have confessed and received imposition of hands from you in token of repentance) be sent unto the Lord with the peace promised them by the Martyrs. But let the rest, who having received no tickets from the Martyrs, complain against you (since this is not confined to one Church or province, but affects the whole world) wait for the public peace of the Church from the protection of the Lord. For this becometh well the modesty, and discipline, and character of us all, that the Bishops, meeting with the Clergy and the faithful of the Laity, who are to be held in honour because of their faith and fear, may arrange all things

with the solemnity of a common consultation. But how irreligious is it, and how destructive even to those who are thus urgent, if, when banished and driven from their country, and despoiled of their goods, they have not yet returned unto the Church, some of the lapsed hasten to anticipate the confessors themselves, and to enter into the Church before them. And if they make this excessive haste, they have what they want in their own power, as the present juncture of affairs offers them more than they demand. Still is the battle being waged; daily is the contest carried on. If they truly and firmly repent them of what they have done, and if the ardour of their faith is so strong, they who cannot wait may be crowned. I wish you, dearest brethren, ever heartily farewell, and to remember me. Salute the whole brotherhood in my name, and entreat them to me mindful of me. Farewell.

#### EP. XVI.

CYPRIAN TO HIS BRETHREN, THE PRÉSBYTERS AND DEACONS  
AT ROME, GREETING.

I. Inasmuch as I find, dearest brethren, that what I have done, and now do, has been unfairly and unfaithfully reported unto you, I have deemed it needful to write you this letter, in which I may give an account of my acts, discipline, and diligence. For as the commandments of the Lord direct, when the first onset of this disturbance arose, and the people with violent clamour frequently demanded me, I, not so much from a regard for my own safety as for the public peace of the brethren, withdrew for a while, lest by my obstinate stay the sedition, which had begun, should be the more excited. Yet, though absent in body, I was not so in spirit, nor was I ever wanting in my acts, or advice, so that I did not, as far as

my poor abilities allowed, consult for the good of the brethren, according to the commandments of the Lord.

II. And what I have done is shown by my epistles, thirteen in number, sent out as circumstances required, and which I transmitted to you. In these, neither advice to the Clergy, nor exhortation to the Confessors, nor reproofs, when needed, to the banished, nor addresses and persuasions to the whole brotherhood to entreat the mercy of God were wanting, so far as, according to the law of faith and the fear of God, my poor abilities, aided by suggestions of the Lord, could do. But after that tortures also came,—whether our brethren were already tortured or shut up in prison to be tortured, my counsel reached them, to strengthen and confirm them. So also, when I discovered that they who had polluted their hands and mouths by sacrilegious contact, and had at all events tainted their consciences with impious certificates, were canvassing the Martyrs, and were on all hands corrupting the Confessors by importunate and flattering entreaties, so that, without any distinction or examination of each case, thousands of letters were daily given, contrary to the law of the Gospel, I wrote letters, whereby, as far as in me lay, to recall the Martyrs and Confessors by my advice to the observance of the precepts of the Lord. In the case of the Presbyters and Deacons also the power of the Priestly office was exercised, so that some who were unmindful of discipline, and had with headstrong haste begun to communicate with the lapsed, were restrained by my interposition. I have also, as much as I could, settled the minds of the people, and taught them that ecclesiastical discipline must be preserved.

III. But afterwards, when some of the lapsed, either of their own accord, or at the instigation of some one else, made such bold demands, that they endeavoured to wrest by violence a promise of peace from the Martyrs and

Confessors, upon this matter also I wrote two epistles unto the Clergy, and commanded them to be read to them, ordering (to the end that I might somehow diminish their violence), that any, who having received letters from the Martyrs should depart from this world, after they had made public confession, and received imposition of hands to repentance, should be sent unto the Lord with the peace which had been promised them by the Martyrs. Nor in this did I lay down a law, or rashly appoint myself its author. But since it seemed fitting that honour should be paid unto the Martyrs, and the violence of those who desired to throw all things into confusion, should be repressed ; and when besides I had read your letter, which you lately sent unto my Clergy by Crementius, the Subdeacon, requesting that assistance might be granted unto those who were seized with sickness after their falling away, and being penitent desired communion,—I determined to abide by your opinion, lest my actions, which ought to be united and agree in all things, should differ in any respect. As to the case of the rest, notwithstanding that they have received letters from the Martyrs, I ordered them to be put off, and reserved until my return, that when peace has been given unto us by the Lord, and more Bishops have met together, we may, by taking counsel with you also, arrange and restore all things. I bid you, dearest brethren, ever heartily farewell.

EP. XVI.

CYPRIAN TO THE LAPSED.

I. Our Lord, Whose precepts and warnings we are bound to observe, when settling the honour of a Bishop, and the discipline of His Church, speaks in the Gospel, and says unto S. Peter : *I say unto thee, that thou art Peter ; and upon this rock will I build my Church, and*



*the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.\** Thence the ordination of Bishops, and the discipline of the Church have run down in the course of time and succession, so that the Church is founded upon the Bishops, and every act of the Church is regulated by the same Rulers. Since then this is established on the divine law, I am astonished that some with daring rashness have so written to me, as if they were writing in the name of the Church, whereas the Church is really composed of Bishops and Clergy, and those of the Laity who remain steadfast. Far be it from us that the mercy of God, and His invincible power, permit the number of the lapsed to be called the Church, since it is written: *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.*† We wish, indeed, that all may be gifted with life, and with our prayers, and groanings, we entreat that they may be restored to their former position. But if some of the lapsed claim to be the Church, and if the Church is with them and in them, what remains but for us to ask them to grant us admission into the Church. Wherefore it behoveth them to be lowly, peaceable, and modest, who bearing their sin in mind, should make satisfaction unto God, and not write letters in the name of the Church, when they ought rather to know that they are writing to the Church.

II. But some of the lapsed have lately written unto me, who are humble and meek, trembling, and fearing God, and who have always been remarkable for their charity and good works, which they ascribed unto the Lord, knowing that He has said: *And when ye have done all, say, we are unprofitable servants; we have done what*

\* S. Matt. xvi. 18.

† S. Matt. xii. 32

*was our duty to do.\** Thinking upon these things, although they had received letters from the Martyrs, yet, that their satisfaction might be acceptable unto the Lord, they have written to me with prayers, saying, that they were sensible of their sins, and were doing sincere penance, but that they did not with hasty or immoderate importunity ask for reconciliation; but that they were waiting for my presence, stating, that their reconciliation will be more welcome if they receive it at my hands. How much I congratulate them, the Lord is my witness; Who hath thought fit to reveal unto me what such servants gain of His mercy. And since I have lately received these letters, and now read yours, which are to a different purpose, I entreat you to distinguish your requests, and whoever you are that have now sent this letter, to subscribe your names to the paper, and send it back to me with each of your names thereon. For I must know, first, to whom I have to reply; and then I will answer each of your requests, according to my station and manner of conduct.

I bid you, dearest brethren, ever heartily farewell; and exhort you to live peaceably and quietly, according to the discipline of the Lord. Farewell.

#### EP. XVII.

CYPRIAN TO THE PREBYTERS AND DEACONS, HIS BRETHREN,  
GREETING.

I. Ye have acted rightly, my dearest brethren, and according to discipline, in that, by the advice of my colleagues who were present, you resolved not to communicate with Caius, Presbyter of Didda, and his Deacon, who, having been oftentimes discovered in their perverse errors,

\* S. Luke xvii. 10.

communicating with the lapsed, and offering their oblations, and who having (as ye wrote to me) been again and again admonished by my colleagues not to do this, have persevered in their daring presumption, thereby deceiving certain brethren among our people; for whose well-being I with all humility desire to consult, and for whose safety I care, not with feigned flattery, but sincere faith; exhorting them to entreat the mercy of the Lord with true penitence and mourning, and full sorrow, since it is written: *Remember from whence thou art fallen and repent.\** And again, Holy Scripture speaketh on this wise: *Thus saith the Lord: When thou shalt be converted, and mourn, then shalt thou be saved, and know where thou hast been.†*

II. But how can they mourn and repent whose mourning and tears some of the Presbyters prevent, by rashly deciding that they may be admitted to Communion, not knowing that it is written: *They who call you happy cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths.‡* It is not cause of surprise, that our healthful and true counsels nothing avail, whilst saving truth is hindered by destructive flattery and fair speeches, and the wounded and sick minds of the lapsed suffer, what the sick and weak in body always suffer; inasmuch as, whilst they refuse salutary food, and useful drinks as bitter and disagreeable, and hanker after those things which seem to delight them, and to be sweet for the present, by their negligence and intemperance bring destruction and death upon themselves, and the true remedy of the physician profiteth not to the restoration of health, so long as sweet allurements deceive by their blandishments.

III. Do not ye, therefore, according to my epistles, advising faithfully and healthfully, withdraw from the better counsels. But read these same epistles to my col-

\* Rev. ii. 5.

† Isaiah xxx. 15.

‡ Isaiah iii. 12.

leagues, if any either are present with you, or come unto you, that we may with one heart and mind take saving counsel to soften and cure the wounds of the lapsed, intending to treat most fully of all the cases when by the mercy of the Lord we meet together. Meanwhile, if any person, either of your Presbyters, or Deacons, or of strangers, shall rashly and recklessly dare, before our opinion is pronounced, to communicate with the lapsed, let him be excluded from communion with us, and give account of his rashness to us all, when with the Lord's permission we meet together.

IV. Ye have further desired my opinion on the cases of Philomenus and Fortunatus, the Sub-deacons, and Favorinus, the Acolyte, who withdrew in the midst of the persecution and have now returned. Upon this matter I cannot appoint myself sole judge, since many of the Clergy are still absent, and have not thought fit even now to return to their places. Each of these cases must be considered separately, and decided upon more fully, not only in conjunction with my colleagues, but also with all the people. For matters of this kind, which hereafter are regarded as precedents touching the Ministers of the Church, must be fully weighed, and decided after mature consideration. Meanwhile let them not receive the monthly dividend, not that they may appear to be deprived of their ecclesiastical functions, but that, all being preserved entire, they may be put off until I am among you. I bid you, dearest brethren, ever heartily farewell. Salute the whole brotherhood, and fare ye well.

#### EP. XVIII.

CYPRIAN TO MOYSES AND MAXIMUS, PRESBYTERS, AND TO  
THE OTHER CONFESSORS, GREETING.

I. The coming of Celerinus, a companion both of your faith and constancy, and a soldier of God in glorious en-

counters, hath made you all collectively and individually present to my affections. In him I have looked upon you all; and as he hath oftentimes spoken sweetly to me of your love towards me, in his words I heard you speaking. Abundantly and beyond measure do I rejoice, when, by such as he, such news is brought from you. Somehow, also, I am with you in the prison there, and I, who am so closely knit around your hearts, seem with you to receive the exhortations of Divine mercy. Your individual love links me with your honor; the spirit permitteth not love to be separated. Confession imprisons you there, affection me. And I, indeed, am mindful of you night and day; and when in the sacrifices I make my prayer with many, and when in secret I offer up my private intercessions, I entreat of the Lord full glory to your crowns, and praises. But my littleness cannot make you full recompense. More do you give, when you remember me in your prayers, who now breathing only heavenly things, and meditating the divine alone, are mounting, by the delay of passion, to the greatest height, and do not, by a long interval of time, protract, but increase your glory. The first and single confession maketh blessed. Ye confess as often as, being asked to retire from prison, ye, through faith and constancy, rather choose the prison. Your praises are as many as the days; as many months as revolve, so great is the increase of your deserts. He conquers once, who suffers at once; but he who is always suffering punishment, and who encounters with pain, and is not conquered, is daily crowned.

II. Let magistrates, and consuls, or pro-consuls, now go in procession, and let them boast of the ensigns of their yearly dignity, and the twelve fasces. Behold a heavenly dignity has been sealed in you by the brightness of a year's honor; and in duration of glorious victory has surpassed the revolving circle of the returning year. The

rising sun and the wauing moon enlightened the world; but the Same, Who made the sun and the moon, was a greater light to you in prison, and the brightness of Christ shining in your hearts and minds, irradiated with that bright and spotless light the darkness of the place of punishment, so horrible and deadly to others. The winter season passed through its changes of months; but, shut up in prison, ye made good the season of winter by the season of persecution. After winter, there succeeded the mildness of spring, joyful with roses, and crowned with flowers; but you had roses and flowers from the delights of paradise, and heavenly garlands crowned your heads. Then cometh summer, rich in the abundance of harvest, and, like thrashing floor, full of corn; but ye, who sowed glory, are reaping the fruits of glory, and, placed on the thrashing floor of the Lord, see the chaff burnt up with inextinguishable fire; whilst you, as winnowed wheat and precious corn, being cleansed and hoarded up, esteem your prison as a garner. Nor doth autumn lack spiritual graces to discharge the functions of the season. The vintage is pressed abroad, and the grape, the joy of the cup, is trodden in the presses. Ye, rich clusters from the vineyard of the Lord, and branches thick with ripe fruit, trodden by the pressure of this world's troubles, pressed in the prison as your wine-press, pour forth blood in the stead of wine; nerved to the endurance of passion, ye willingly drink the cup of martyrdom. Thus, with the servants of God, does the year roll on; thus are the changes of seasons celebrated by spiritual deserts and heavenly rewards.

III. Blessed beyond measure are those of you, who, walking those ways of glory, have already departed from the world, and, having ended the journey of faith and constancy, have attained unto the presence and bliss of the Lord, the Lord Himself rejoicing. Nor yet is your

glory less, who, still engaged in the contest, and about to follow the glories of your companions, long carry on the battle, and, steadfast in unflinching and unshaken faith, daily show forth, by your virtues, a spectacle before the Lord. The longer the battle continues, the more glorious will be your crown; the contest is single, yet crowded with many and oft repeated engagements. ~~Ye conquer hunger,~~ and despise thirst, and, by the strength of your courage, trample underfoot the squalid prison, and the terrors of your place of punishment. There, punishment is subdued; torture is destroyed; death is not feared, but wished for, seeing that it is conquered by the reward of immortality, in that he who conquers is crowned with eternal life. What must be the mind that is now in you! how exalted, and large the breast, in which such and so great things are reflected upon, in which nothing is thought of, save the precepts of God, and the rewards of Christ. There is only the will of God; and although ye are still in the flesh, yet ye no longer live the life of the present world, but of the future.

IV. It now remains, dearest brethren, that you be mindful of me; that, in the midst of your great and divine thoughts, you keep me in your heart and mind, and I be in your supplications, and prayers, when that voice, illustrious with the purification of confession, and glorious for the preservation of its honour, goes to the ears of the Lord; and which, when heaven is opened to it, passing from these parts of the vanquished world to the kingdom above, obtains of the goodness of God what it entreats. For what can ye ask of the mercy of the Lord which ye are not thought worthy to obtain who have so kept the commandments of the Lord? who, in the firm strength of faith, have maintained the discipline of the Gospel? who, standing through the uncorrupted honour of constancy, with the commandments of the Lord, and His Apostles, have,

by the truth of your martyrdom, confirmed the wavering faith of many? Truly witnesses of the Gospel, and in very deed Martyrs of Christ, firmly rooted in Him, founded immoveably upon the rock, ye have united discipline with courage, have provoked others to the fear of God, and have made your Martyrdom an example.

I bid you, bravest and most blessed brethren, ever heartily farewell, and that ye bear me in mind.

#### EP. XIX.

CYPRIAN TO THE PRESBYTERS AND DEACONS, AND TO THE WHOLE PEOPLE, GREETING.

I have been wont, dearest brethren, in clerical ordinations, to consult you beforehand, and to weigh by common advice the manners and merits of each. But, when the Divine suffrages anticipate them, human testimonies need not be waited for. Our brother Aurelius, an illustrious youth, already approved by the Lord, and dear unto God, though young in years, yet advanced in courage and the praise of faith: wanting in the nature of his age, but great in honour, has struggled here in a double contest; twice confessing, and twice ennobled by the victory of his confession; both when he conquered in his course being banished, and when he fought again, in a severer conflict, triumphant and victorious in the battle of suffering. As often as the adversary wished to challenge the sons of God, so often did he a most ready and valiant soldier fight and conquer. It would have been a little matter to have encountered in the sight of a few when he was banished; he gained also the encounter in the forum with more illustrious courage, so that, after the Magistrates, he might conquer the Proconsul, and after banishment overcome torments. Nor



do I see, which I should the more extol, the glory of his wounds, or the modesty of his manners: that he is ennobled by the honour of his courage, or that he is praiseworthy for his admirable modesty. So exalted is he in dignity, and so lowly in humility, that it seems that he is received by Divine Providence to be an example of ecclesiastical discipline to others, how the servants of God should conquer by courage in confession, and be eminent for regularity of life after confession.

II. Such a one deserved higher degrees of clerical ordination, and greater honours, and should be judged not by his years, but by his merits. But it was meanwhile determined that he should commence with the office of reader last, because nothing was more fitting for a voice, which had confessed the Lord with glorious constancy, than to be heard in reading the Divine Word; after sublime words, which have spoken the witness of Christ, to read the Gospel of Christ, whence witnesses are made; to come to the desk after the rack; there to have been a spectacle to the multitude of the Gentiles; here to be seen by the brethren; there to have been heard by the wondering crowds that stood around; here to be listened to with the joy of the brotherhood. Know therefore, brethren most beloved, that he has been ordained by me, and by my colleagues, who were present. And I know well that you both will gladly welcome, and desire, that as many such as possible may be ordained; and since joy is always eager, and rejoicing cannot brook delay, he reads meanwhile on the Lord's day for us, and by his reading the word, he gives us hopes of peace. Continue constant in prayers, and aid my prayers by your supplications, that the mercy of the Lord favouring us, may soon give back the Priest to his people, and with the Priest a martyr as reader. I bid you, dearest brethren, ever heartily farewell in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ.

## EP. XX.

I. Although, dear st brethren, Virtius, a most faithful and sincere Presbyter, as well as Rogatian and Numidicus, Presbyters, Confessors, and illustrious through the glory of the Divine favour; and besides them, the Deacons, good men, and devoted in all duties to the government of the Church, with the rest of the Ministers, give to you the full benefits of their presence, and cease not to confirm each of you by continual exhortations, and by salutary counsel to direct, and reform the minds of the lapsed, yet I admonish you, as far as I can, and come to you, in what way I can, by my letters. I say, dearest brethren, by my letters. For the malice, and treachery of certain Presbyters, have brought about that I may not come unto you before Easter; inasmuch, as mindful of their conspiracy, and retaining that old poison of theirs against my Episcopacy,\* nay rather against your election, and the judgment of God, they renew their old attack upon me, and again, with their wonted craft, resume their impious designs. And yet, through the Providence of God, when I neither wished nor desire it, but rather forgave them, and was silent, they have suffered the punishment which they deserved, so that, not cast out by me, they have of their own accord cast out themselves; according to the dictates of their consciences, they have pronounced sentence against themselves; according to your and the divine suffrages, these conspirators, and evil men have voluntarily expelled themselves from the Church.

II. Now it has become evident, whence the faction of Felicissimus took its rise and on what root and support it stood. These, therefore, gave encouragement and exhor-

\* S. Cyprian here alludes to those who opposed his election to the Episcopacy.

tation to certain Confessors, not to agree with their Bishop, nor in faith and quiet, according to the precepts of the Lord, to maintain ecclesiastical discipline, nor to preserve the glory of their confession by a pure and holy conversation. And, as if it were not sufficient to have ~~corrupted the minds of certain Confessors, and to have~~ desired to arm a portion of our disunited brotherhood against the Priesthood of God ; they have now, by their poisoned deceitfulness, turned themselves to the destruction of the lapsed, that they may call off from the healing of their wounds the sick and wounded, who, by reason of their disastrous fall, are but little fitted, and too weak to adopt stronger counsel ; and that by giving up prayers and supplications, whereby, by long and continued amends, the Lord must be appeased, they may, by the falsehood of delusive peace, seduce them to deadly and precipitate acts.

III. • But I entreat you, brethren, watch against the snares of the devil, and, anxious for your salvation, exercise greater diligence against this deadly artifice. This is another persecution, and another trial. These five Presbyters are nothing else but those five chief persons, who were lately joined with the Magistrates in the edict, to subvert our faith, and, by swerving from the truth, to turn aside the weak hearts of the brethren to deadly snares. Now the same plan, the same overthrow, are again brought forward by five Presbyters, joined with Felicissimus, to the loss of salvation ; so that God is not entreated, and he who has denied Christ, does not ask forgiveness of the same Christ, Whom he has denied ; that after the commission of the fault, penitence may be also taken away ; and that amends be not made to the Lord by means of the Bishops and Priests ; but that, when they have left the Priests of the Lord, a new tradition of a wicked institution may rise up against the discipline of the Gospel ; and although it has been once decided

upon, as well by me and the Confessors and city Clergy, as by all Bishops, who are either in our province or beyond the sea, that no new measures be taken touching the cause of the lapsed, until we have all met together, and, after deliberation in common, have decided some sentence, moderated alike by discipline and mercy; yet have they rebelled against this, our determination, and all Priestly authority and power are destroyed by factious conspiracies.

IV. What pain, dearest brethren, do I now endure, because I cannot for the present come unto you; I cannot in person approach each one of you; nor exhort you according to the instructions of our Lord and His Gospel. Exile now for two years, and mournful separation from your countenance and eyes; continued grief and mourning, which rends me in my solitude with continual lamentation, all these were not sufficient; nor my tears flowing night and day, because the Bishop whom you elected with so great love and zeal, should not be able to salute you, and cling to your embrace. A greater grief hath in this been inflicted upon my wasting spirit, that in the midst of so great anxiety and such pressing need, I cannot myself come over to you, whilst in the midst of the threats and crafty designs of the treacherous, I must be on my guard, lest a greater tumult should arise there in consequence of my coming; and, whereas, a Bishop should in all things take thought for peace and tranquillity, he himself should appear to have given occasion for sedition, and to have again roused the persecution. Hence, most beloved brethren, hence I both admonish and exhort you not rashly to believe their deadly speeches; nor readily to give consent to their deceptive words; not to embrace darkness for light, night for day, hunger for food, thirst for drink, poison for remedy, death for health. Let neither age nor authority deceive you, in that they correspond to the old wickedness of the two Presbyters, for as they en-

deavoured to debauch and violate the chaste Susannah, so these also endeavour to corrupt the chastity of the Church by adulterous doctrines, and to violate the truth of the Gospel.

V. The Lord crieth aloud and saith: *Hearken not unto the words of false prophets, for the visions of their own hearts deceive them. They speak, but not out of the mouth of the Lord. They say to them that despise the word of the Lord, ye shall have peace.\** They, who themselves have not peace, offer peace; they who have departed from the Church, promise to bring back and restore the lapsed to the Church. God is one and Christ is one, and the Church is one, and there is one chair founded upon the Rock according to the word of the Lord. Another Altar cannot be set up, nor another Priesthood made, beside the one Priesthood and the one Altar. Whosoever *collecteth elsewhere, scattereth.* That is adulterous, impious, sacrilegious, whatever is set on foot through human madness, so that divine appointments are broken. Depart far from the contagion of such men, and by flight shun their words as a cancer and a pestilence, since the Lord forwarns us, and says: *They are blind leaders of the blind; but if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.†* They prevent your prayers which ye pour forth with us night and day unto God, that ye may appease Him with full satisfaction. They hinder your tears with which ye wash away the crime of the sin you have committed; they hinder the peace which ye truly and faithfully ask of the Lord's mercy, not knowing that it is written: *And that prophet, and dreamer of dreams that hath spoken, to turn you away from the Lord your God, shall be put to death.‡* Let no one, dearest brethren, cause you to wander from the ways of the Lord; let no one lead you Christians away from the Gospel of Christ; let no one take away the children of the Church from the Church.

\* Jer. xxiii. 16.

† S. Matt. xv. 14.

‡ Deut. xiii. 5.









