

Hebrews

Saint John Chrysostom

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HOMILIES OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM,

ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE, ON THE

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS,

PUBLISHED AFTER HIS FALLING ASLEEP, FROM NOTES BY CONSTANTINE, PRESBYTER OF ANTIOCH.

ARGUMENT

AND SUMMARY OF THE EPISTLE

[1.] THE blessed Paul, writing to the Romans, says, "Inasmuch then as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: if by any means I may provoke to emulation them that are my flesh": and again, in another place, "For He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles." If therefore he were the Apostle of the Gentiles, (for also in the Acts, God said to him, "Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles,") what had he to do with the Hebrews? and why did he also write an Epistle to them?

And especially as besides, they were ill-disposed towards him, and this is to be seen from many places. For hear what James says to him, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe... and these all have been informed of thee that thou teachest men to forsake the law." And oftentimes he had many disputings concerning this.

Why therefore, one might ask, as he was so learned in the law (for he was instructed in the law at the feet of Gamaliel, and had great zeal in the matter, and was especially able to confound them in this respect) — why did not God send him to the Jews? Because on this very account they were more vehement in their enmity against him. "For they will not endure

thee," God says unto him; "But depart far hence to the Gentiles, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me." Whereupon he says, "Yea, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee; and when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him."

And this he says is a sign and proof of their not believing him. For thus it is: when a man goes away from any people, if he be one of the least and of those who are nothing worth, he does not much vex those from whom he went; but if he be among the distinguished and earnest partisans and those who care for these things, he exceedingly grieves and vexes them beyond measure, in that he especially overthrows their system with the multitude.

And besides this, there was something else. What now might this be? That they who were about Peter were also with Christ, and saw signs and wonders; but he [Paul] having had the benefit of none of these, but being with Jews, suddenly deserted and became one of them. This especially promoted our cause. For while they indeed, seemed to testify even from gratitude, and one might have said that they bore witness to those things in love for their Master; he, on the other hand, who testifies to the resurrection, this man was rather one who heard a voice only. For this cause thou seest them waging war passionately with him, and doing all things for this purpose, that they might slay him, and raising seditions

The unbelievers, then, were hostile to him for this reason; but why were the believers? Because in preaching to the Gentiles he was constrained to preach Christianity purely; and if haply even in Judaea he were found [doing so], he cared not. For Peter and they that were with him, because they preached in Jerusalem, when there was great fierceness, of necessity enjoined the observance of the law; but this man was quite at liberty. The [converts] too from the Gentiles were more than the Jews because they were without. And this enfeebled the law, and they had no such great reverence for it, although he preached all things purely. Doubtless in this matter they think to shame him by numbers, saying, "Thou seest, brother, how many ten thousands of Jews there are which are come together." On this account they hated him and turned away from him, because "They are informed of thee, he says, that thou teachest men to forsake the law."

[2.] Why, then, not being a teacher of the Jews, does he send an Epistle to them? And where were those to whom he sent it? It seems to me in Jerusalem and Palestine. How then does he send them an Epistle? Just as he baptized, though he was not commanded to baptize. For, he says, "I was not sent to baptize": not, however, that he was forbidden, but he does it as a subordinate matter. And how could he fail to write to those, for whom he was willing even to become accursed? Accordingly he said, "Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you."

For as yet he was not arrested. Two years then he passed bound, in Rome; then he was set free; then, having gone into Spain, he saw Jews also in like manner; and then he returned to Rome, where also he was slain by Nero. The Epistle to Timothy then was later than this Epistle. For there he says, "For I am now ready to be offered"; there also he says, "In my first answer no man stood with me." In many places they [the Hebrew Christians] had to contend with persecution, as also he says, writing to the Thessalonians, "Ye became followers of the churches of Judaea": and writing to these very persons he says, "Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods." Dost thou see them contending? And if men had thus treated the Apostles, not only in Judaea, but also wherever they were among the Gentiles, what would they not have done to the believers? On this account, thou seest, he was very careful for them. For when he says, "I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints"; and again, when he exhorts the Corinthians to beneficence, and says that the Macedonians had already made their contribution, and says, "If it be meet that I go also," — he means this. And when he says, "Only that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do," — he declares this. And when he says, "They gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision," — he declares this.

But this was not for the sake of the poor who were there, but that by this we might be partakers in the beneficence. For not as the preaching did we apportion the care for the poor to each other (we indeed to the Gentiles, but they to the circumcision). And everywhere thou seest him using great care for them: as was reasonable.

Among the other nations indeed, when there were both Jews and Greeks, such was not the case; but then, while they still seemed to have authority and independence and to order many things by their own laws, the government not being yet established nor brought perfectly under the Romans, they naturally exercised great tyranny. For if in other cities, as in Corinth, they beat the Ruler of the synagogue before the Deputy's judgment seat, and Gallio "cared for none of these things," but it was not so in Judaea. Thou seest indeed, that while in other cities they bring them to the magistrates, and need help from them. and from the Gentiles, here they took no thought of this, but assemble a Sanhedrim themselves and slay whom they please. Thus in fact they put Stephen to death, thus they beat the Apostles, not taking them before rulers. Thus also they were about to put Paul to death, had not the chief captain thrown himself [upon them]. For this took place while the priests, while the temple, while the ritual, the sacrifices were vet standing. Look indeed at Paul himself being tried before the High Priest, and saying," I wist not that he was the High Priest," and this in the presence of the Ruler. For they had then great power. Consider then what things they were likely to suffer who dwelt in Jerusalem and Judaea.

[3.] He then who prays to become accursed for those who were not yet believers, and who so ministers to the faithful, as to journey himself, if need be, and who everywhere took great care of them; — let us not wonder if he encourage and comfort them by letters also, and if he set them upright when tottering and fallen. For in a word, they were worn down and despairing on account of their manifold afflictions. And this he shows near the end, saying, "Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees"; and again, "Yet a little while, he that shall come will come, and will not tarry"; and again, "If ye be without chastisement,... then are ye bastards and not sons."

For since they were Jews and learned from the fathers that they must expect both their good and their evil immediately and must live accordingly, but then [when the Gospel came] the opposite was [taught] — their good things being in hope and after death, their evils in hand, though they had patiently endured much, it was likely that many would be fainthearted; — hereon he discourses.

But we will unfold these things at a fit opportunity. At present: he of necessity wrote to those for whom he cared so greatly. For while the reason why he was not sent to them is plain, yet he was not forbidden to write. And that they were becoming fainthearted he shows when he says, "Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths" and again, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and love." For the soul overtaken by many trials, was turned aside even from the faith. Therefore he exhorts them to "Give heed to the things which they have heard, and that there should not be an evil heart of unbelief." On this account also, in this Epistle, especially, he argues at length concerning faith, and after much [reasoning] shows at the end that to them [of old] also He promised good things in hand, and yet gave nothing.

And besides these things, he establishes two points that they might not think themselves forsaken: the one, that they should bear nobly whatever befalls them; the other, that they should look assuredly for their recompense. For truly He will not overlook those with Abel and the line of unrewarded righteous following him.

And he draws comfort in three ways: first, from the things which Christ suffered: as He Himself says, "The servant is not greater than his Lord." Next, from the good things laid up for the believers. Thirdly, from the evils; and this point he enforces not only from the things to come (which would be less persuasive), but also from the past and from what had befallen their fathers. Christ also does the same, at one time saying, "The servant is not greater than his Lord"; and again, "There are many mansions with the Father"; and He denounces innumerable woes on the unbelievers.

But he speaks much of both the New and the Old Covenant; for this was useful to him for the proof of the Resurrection. Lest they should disbelieve that [Christ] rose on account of the things which He suffered, he confirms it from the Prophets, and shows that not the Jewish, but ours are the sacred [institutions]. For the temple yet stood and the sacrificial rites; therefore he says, "Let us go forth therefore without, bearing His reproach." But this also was made an argument against him: "If these things are a shadow, if these things are an image, how is it that they have not passed away or given place when the truth was manifested, but these

things still flourish?" This also he quietly intimates shall happen, and that at a time close at hand.

Moreover, he makes it plain that they had been a long time in the faith and in afflictions, saying, "When for the time ye ought to be teachers," and, "Lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief," and ye became "Followers of them who through patience inherit the promises."

HOMILY 1

HEBREWS 1:1, 2

"God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, hath at the end of the days spoken unto us by His Son whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds."

[1.] TRULY, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." (Romans 5:20) This at least the blessed Paul intimates here also, in the very beginning of his Epistle to the Hebrews. For since as it was likely that afflicted, worn out by evils, and judging of things thereby, they would think themselves worse off than all other men, — he shows that herein they had rather been made partakers of greater, even very exceeding, grace; arousing the hearer at the very opening of his discourse. Wherefore he says, "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the Prophets, hath at the end of the days spoken unto us by His Son."

Why did he [Paul] not oppose "himself" to "the prophets"? Certainly, he was much greater than they, inasmuch as a greater trust was committed to him. Yet he doth not so. Why? First, to avoid speaking great things concerning himself. Secondly, because his hearers were not yet perfect. And thirdly, because he rather wished to exalt them, and to show that their superiority was great. As if he had said, What so great matter is it that He sent prophets to our fathers? For to us [He has sent] His own only-begotten Son Himself.

And well did he begin thus, "At sundry times and in divers manners," for he points out that not even the prophets themselves saw God nevertheless, the Son saw Him. For the expressions, "at sundry times and in divers manners" are the same as "in different ways." "For I "(saith He) "have multiplied visions, and used similitudes by the ministry of the Prophets." (Hosea 12:10) Wherefore the excellency consists not in this alone, that to them indeed prophets were sent, but to us the Son; but that none of them saw God, but the Only-begotten Son saw Him. He doth not

indeed at once assert this, but by what he says afterwards he establishes it, when he speaks concerning His human nature; “For to which of the Angels said He, Thou art My Son,” (verse 5), and, “Sit thou on My right hand”? (Verse 13)

And look on his great wisdom. First he shows the superiority from the prophets. Then having established this as acknowledged, he declares that to them indeed He spake by the prophets, but to us by the Only-begotten. Then [He spake] to them by Angels, and this again he establishes, with good reason (for angels also held converse with the Jews): yet even herein we have the superiority, inasmuch as the Master [spake] to us, but to them servants, and prophets, fellow-servants.

[2.] Well also said he, “at the end of the days,” for by this he both stirs them up and encourages them desponding of the future. For as he says also in another place, “The Lord is at hand, be careful for nothing” (Philippians 4:5, 6), and again, “For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Romans 13:11): so also here. What then is it which he says? That whoever is spent in the conflict, when he hears of the end thereof, recovers his breath a little, knowing that it is the end indeed of his labors, but the beginning of his rest.

“Hath in the end of the days spoken unto us in [His] Son.” Behold again he uses the saying, “in [His] Son,” for “through the Son,” against those who assert that this phrase is proper to the Spirit. Dost thou see that the [word] “in” is “through”?

And the expression, “In times past,” and this, “In the end of the days,” shadows forth some other meaning: — that when a long time had intervened, when we were on the edge of punishment, when the Gifts had failed, when there was no expectation of deliverance, when we were expecting to have less than all — then we have had more.

And see how considerately he hath spoken it. For he’ said not, “Christ spake” (albeit it was He who did speak), but inasmuch as their souls were weak, and they were not yet able to hear the things concerning Christ, he says, “God hath spoken by Him.” What meanest thou? did God speak through the Son? Yes. What then? Is it thus thou showest the superiority? for here thou hast but pointed out that both the New and the Old

[Covenants] are of One and the same: and that this superiority is not great. Wherefore he henceforth follows on upon this argument, saying, "He spake unto us by [His] Son."

(Note, how Paul makes common cause, and puts himself on a level with the disciples, saying, He spake "to us": and yet He did not speak to him, but to the Apostles, and through them to the many. But he lifts them [the Hebrews] up, and declares that He spake also to them. And as yet he doth not at all reflect on the Jews. For almost all to whom the prophets spake, were a kind of evil and polluted persons. But as yet the discourse is not of these: but, hitherto of the gifts derived from God.)

"Whom He appointed," saith he, "heir of all." What is "whom He appointed heir of all"? He speaks here of the flesh [the human nature]. As He also says in the second Psalm, "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance." (Psalm 2:8) For no longer is "Jacob the portion of the Lord" nor "Israel His inheritance" (Deuteronomy 32:9), but all men: that is to say, He hath made Him Lord of all: which Peter also said in the Acts, "God hath made Him both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:36) But he has used the name "Heir," declaring two things: His proper sonship and His indefeasible sovereignty. "Heir of all," that is, of all the world.

[3.] Then again he brings back his discourse to its former point. "By whom also He made the worlds [the ages]." Where are those who say, There was [a time] when He was not?

Then, using degrees of ascent, he uttered that which is far greater than all this, saying,

Verse 3, 4. *"Who, (being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power,) when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the Angels as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."*

O! the wisdom of the Apostle! or rather, not the wisdom of Paul, but the grace of the Spirit is the thing to wonder at. For surely he uttered not these things of his own mind, nor in that way did he find his wisdom. (For whence could it be? From the knife, and the skins, or the workshop?) But it was from the working of God. For his own understanding did not give

birth to these thoughts, which was then so mean and slender as in nowise to surpass the baser sort; (for how could it, seeing it spent itself wholly on bargains and skins?) but the grace of the Spirit shows forth its strength by whomsoever it will.

For just as one, wishing to lead up a little child to some lofty place, reaching up even to the top of Heaven, does this gently and by degrees, leading him upwards by the steps from below, — then when he has set him on high, and bidden him to gaze downwards, and sees him turning giddy and confused, and dizzy, taking hold of him, he leads him down to the lower stand, allowing him to take breath; then when he hath recovered it, leads him up again, and again brings him down; — just so did the blessed Paul likewise, both with the Hebrews and everywhere, having learnt it from his Master. For even He also did so; sometimes He led His hearers up on high, and sometimes He brought them down, not allowing them to remain very long.

See him, then, even here — by how many steps he led them up, and placed them near the very summit of religion, and then or ever they grow giddy, and are seized with dizziness, how he leads them again lower down, and allowing them to take breath, says, “He spake unto us by [His] Son,” “whom He appointed Heir of all things.” For the name of Son is so far common. For where a true [Son] it is understood of, He is above all: but however that may be, for the present he proves that He is from above.

And see how he says it: “Whom He appointed,” saith he, “heir of all things.” The phrase, “He appointed Heir,” is humble. Then he placed them on the higher step, adding, “by whom also He made the worlds.” Then on a higher still, and after which there is no other, “who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person.” Truly he has led them to unapproachable light, to the very brightness itself. And before they are blinded see how he gently leads them down again, saying, “and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of he Majesty.” He does not simply say, “He sat down,” but “after the purifying, He sat town,” for he hath touched on the Incarnation, and his utterance is again lowly.

Then again having said a little by the way (for he says, “on the right hand of the Majesty on high”), [he turns] again to what is lowly; “being made

so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." Henceforward then he treats here of that which is according to the flesh, since the phrase "being made better" doth not express His essence according to the Spirit, (for that was not "made" but "begotten,") but according to the flesh: for this was "made." Nevertheless the discourse here is not about being called into existence. But just as John says, "He that cometh after me, is preferred before me" (John 1:15, 30), that is, higher in honor and esteem; so also here, "being made so much better than the angels" — that is, higher in esteem and better and more glorious, "by how much He hath obtained by inheritance a more excellent name than they." Seest thou that he is speaking of that which is according to the flesh? For this Name, God the Word ever had; He did not afterwards "obtain it by inheritance"; nor did He afterwards become "better than the Angels, when He had purged our sins"; but He was always "better," and better without all comparison. For this is spoken of Him according to the flesh.

So truly it is our way also, when we talk of man, to speak things both high and low. Thus, when we say, "Man is nothing," "Man is earth," "Man is ashes," we call the whole by the worse part. But when we say, "Man is an immortal animal," and "Man is rational, and of kin to those on high," we call again the whole by the better part. So also, in the case of Christ, sometimes Paul discourseth from the less and sometimes from the better; wishing both to establish the economy, and also to teach about the incorruptible nature.

[4.] Since then "He hath purged our sins," let us continue pure; and let us receive no stain, but preserve the beauty which He hath implanted in us, and His comeliness undefiled and pure, "not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing." (Ephesians 5:27) Even little sins are "a spot and a wrinkle," such a thing, I mean, as Reproach, Insult, Falsehood.

Nay, rather not even are these small, but on the contrary very great: yea so great as to deprive a man even of the kingdom of Heaven. How, and in what manner? "He that calleth his brother fool, is in danger" (He saith) "of hellfire." (Matthew 5:22) But if it be so with him who calls a man "fool," which seems to be the slightest of all things, and rather mere children's talk; what sentence of punishment will not he incur, who calleth him

malignant and crafty and envious, and casteth at him ten thousand other reproaches? What more fearful than this?

Now suffer, I beseech you, the word [of exhortation]. For if he that "doeth" [aught] to "one of the least, doeth it to Him" (Matthew 25:40), and he that "doeth it not to one of the least doeth it not to Him" (Matthew 25:45), how is it not the same also in the matter of good or evil speaking? He that reviles his brother, reviles God: and he that honors his brother, honors God. Let us train therefore our tongue to speak good words. For "refrain," it is said, "thy tongue from evil." (Psalm 34:13) For God gave it not that we should speak evil, that we should revile, that we should calumniate one another; but to sing hymns to God withal, to speak those things which "give grace to the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29), things for edification, things for profit.

Hast thou spoken evil of a man? What is thy gain, entangling thyself in mischief together with him? For thou hast obtained the reputation of a slanderer. For there is not any, no not any evil, which stops at him that suffers it, but it includes the doer also. As for instance, the envious person seems indeed to plot against another, but himself first reaps the fruit of his sin, wasting and wearing himself away, and being hated of all men. The cheat deprives another of his money; yea and himself too of men's good will: and causes himself to be evil spoken of by all men. Now reputation is much better than money, for the one it is not easy to wash out, whereas it is easy to gain possession of the other. Or rather, the absence of the one doth no hurt to him that wanteth it; but the absence of the other makes you reproached and ridiculed, and an object of enmity and warfare to all.

The passionate man again first punishes and tears himself in pieces, and then him with whom he is angry.

Just so the evil speaker disgraces first himself and then him who is evil-spoken of: or, it may be, even this hath proved beyond his power, and while he departs with the credit of a foul and detestable kind of person, he causes the other to be loved the more. For when a man hearing a bad name given him, doth not requite the giver in the same kind, but praises and admires, he doth not praise the other, but himself. For I before observed that, as calumnies against our neighbors first touch those who devise the mischief, so also good works done towards our neighbors, gladden first

those who do them. The parent either of good, or evil, justly reaps the fruit of it first himself. And just as water, whether it be brackish or sweet, fills the vessels of those who resort to it, but lessens not the fountain which sends it forth; so surely also, both wickedness and virtue, from whatever person they proceed, prove either his joy or his ruin.

So far as to the things of this world; but what speech may recount the things of that world, either the goods or the evils? There is none. For as to the blessings, they surpass all thought, not speech only; for their opposites are expressed indeed in terms familiar to us. For fire, it is said, is there, and darkness, and bonds, and a worm that never dieth. But this represents not only the things which are spoken of, but others more intolerable. And to convince thee, consider at once this first: if it be fire, how is it also darkness? Seest thou how that fire is more intolerable than this? For it hath no light. If it be fire, how is it forever burning? Seest thou how something more intolerable than this happens? For it is not quenched. Yea, therefore it is called unquenchable. Let us then consider how great a misery it must be, to be forever burning, and to be in darkness, and to utter unnumbered groanings, and to gnash the teeth, and not even to be heard. For if here any one of those ingeniously brought up, should he be cast into prison, speaks of the mere ill savor, and the being laid in darkness, and the being bound with murderers, as more intolerable than any death: think what it is when we are burning with the murderers of the whole world, neither seeing nor being seen, but in so vast a multitude thinking that we are alone. For the darkness and gloom doth not allow our distinguishing those who are near to us, but each will burn as if he were thus suffering alone. Moreover, if darkness of itself afflicteth and terrifieth our souls, how then will it be when together with the darkness there are likewise so great pains and burnings?

Wherefore I entreat you to be ever revolving these things with yourselves, and to submit to the pain of the words, that we may not undergo the punishment of the things. For assuredly, all these things shall be, and those whose doings have deserved those chambers of torture no man shall rescue, not father, nor mother, nor brother. “For a brother redeemeth not,” He saith; “shall a man redeem?” (Psalm 49:7, LXX.), though he have much confidence, though he have great power with God. For it is He Himself

who rewards every one according to his works, and upon these depends our salvation or punishment.

Let us make then to ourselves “friends of the mammon of unrighteousness” (Luke 16:9), that is: Let us give alms; let us exhaust our possessions upon them, that so we may exhaust that fire: that we may quench it, that we may have boldness there. For there also it is not they who receive us, but our own work: for that it is not simply their being our friends which can save us, learn from what is added. For why did He not say, “Make to yourselves friends, that they may receive you into their everlasting habitations,” but added also the manner? For saying, “of the mammon of unrighteousness,” He points out that we must make friends of them by means of our possessions, showing that mere friendship will not protect us, unless we have good works, unless we spend righteously the wealth unrighteously gathered.

Moreover, this our discourse, of Almsgiving I mean, fits not only the rich, but also the needy. Yea even if there be any person who supporteth himself by begging, even for him is this word. For there is no one, so poverty-stricken, however exceeding poor he may be, as not to be able to provide “two mites.” (Luke 21:2) It is therefore possible that a person giving a small sum from small means, should surpass those who have large possessions and give more; as that widow did. For not by the measure of what is given, but by the means and willingness of the givers is the extent of the alms-deed estimated. In all cases the will is needed, in all, a right disposition; in all, love towards God. If with this we do all things, though having little we give little, God will not turn away His face, but will receive it as great and admirable: for He regards the will, not the gifts: and if He see that to be great, He assigneth His decrees and judges accordingly, and maketh them partakers of His everlasting benefits.

Which may God grant us all to obtain, by the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor, now and for ever, and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 2

HEBREWS 1:3

"Who being the brightness of His Glory and the express Image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins."

[1.] EVERYWHERE indeed a reverential mind is requisite, but especially when we say or hear anything of God: Since neither can tongue speak nor thought hear anything suitable to our God. And why speak I of tongue or thought? For not even the understanding which far excels these, will be able to comprehend anything accurately, when we desire to utter aught concerning God. For if "the peace of God surpasseth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7), and "the things which are prepared for them that love Him have not entered into the heart of man" (1 Corinthians 2:9); much more He Himself, the God of peace, the Creator of all things, doth by a wide measure exceed our reasoning. We ought therefore to receive all things with faith and reverence, and when our discourse fails through weakness, and is not able to set forth accurately the things which are spoken, then especially to glorify God, for that we have such a God, surpassing both our thought and our conception. For many of our conceptions about God, we are unable to express, as also many things we express, but have not strength to conceive of them. As for instance: — That God is everywhere, we know; but how, we no longer understand. That there is a certain incorporeal power the cause of all our good things, we know: but how it is, or what it is, we know not. Lo! we speak, and do not understand. I said, That He is everywhere, but I do not understand it. I said, That He is without beginning, but I do not understand it. I said, That He begat from Himself, and again I know not how I shall understand it. And some things there are which we may not even speak — as for instance, thought conceives but cannot utter.

And to show thee that even Paul is weak and doth not put out his illustrations with exactness; and to make thee tremble and refrain from searching too far, hear what he says, having called Him Son and named

Him Creator, “Who being the brightness of His Glory, and the express image of His person.”

This we must receive with reverence and clear of all incongruities. “The brightness of His glory,” saith he. But observe in what reference he understands this, and so do thou receive it: — that He is of Him: without passion: that He is neither greater, nor less; since there are some, who derive certain strange things from the illustration. For, say they, “the brightness” is not substantial, but hath its being in another. Now do not thou, O man, so receive it, neither be thou sick of the disease of Marcellus and Photinus. For he hath a remedy for thee close at hand, that thou fall not into that imagination, nor doth he leave thee to be hurried down into that fatal malady. And what saith he? “And the express image of His person” [or “subsistence”]: that is, just as He [the Father] is personally subsisting, being in need of nothing, so also the Son. For he saith this here, showing the undeviating similitude and the peculiar image of the Prototype, that He [the Son] is in subsistence by Himself.

For he who said above, that “by Him He made all things” here assigns to Him absolute authority. For what doth he add? “And upholding all things by the word of His power”; that we might hence infer not merely His being the express image of His Person, but also His governing all things with absolute authority.

See then, how he applies to the Son that which is proper to the Father. For on this account he did not say simply, “and upholding all things,” nor did he say, “by His power,” but, “by the word of His power.” For much as just now we saw him gradually ascend and descend; so also now, as by steps, he goes up on high, then again descends, and saith, “by whom also He made the worlds.”

Behold how here also he goes on two paths, by the one leading us away from Sabellius, by the other from Arius, yea and on another, that He [Christ] should not be accounted unoriginated, which he does also throughout, nor yet alien from God. For if, even after so much, there are some who assert that He is alien, and assign to Him another father, and say that He is at variance with Him; — had [Paul] not declared these things, what would they not have uttered?

How then does he this? When he is compelled to heal, then is he compelled also to utter lowly things: as for instance, “He appointed Him” (saith he) “heir of all things,” and “by Him He made the worlds.” (*Supra*, verse 2) But that He might not be in another way dishonored, he brings Him up again to absolute authority and declares Him to be of equal honor with the Father, yea, so equal, that many thought Him to be the Father.

And observe thou his great wisdom. First he lays down the former point and makes it sure accurately. And when this is shown, that He is the Son of God, and not alien from Him, he thereafter speaks out safely all the high sayings, as many as he will. Since any high speech concerning Him, led many into the notion just mentioned, he first sets down what is humiliating and then safely mounts up as high as he pleases. And having said, “whom He appointed heir of all things,” and that “by Him He made the worlds,” he then adds, “and upholding all things by the word of His power.” For He that by a word only governs all things, could not be in need of any one, for the producing all things.

[2.] And to prove this, mark how again going forward, and laying aside the “by whom,” he assigns to Him absolute power. For after he had effected what he wished by the use of it, thenceforward leaving it, what saith he? “Thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thine hands.” (*Infra*, verse 10) Nowhere is there the saying “by whom,” or that “by Him He made the worlds.” What then? Were they not made by Him? Yes, but not, as thou sayest or imaginest, “as by an instrument”: nor as though He would not have made them unless the Father had reached out a hand to Him. For as He “judgeth no man” (John 5:22), and is said to judge by the Son, in that He begat Him a judge; so also, to create by Him, in that He begat Him a Creator. And if the Father be the original cause of Him, in that He is Father, much more of the things which have been made by Him. When therefore he would show that He is of Him, he speaks of necessity lowly things. But when he would utter high things, Marcellus takes a handle, and Sabellius; avoiding however the excess of both, he holds a middle [way]. For neither does he dwell on the humiliation, lest Paul of Samosata should obtain a standing place, nor yet does he for ever abide in the high sayings; but shows on the contrary His abundant nearness, lest Sabellius rush in upon him. He names Him “Son,” and immediately Paul of Samosata comes on him, saying that

He is a son, as the many are. But he gives him a fatal wound, calling Him "Heir." But yet, with Arius, he is shameless. For the saying, "He appointed Him heir," they both hold: the former one saying, it comes of weakness; the other still presses objections, endeavoring to support himself by the clause which follows. For by saying, "by whom also He made the worlds," he strikes backwards the impudent Samosatene: while Arius still seems to be strong. Nevertheless see how he smites him likewise, saying again, "who being the brightness of His glory." But behold! Sabellius again springs on us, with Marcellus, and Photinus: but on all these also he inflicts one blow, saying, "and the express image of His person and upholding all things by the word of His power." Here again he wounds Marcion too; not very severely, but however he doth wound him. For through the whole of this Epistle he is fighting against them.

But the very thing which he said, "the brightness of the glory," hear also Christ Himself saying, "I am the Light of the world." (John 8:12) Therefore he [the Apostle] uses the word "brightness," showing that this was said in the sense of "Light of Light." Nor is it this alone which he shows, but also that He hath enlightened our souls; and He hath Himself manifested the Father, and by "the brightness" he has indicated the nearness of the Being [of the Father and the Son]. Observe the subtlety of his expressions. He hath taken one essence and subsistence to indicate two subsistences. Which he also doth in regard to the knowledge of the Spirit; for as he saith that the knowledge of the Father is one with that of the Spirit, as being indeed one, and in naught varying from itself (1 Corinthians 2:10-12): so also here he hath taken hold of one certain [thing] whereby to express the subsistence of the Two.

And he adds that He is "the express Image." For the "express Image "is something other than its Prototype: yet not Another in all respects, but as to having real subsistence. Since here also the term, "express image," indicates there is no variation from that whereof it is the "express image": its similarity in all respects. When therefore he calls Him both Form, and express Image, what can they say? "Yea," saith he, "man is also called an Image of God." What then! is he so [an image of Him] as the Son is? No (saith he) but because the term, image, doth not show resemblance. And yet, in that man is called an Image, it showeth resemblance, as in man. For what God is in Heaven, that man is on earth, I mean as to dominion. And

as he hath power over all things on earth, so also hath God power over, all things which are in heaven and which are on earth. But otherwise, man is not called "Express image," he is not called Form: which phrase declares the substance, or rather both substance and similarity in substance. Therefore just as "the form of a slave" (Philippians 2:6, 7) expresses no other thing than a man without variation [from human nature], so also "the form of God" expresses no other thing than God.

"Who being" (saith he) "the brightness of His glory." See what Paul is doing. Having said, "Who being the brightness of His glory," he added again, "He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty": what names he hath used, nowhere finding a name for the Substance. For neither "the Majesty," nor "the Glory" setteth forth the Name, which he wishes to say, but is not able to find a name. For this is what I said at the beginning, that oftentimes we think something, and are not able to express [it]: since not even the word God is a name of substance, nor is it at all possible to find a name of that Substance.

And what marvel, if it be so in respect of God, since not even in respect of an Angel, could one find a name expressive of his substance? Perhaps too, neither in respect of the soul. For this name [soul] doth not seem to me to be significative of the substance thereof, but of breathing. For one may see that the same [thing] is called both Soul and Heart and Mind: for, saith he, "Create in me a clean heart, O God" (Psalm 51:10), and one may often see that it [the soul] is called spirit.

"And upholding all things by the word of His power." Tell me, "God said" (it is written), "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3): "the Father, saith one, commanded, and the Son obeyed"? But behold here He also [the Son] acts by word. For (saith he), "And upholding all things" — that is, governing; He holds together what would fall to pieces; For, to hold the world together, is no less than to make it, but even greater (if one must say a strange thing). For the one is to bring forward something out of things which are not: but the other, when things which have been made are about to fill back into non-existence, to hold and fasten them together, utterly at variance as they are with each other: this is indeed great and wonderful, and a certain proof of exceeding power.

Then showing the easiness, he said, “upholding”: (he did not say, governing, from the figure of those who simply with their finger move anything, and cause it to go round.) Here he shows both the mass of the creation to be great, and that this greatness is nothing to Him. Then again he shows the freedom from the labor, saying, “By the word of His power.” Well said he, “By the word.” For since, with us, a word is accounted to be a bare thing, he shows that it is not bare with God. But, how “He upholdeth by the word,” he hath not further added: for neither is it possible to know. Then he added concerning His majesty: for thus John also did: having said that “He is God” (John 1:1), he brought in the handiwork of the Creation. For the same thing which the one indirectly expressed, saying, “In the beginning was the Word,” and “All things were made by Him” (John 1:3), this did the other also openly declare by “the Word,” and by saying “by whom also. He made the worlds.” For thus he shows Him to be both a Creator, and before all ages, What then? when the prophet saith, concerning the Father, “Thou art from everlasting and to everlasting” (Psalm 90:2), and concerning the Son, that He is before all ages, and the maker of all things — what can they say? Nay rather, when the very thing which was spoken of the Father, — “He which was before the worlds,” — this one may see spoken of the Son also? And that which one saith, “He was life” (John 1:4), pointing out the preservation of the creation, that Himself is the Life of all things, — so also saith this other, “and upholding all things by the word of His power”: not as the Greeks who defraud Him, as much as in them lies, both of Creation itself, and of Providence, shutting up His power, to reach only as far as to the Moon.

“By Himself” (saith he) “having purged our sins.” Having spoken concerning those marvelous and great matters, which are most above us, he proceeds to speak also afterwards concerning His care for men. For indeed the former expression, “and upholding all things,” also was universal: nevertheless this is far greater, for it also is universal: for, for His part, “all” men believed. As John also, having said, “He was life,” and so pointed out His providence, saith again, and “He was light.”

“By Himself,” saith he, “having purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” He here setteth down two very great proofs of His care: first the “purifying us from our sins,” then the doing it “by Himself.” And in many places, thou seest him making very much of this,

— not only of our reconciliation with God, but also of this being accomplished through the Son. For the gift being truly great, was made even greater by the fact that it was through the Son.

For in saying, “He sat on the right hand,” and, “having by Himself purged our sins,” — though he had put us in mind of the Cross, he quickly added the mention of the resurrection and ascension. And see his unspeakable wisdom: he said not, “He was commanded to sit down,” but “He sat down.” Then again, lest thou shouldest think that He standeth, he subjoins, “For to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit thou on My right hand.”

“He sat” (saith he) “on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” What is this “on high”? Doth he enclose God in place? Away with such a thought! but just as, when he saith, “on the right hand,” he did not describe Him as having figure, but showed His equal dignity with the Father; so, in saying “on high,” he did not enclose Him there, but expressed the being higher than all things, and having ascended up above all things. That is, He attained even unto the very throne of the Father: as therefore the Father is on high, so also is He. For the “sitting together” implies nothing else than equal dignity. But if they say, that He said, “Sit Thou,” we may ask them, What then? did He speak to Him standing? Moreover, he said not that He commanded, not that He enjoined, but that “He said”: for no other reason, than that thou mightest not think Him without origin and without cause. For that this is why he said it, is evident from the place of His sitting. For had he intended to signify inferiority, he would not have said, “on the right hand,” but on the left hand.

Verse 4. *“Being made,” saith he, “so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”*

The “being made,” here, is instead of “being shown forth,” as one may say. Then also from whir does he reason confidently? From the Name. Seest thou that the name Son is wont to declare true relationship? And indeed if He were not a true Son (and “true” is nothing else than “of Him”), how does he reason confidently from this? For if He be Son only by grace, He not only is not “more excellent than the angels,” but is even less than they. How? Because righteous men too were called sons; and the name son, if it be not a genuine son, doth not avail to show the

"excellency." When too he would point out that there is a certain difference between creatures and their maker, hear what he saith:

Verse 5. *"For to which of the Angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son"?*

For these things indeed are spoken with reference also to the flesh: "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son" — while this, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee," expresses nothing else than "from [the time] that God is." For as He is said to be, from the time present (for this befits Him more than any other), so also the [word] "Today" seems to me to be spoken here with reference to the flesh. For when He hath taken hold of it, thenceforth he speaks out all boldly. For indeed the flesh partakes of the high things, just as the Godhead of the lowly. For He who disdained not to become man, and did not decline the reality, how should He have declined the expressions?

Seeing then that we know these things, let us be ashamed of nothing, nor have any high thoughts. For if He Himself being God and Lord and Son of God, did not decline to take the form of a slave, much more ought we to do all things, though they be lowly. For tell me, O man, whence hast thou high thoughts? from things of this life? but these or ever they appear, run by. Or, from things spiritual? nay, this is itself one spiritual excellency, — to have no high thoughts.

Wherefore then dost thou cherish high thoughts? because thou goest on aright? hear Christ saying, "When ye have done all things, say, we are unprofitable servants, for we have done that which was our duty to do." (Luke 17:10)

Or because of thy wealth hast thou high thoughts? Dost thou not see those before thee, how they departed naked and desolate? did we not come naked into life, and naked also shall depart? who hath high thoughts on having what is another's? for they who will use it to their own enjoyment alone, are deprived of it however unwillingly, often before death, and at death certainly. But (saith one) while we live we use them as we will. First of all, one doth not lightly see any man using what he hath as he will. Next, if a man do even use things as he will, neither is this a great matter:

for the present time is short compared with the ages without end. Art thou high-minded, O man, because thou art rich? on what account? for what cause? for this befalleth also, robbers, and thieves, and man-slayers, and effeminate, and whoremongers, and all sorts of wicked men. Wherefore then art thou high-minded? Since if thou hast made meet use of it, thou must not be high-minded, lest thou profane the commandment: but if unmeet, by this indeed [it has come to pass that] thou art become a slave of money, and goods, and art overcome by them. For tell me, if any man sick of a fever should drink much water, which for a short space indeed quencheth his thirst, but afterwards kindleth the flame, ought he to be high-minded? And what, if any man have many cares without cause, ought he therefore to be high-minded? tell me, wherefore? because thou hast many masters? because thou hast ten thousand cares? because many will flatter thee? [Surely not.] For thou art even their slave. And to prove that to thee, hear plainly. The other affections which are within us, are in some cases useful. For instance, Anger is often useful. For (saith he) “unjust wrath shall not be innocent” (Ecclus. 1:22): wherefore it is possible for one to be justly in wrath. And again, “He that is angry with his brother without cause, shall be in danger of hell.” (Matthew 5:22) Again for instance, emulation, desire, [are useful]: the one when it hath reference to the procreation of children, the other when he directs his emulation to excellent things. As Paul also saith, “It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing” (Galatians 4:18) and, “Covet earnestly the best gifts.” (1 Corinthians 12:31) Both therefore are useful: but an insolent spirit is in no case good, but is always unprofitable and hurtful.

However, if a man must be proud, [let it be] for poverty, not for wealth. Wherefore? Because he who can live upon a little, is far greater and better than he who cannot. For tell me, supposing certain persons called to the Imperial City, if some of them should need neither beasts, nor slaves, nor umbrellas, nor lodging-places, nor sandals, nor vessels, but it should suffice them to have bread, and to take water from the wells, — while others of them should say, “unless ye give us conveyances, and a soft bed, we cannot come; unless also we have many followers, unless we may be allowed continually to rest ourselves, we cannot come, nor unless we have the use of beasts, unless too we may travel but a small portion of the day — and we have need of many other things also”: whom should we admire?

those or these? plainly, these who require nothing. So also here: some need many things for the journey through this life; others, nothing. So that it would be more fitting to be proud, for poverty if it were fitting at all.

“But the poor man,” they say, “is contemptible.” Not he, but those who despise him. For why do not I despise those who know not how to admire what they ought? Why, if a person be a painter, he will laugh to scorn all who jeer at him, so long as they are uninstructed; nor cloth he regard the things which they say, but is content with his own testimony. And shall we depend on the opinion of the many? Therefore, we are worthy of contempt when men despise us for our poverty, and we do not despise them nor call them miserable.

And I say not how many sins are produced by wealth, and how many good things by poverty. But rather, neither wealth nor poverty is excellent in itself, but through those who use it. The Christian shines out in poverty rather than in riches. How? He will be less arrogant, more sober-minded, graver, more equitable, more considerate: but he that is in wealth, hath many impediments to these things. Let us see then what the rich man does, or rather, he who useth his wealth amiss. Such an one practiceth rapine, fraud, violence. Men’s unseemly loves, unholy unions, witchcrafts, poisonings, all their other horrors, — wilt thou not find them produced by wealth? Seest thou, that in poverty rather than in wealth the pursuit of virtue is less laborious? For do not, I beseech thee, think that because rich men do not suffer punishment here, neither do they sin. Since if it were easy for a rich man to suffer punishment, thou wouldest surely have found the prisons filled with them. But among its other evils, wealth hath this also, that he who possesseth it, transgressing in evil with impunity, will never be staved from doing so, but will receive wounds without remedies, and no man will put a bridle on him.

And if a man choose, he will find that poverty affords us more resources even for pleasure. How? Because it is freed from cares, hatred, fighting, contention, strife, from evils out of number.

Therefore let us not follow after wealth, nor be forever envying those who possess much. But let those of us who have wealth, use it aright; and those who have not, let us not grieve for this, but give thanks for all things unto God, because He enableth us to receive with little labor the same

reward with the rich, or even (if we will) a greater: and froth small means we shall have great gains. For so he that brought the two talents, was admired and honored equally with him who brought the five. Now why? Because he was entrusted with [but] two talents, yet he accomplished all that in him lay, and brought in what was entrusted to him, doubled. Why then are we eager to have much entrusted to us, when we may by a little reap the same fruits, or even greater? when the labor indeed is less, but the reward much more? For more easily will a poor man part with his own, than a rich man who hath many and great possessions. What, know ye not, that the more things a man hath, the more he setteth his love upon? Therefore, lest this befall us, let us not seek after wealth, nor let us be impatient of poverty, nor make haste to be rich: and let those of us who have [riches] so use them as Paul commanded. ("They that have," saith he, "as though they had not, and they that use this world as not abusing it"-1 Corinthians 7:29, 31): that we may obtain the good things promised. And may it be granted to us all to obtain them, by the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor, now, and for ever, and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 3

HEBREWS 1:6-8

"And again when He bringeth in the First-Begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him. And of the Angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

[1.] OUR Lord Jesus Christ calls His coming in the flesh an exodus [or going out]: as when He saith, "The sower went out to sow." (Matthew 13:3) And again, "I went out from the Father, and am come." (John 16:28) And in many places one may see this. But Paul calls it an [eisodus or] coming in, saying, "And when again He bringeth in the First-Begotten into the world," meaning by this Bringing in, His taking on Him flesh.

Now why has he so used the expression? The things signified [thereby] are manifest, and in what respect it is [thus] said. For Christ indeed calls it a Going out, justly; for we were out from God. For as in royal palaces, prisoners and those who have offended the king, stand without, and he who desires to reconcile them, does not bring them in, but himself going out discourses with them, until having made them meet for the king's presence, he may bring them in, so also Christ hath done. Having gone out to us, that is, having taken flesh, and having discoursed to us of the King's matters, so He brought us in, having purged the sins, and made reconciliation. Therefore he calls it a Going out.

But Paul names it a Coming in, from the metaphor of those who come to an inheritance and receive any portion or possession. For the saying, "and when again He bringeth in the First-Begotten into the world," means this, "when he putteth the world into His hand." For when He was made known, then also He obtained possession of the whole thereof, He saith not these things concerning God The Word, but concerning that which is according to the flesh. For if according to John, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him" (John 1:10): how is He "brought in," otherwise than in the flesh?

"And," saith he, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." Whereas he is about to say something great and lofty, he prepares it beforehand, and makes it acceptable, in that he represents the Father as "bringing in" the Son. He had said above, that "He spake to us not by prophets but by His Son"; that the Son is superior to angels; yea and he establishes this from the name [SON]. And here, in what follows, from another fact also. What then may this be? From worship. And he shows how much greater He is, as much as a Master is than a slave; just as any one introducing another into a house straightway commands those having the care thereof to do him reverence; [so] saying in regard to the Flesh, "And let all the Angels of God worship Him."

Is it then Angels only? No; for hear what follows: "And of His Angels He saith, Which maketh His Angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire: but unto the Son, Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Behold, the greatest difference! that they are created, but He uncreated. While of His angels He saith, who "maketh"; wherefore of the Son did He not say "Who maketh"? Although he might have expressed the difference as follows: "Of His Angels He saith, Who maketh His Angels spirits, but of the Son, 'The Lord created Me': 'God hath made Him Lord and Christ.'" (Proverbs 8:22; Acts 2:36) But neither was the one spoken concerning the Son, nor the other concerning God The Word, but concerning the flesh. For when he desired to express the true difference, he no longer included angels only, but the whole ministering power above. Seest thou how he distinguishes, and with how great clearness, between creatures and Creator, ministers and Lord, the Heir and true Son, and slaves?

[2.] "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Behold a symbol of Kingly Office. "A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom." Behold again another symbol of Royalty.

Then again with respect to the flesh (verse 9) "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee."

What is, "Thy God"? Why, after that he hath uttered a great word, he again qualifieth it. Here he hits both Jews, and the followers of Paul of Samosata, and the Arians, and Marcellus, and Sabellius, and Marcion. How? The Jews, by his indicating two Persons, both God and Man; the

other Jews, I mean the followers of Paul of Samosata, by thus discoursing concerning His eternal existence, and uncreated essence: for by way of distinction, against the word, “He made,” he put, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” Against the Arians there is both this same again, and also that He is not a slave; but if a creature, He is a slave. And against Marcellus and the others, that these are two Persons, distinguished in reference to their subsistence. And against the Marcionites, that the Godhead is not anointed, but the Manhood.

Next he saith, “Above Thy fellows.” But who are these His “fellows” other than men? that is Christ received “not the Spirit by measure.” (John 3:34) Seest thou how with the doctrine concerning His uncreated nature he always joins also that of the “Economy”? what can be clearer than this? Didst thou see how what is created and what is begotten are not the same? For otherwise he would not have made the distinction, nor in contrast to the word, “He made” [etc.], have added, “But unto the Son He said, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” Nor would he have called the name, “Son, a more excellent Name,” if it is a sign of the same thing. For what is the excellence? For if that which is created, and that which is begotten be the same, and they [the Angels] were made, what is there [in Him] “more excellent”? Lo! again pK!Rfp=w “God,” with the Article.

[3.] And again he saith (verse 10-12): “Thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thine hands. They shall perish, but Thou remainest, and they shall all wax old as a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same and Thy years shall not fail.”

Lest hearing the words, “and when He bringeth in the First-Begotten into the world”; thou shouldest think it as it were a Gift afterwards super-added to Him; above, he both corrected this beforehand, and again further corrects, saying, “in the beginning”: not now, but from the first. See again he strikes both Paul of Samosata and also Arius a mortal blow, applying to the Son the things which relate to the Father. And withal he has also intimated another thing by the way, greater even than this. For surely he hath incidentally pointed out also the transfiguration of the world, saying, “they shall wax old as a garment, and as a vesture Thou shall fold them up, and they shall be changed.” Which also he saith in the

Epistle to the Romans, that he shall transfigure the world. (See Romans 8:21) And showing the facility thereof, he adds, as if a man should fold up a garment so shall He both fold up and change it. But if He with so much ease works the transfiguration and the creation to what is better and more perfect, needed He another for the inferior creation? How far doth your shamelessness go? At the same time too this is a very great consolation, to know that things will not be as they are, but they all shall receive change, and all shall be altered, but He Himself remaineth ever existing, and living without end: "and Thy years," he saith, "shall not fail."

[4.] Verse 13. "But to which of the Angels said He at any time, Sit thou on My right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" Behold, again he encourages them, inasmuch as their enemies were to be worsted, and their enemies are the same also with Christ's.

This again belongs to Sovereignty, to Equal Dignity, to Honor and not weakness, that the Father should be angry for the things done to the Son. This belongs to His great Love and honor towards the Son, as of a father towards a son. For He that is angry in His behalf how is He a stranger to Him? Which also he saith in the second Psalm, "He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn, and the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure." (Psalm 2:4, 5) And again He Himself saith, "Those that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither before Me, and slay them." (Luke 19:27) For that they are His own words, hear also what He saith in another place, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left desolate." (Luke 13:34, 35) And again, "The kingdom shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matthew 21:43) And again, "He that falleth upon that stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever It shall fall, It will grind him to powder." (Matthew 21:44) And besides, He who is to be their Judge in that world, much more did He Himself repay them in this. So that the words "Till I make thine enemies thy footstool" are expressive of honor only towards the SON.

Verse 14. *"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"*

What marvel (saith he) if they minister to the Son, when they minister even to our salvation? See how he lifts up their minds, and shows the great honor which God has for us, since He has assigned to Angels who are above us this ministration on our behalf. As if one should say, for this purpose (saith he) He employs them; this is the office of Angels, to minister to God for our salvation. So that it is an angelical work, to do all for the salvation of the brethren: or rather it is the work of Christ Himself, for He indeed saves as Lord, but they as servants. And we, though servants are yet Angels' fellow-servants. Why gaze ye so earnestly on the Angels (saith he)? They are servants of the Son of God, and are sent many ways for our sakes, and minister to our salvation. And so they are partners in service with us.

Consider ye how he ascribes no great difference to the kinds of creatures. And yet the space between angels and men is great; nevertheless he brings them down near to us, all but saying, For us they labor, for our sake they run to and fro: on us, as one might say, they wait. this is their ministry, for our sake to be sent every way.

And of these examples both the Old [Testament] is full, and the New. For when Angels bring glad tidings to the shepherds, or to Mary, or to Joseph; when they sit at the sepulcher, when they are sent to say to the disciples, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" (Acts 1:11), when they release Peter out of the prison, when they discourse with Philip, consider how great the honor is; when God sends His Angels for ministers as to friends; when to Cornelius [an Angel] appears, when [an Angel] brings forth all the apostles from the prison, and says, "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people the words of this life" (Acts 5:20); and to Paul himself also an Angel appears. Dost thou see that they minister to us on God's behalf, and that they minister to us in the greatest matters? wherefore Paul saith, "All things are yours, whether life or death, or the world, or things present, or things to come." (1 Corinthians 3:22)

Well then the SON also was sent, but not as a servant, nor as a minister, but as a Son, and Only-Begotten, and desiring the same things with the Father. Rather indeed, He was not "sent": for He did not pass from place to place, but took on Him flesh: whereas these change their places, and

leaving those in which they were before, so come to others in which they were not.

And by this again he incidentally encourages them, saying, What fear ye? Angels are ministering to us.

[5.] And having spoken concerning the Son, both what related to the Economy, and what related to the Creation, and to His sovereignty, and having shown His co-equal dignity, and that as absolute Master He ruleth not men only but also the powers above, he next exhorts them, having made out his argument, that we ought to give heed to the things which have been heard. (c. 2:1) "Wherefore we ought to give more earnest heed" (saith he) "to the things which we have heard." Why "more earnest"? Here he meant "more earnest" than to the Law: but he suppressed the actual expression of it, and yet makes it plain in the course of reasoning, not in the way of counsel, nor of exhortation. For so it was better.

Verse 2, 3. *"For if the word spoken by Angels" (saith he) "was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken to us by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him?"*

Why ought we to "give more earnest heed to the things which we have heard"? were not those former things of God, as well as these? Either then he meaneth "more earnest" than [to] the Law, or "very earnest"; not making comparison, God forbid. For since, on account of the long space of time, they had a great opinion of the Old Covenant, but these things had been despised as vet new, he proves (more than his argument required) that we ought rather to give heed to these. How? By saying in effect, Both these and those are of God, but not in a like manner. And this he shows us afterwards: but for the present he treats it somewhat superficially, but afterwards more clearly, saying "For if that first covenant had been faultless" (c. 8:7), and many other such things: "for that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." (c. 8:13) But as yet he ventures not to say any such thing in the beginning of his discourse, nor until he shall have first occupied and possessed his hearer by his fuller [arguments].

Why then ought we “to give more earnest heed”? “Lest at any time,” saith he, “we should let them slip” — that is, lest at any time we should perish, lest we should fall away. And here he shows the grievousness of this falling away, in that it is a difficult thing for that which hath fallen away to return again, inasmuch as it hath happened through willful negligence. And he took this form of speech from the Proverbs. For, saith he, “my son [take heed] lest thou fall away” (Proverbs 3:21, LXX.), showing both the easiness of the fall, and the grievousness of the ruin. That is, our disobedience is not without danger. And while by his mode of reasoning he shows that the chastisement is greater, yet again he leaves it in the form of a question, and not in the conclusion. For indeed this is to make one’s discourse inoffensive, when one does not in every case of one’s self infer the judgment, but leaves it in the power of the hearer himself to give sentence: and this would render them more open to conviction. And both the prophet Nathan doth the same in the Old [Testament], and in Matthew Christ, saying, “What will He do to the husbandmen” (Matthew 21:40) of that vineyard? so compelling them to give sentence themselves: for this is the greatest victory.

Next, when he had said, “For if the word which was spoken by Angels was steadfast” — he did not add, much more that by Christ: but letting this pass, he said what is less, “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” And see how he makes the comparison. “For if the word which was spoken by Angels,” saith he. There, “by Angels,” here, “by the Lord” — and there “a word,” but here, “salvation.”

Then lest any man should say, Thy sayings, O Paul, are they Christ’s? he proves their trustworthiness both from his having heard these things of Him, and from their being now spoken by God; since not merely a voice is wafted, as in the case of Moses, but signs are done, and facts bear witness.

[6.] But what is this, “For if the word spoken by Angels was steadfast”? For in the Epistle to the Galatians also he saith to this effect, “Being ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator.” (Galatians 3:19) And again, “Ye received a law by the disposition of Angels, and have not kept it.” (Acts 7:53) And everywhere he saith it was given by angels. Some indeed say that Moses is signified; but without reason. For here he says Angels in the plural: and the Angels too which he here speaks of, are those in

Heaven. What then is it? Either he means the Decalogue only (for there Moses spake, and God answered him — Exodus 19:19), — or that angels were present, God disposing them in order, — or that he speaks thus in regard of all things said and done in the old Covenant, as if Angels had part in them. But how is it said in another place, “The Law was given by Moses” (John 1:17), and here “by Angels”? For it is said, “And God came down in thick darkness.” (Exodus 19:16, 20)

“For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast.” What is “was steadfast”? True, as one may say; and faithful in its proper season; and all the things which had been spoken came to pass. Either this is his meaning, or that they prevailed, and the threatenings were coming to be accomplished. Or by “the word” he means injunctions. For apart from the Law, Angels sent from God enjoined many things: for instance at Bochim, in the Judges, in [the history of] Samson. (Judges 2:1; 13:3) For this is the cause why he said not “the Law” but “the word.” And he seems to me haply rather to mean this, viz., those things which are committed to the management of angels. What shall we say then? The angels who were entrusted with the charge of the nation were then present, and they themselves made the trumpets, and the other things, the fire, the thick darkness. (Exodus 19:16)

“And every transgression and disobedience,” saith he. Not this one and that one, but “every” one. Nothing, he saith, remained unavenged, but “received a just recompense of reward,” instead of [saying] punishment. Why now spake he thus? Such is the manner of Paul, not to make much account of his phrases, but indifferently to put down words of evil sound, even in matters of good meaning. As also in another place he saith, “Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:5) And again he hath put “the recompense” for punishment, as here he calleth punishment “reward.” “If it be a righteous thing,” he saith, “with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled rest.” (2 Thessalonians 1:6, 7) That is, justice was not violated, but God went forth against them, and caused the penalty to come round on the sinners, though not all their sins are made manifest, but only where the express ordinances were transgressed.

“How then shall we,” he saith, “escape if we neglect so great salvation?” Hereby he signified, that other salvation was no great thing. Well too did he add the “So great.” For not from wars (he saith) will He now rescue us, nor bestow on us the earth and the good things that are in the earth, but it will be the dissolution of death, the destruction of the devil, the kingdom of Heaven, everlasting life. For all these things he hath briefly expressed, by saying, “if we neglect so great salvation.”

[7.] Then he subjoins what makes this worthy of belief. “Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord”: that is, had its beginning from the fountain itself. It was not a man who brought it over into the earth, nor any created power, but the Only-Begotten Himself.

“And was confirmed unto us by them that heard [Him].” What is” confirmed”? It was believed, or, it came to pass. For (he saith) we have the earnest; that is, it hath not been extinguished, it hath not ceased, but it is strong and prevaileth. And the cause is, the Divine power works therein. It means they who heard from the Lord, themselves confirmed us. This is a great thing and trustworthy: which also Luke saith in the beginning of his Gospel, “As they delivered unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word.” (Luke 1:2)

How then was it confirmed? What if those that heard were forgers? saith some one. This objection then he overthrows, and shows that the grace was not human. If they had gone astray, God would not have born witness to them; for he subjoined (verse 4), “God also bearing witness with them.” Both they indeed bear witness, and God beareth witness too. How doth He bear witness? not by word or by voice, (though this also would have been worthy of belief): but how? “By signs, and wonders, and divers miracles.” (Well said he, “divers miracles,” declaring the abundance of the gifts: which was not so in the former dispensation, neither so great signs and so various.) That is, we did not believe them simply, but through signs and wonders: wherefore we believe not them, but God Himself.

“And by gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will.”

What then, if wizards also do signs, and the Jews said that He “cast out devils through Beelzebub”? (Luke 11:15) But they do not such kind of signs: therefore said he “divers miracles”: for those others were not

miracles, [or powers,] but weakness and fancy, and things altogether vain. Wherefore he said, “by gifts of the Holy Ghost according to His own will.”

[8.] Here he seems to me to intimate something further. For it is not likely there were many there who had gifts, but that these had failed, upon their becoming more slothful. In order then that even in this he might comfort them, and not leave them to fall away, he referred all to the will of God. He knows (he says) what is expedient, and for whom, and apportions His grace accordingly. Which also he [Paul] does in the Epistle to the Corinthians, saying, “God hath set every one of us, as it pleased Him.” (1 Corinthians 12:18) And again, “The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” (1 Corinthians 12:7)

“According to His will.” He shows that the gift is according to the will of the Father. But oftentimes on account of their unclean and slothful life many have not received a gift, and sometimes also those whose life is good and pure have not received one. Why, I pray you? Lest they might be made haughty, that they might not be puffed up, that they might not grow more negligent, that they might not be more excited. For if even without a gift, the mere consciousness of a pure life be sufficient to lift a man up, much more when the grace is added also. Wherefore to the humble, to the simple, it was rather given, and especially to the simple: for it is said, “in singleness and gladness of heart.” (Acts 2:46) Yea, and hereby also he rather urged them on, and if they were growing negligent gave them a spur. For the humble, and he who imagines no great things concerning himself, becomes more earnest when he has received a gift, in that he has obtained what is beyond his deserts, and thinks that he is not worthy thereof. But he who thinks he hath done well, reckoning it to be his due, is puffed up. Wherefore God dispenseth this profitably: which one may see taking place also in the Church: for one hath the word of teaching, another hath not power to open his mouth. Let not this man (he says) be grieved because of this. For “the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” (1 Corinthians 12:7) For if a man that is an householder knoweth to whom he should entrust anything, much more God, who understands the mind of men, “who knoweth all things or ever they come into being.” One thing only is worthy of grief, Sin: there is nothing else.

Say not, Wherefore have I not riches? or, If I had, I would give to the poor. Thou knowest not, if thou hadst them, whether thou wouldest not the rather be covetous. For now indeed thou sayest these things, but being put to the trial thou wouldest be different. Since also when we are satisfied, we think that we are able to fast; but when we have gone without a little space, other thoughts come into us. Again, when we are out of the way of strong drink, we think ourselves able to master our appetite, but no longer so, when we are caught by it.

Say not, Wherefore had I not the gift of teaching? or, If I had it, I should have edified innumerable souls. Thou knowest not, if thou hadst it, whether it would not be to thy condemnation, — whether envy, whether sloth, would not have disposed thee to hide thy talent. Now, indeed, thou art now free from all these, and though thou give not "the portion of meat" (Luke 12:42), thou art not called to account: but then, thou wouldest have been responsible for many.

[9.] And besides, neither now art thou without the gift. Show in the little, what thou wouldst have been, if thou hadst had the other. "For if" (he says) "ye are not faithful in that which is little, how shall any one give you that which is great?" (Luke 16:11) Give such proof as did the widow; she had two farthings, and she cast in all, whatsoever she possessed.

Dost thou seek riches? Prove that thou thinkest lightly of the few things, that I may trust thee also concerning the many things. But if thou dost not think lightly even of these, much less wilt thou do so of the other.

Again, in speech, prove that thou canst use fitly exhortation and counsel. Hast thou not external eloquence? hast thou not store of thoughts? But nevertheless thou knowest these common things. Thou hast a child, thou hast a neighbor, thou hast a friend, thou hast a brother, thou hast kinsmen. And though publicly before the Church, thou art not able to draw out a long discourse, these thou canst exhort in private. Here, there is no need of rhetoric, nor of elaborate discourse: prove in these, that if thou hadst skill of speech, thou wouldest not have neglected it. But if in the small matter thou art not in earnest, how shall I trust thee concerning the great?

For, that every man can do this, hear what Paul saith, how he charged even lay people; "Edify," he says, "one another, as also ye do." (1

Thessalonians 5:11) And, “Comfort one another with these words.” (1 Thessalonians 4:18) God knoweth how He should distribute to every man. Art thou better than Moses? hear how he shrinks from the hardship. “Am I,” saith he, “able to bear them? for Thou saidst to me, Bear them up, as a nursing-father would bear up the sucking-child.” (Numbers 11:12) What then did God? He took of his spirit and gave unto the others, showing that neither when he bare them was the gift his own, but of the Spirit. If thou hadst had the gift, thou wouldst perchance a have been lifted up, perchance wouldst thou have been turned out of the way. Thou knowest not thyself as God knoweth thee. Let us not say, To what end is that? on what account is this? When God dispenseth, let us not demand an account of Him: for this [is] of the uttermost impiety and folly. We are slaves, and slaves far apart from our Master, knowing not even the things which are before us.

[10.] Let us not then busy ourselves about the counsel of God, but whatsoever He hath given, this let us guard, though it be small, though it be the lowest, and we shall be altogether approved. Or rather, none of the gifts of God is small: art thou grieved because thou hast not the gift of teaching? Then tell me, which seems to you the greater, to have the gift of teaching, or the gift of driving away diseases? Doubtless the latter. But what? Tell me; doth it not seem to thee greater to give eyes to the blind than even to drive away diseases? But what? Tell me; doth it not seem to thee greater to raise the dead than to give eyes to the blind? What again, tell me; doth it not seem to thee greater to do this by shadows and napkins, than by a word? Tell me then, which wouldst thou? Raise the dead with shadows and napkins, or have the gift of teaching? Doubtless thou wilt say the former, to raise the dead with shadows and napkins. If then I should show to thee, that there is another gift far greater than this, and that thou dost not receive it when it is in thy power to receive it, art not thou justly deprived of those others? And this gift not one or two, but all may have. I know that ye open wide your mouths and are amazed, at being to hear that it is in your power to have a greater gift than raising the dead, and giving eyes to the blind, doing the same things which were done in the time of the Apostles. And it seems to you past belief.

What then is this gift? charity. Nay, believe me; for the word is not mine, but Christ’s speaking by Paul. For what saith he? “Covet earnestly the

best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way." (1 Corinthians 12:31) What is this, "yet more excellent"? What he means is this. The Corinthians were proud over their gifts, and those having tongues, the least gift, were puffed up against the rest. He saith therefore, Do ye by all means desire gifts? I show unto you a way of gifts not merely excelling but far more excellent. Then he saith, "Though I speak with the tongues of Angels, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I have faith so as to remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." (1 Corinthians 13:1, 2)

Hast thou seen the gift? Covet earnestly this gift. This is greater than raising the dead. This is far better than all the rest, And that it is so, hear what Christ Himself saith, discoursing with His disciples, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples." (John 13:35) And showing how, He mentioned not the miracles, but what? "If ye have love one with another." And again He saith to the Father, "Hereby shall they know that Thou hast sent Me, if they be one." (John 17:21) And He said to His disciples, "A new commandment I give to you, that ye love one another." (John 13:34) Such an one therefore is more venerable and glorious than those who raise the dead; with reason. For that indeed is wholly of God's grace, but this, of thine own earnestness also. This is of one who is a Christian indeed: this shows the disciple of Christ, the crucified, the man that hath nothing common with earth. Without this, not even martyrdom can profit.

And as a proof, see this plainly. The blessed Paul took two of the highest virtues, or rather three; namely, those which consist in miracles, in knowledge, in life. And without this the others, he said, are nothing. And I will say how these are nothing. "Though I give my goods to feed the poor," he says, "and have not charity, I am nothing." (1 Corinthians 13:3) For it is possible not to be charitable even when one feeds the poor and exhausts one's means.

[11.] And indeed these things have been sufficiently declared by us, in the place concerning Charity: and thither we refer the readers. Meanwhile, as I was saying, let us covet earnestly the Gift, let us love one another; and we shall need nothing else for the perfect acquisition of virtue, but all will be easy to us without toils and we shall do all perfectly with much diligence.

But see, even now, it is said, we love one another. For one man hath two friends, and another three. But this is not to love for God's sake, but for the sake of being beloved. But to love for God's sake hath not this as its principle of Love; but such an one will be disposed towards all men as towards brethren; loving those that are of the same faith as being true brothers; heretics and Heathen and Jews, brothers indeed by nature, but vile and unprofitable, — pitying and wearing himself out and weeping for them. Herein we shall be like God if we love all men, even our enemies; not, if we work miracles. For we regard even God with admiration when He worketh wonders, yet much more, when He showeth love towards man, when He is long-suffering. If then even in God this is worthy of much admiration, much more in men is it evident that this rendereth us admirable.

This then let us zealously seek after: and we shall be no way inferior to Paul and Peter and those who have raised innumerable dead, though we may not be able to drive away a fever. But without this [Love]; though we should work greater miracles even than the Apostles themselves, though we should expose ourselves to innumerable dangers for the faith: there will be to us no profit from any. And these things it is not I that say, but he, the very nourisher of Charity, knoweth these things. To him then let us be obedient; for thus we shall be able to attain to the good things promised, of which may we all be made partakers, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father with the Holy Ghost, be the glory, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 4

HEBREWS 2:5-7

"For unto Angels He hath not put in subjection. the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the Angels."

[1.] I COULD have wished to know for certain whether any hear with fitting earnestness the things that are said, whether we are not casting the seeds by the wayside: for in that case I should have made my instructions with more cheerfulness. For we shall speak, though no one hear, for the fear which is laid on us by our Savior. For, saith He, testify to this people; even if they hear not, thou shalt thyself be guiltless. (See Ezekiel 3:19) If however I had been persuaded of your earnestness, I should have spoken not for fear only, but should have done it with pleasure also. For now indeed, even if no man hear, even if my work, so long as I fulfill my own part, brings no danger, still the labor is not altogether pleasant. For what profit is it, when though I be not blamed, yet no one is benefited? But if any would give heed we shall receive advantage not so much from avoiding punishment ourselves as from your progress.

How then shall I know this? Having taken notice of some of you, who are not very attentive, I shall question them privately, when I meet them. And if I find that they retain any of the things that have been spoken (I say not all, for this would not be very easy for you), but even if [they retain] a few things out of many, it is plain I should have no further doubts about the rest. And indeed we ought, without giving notice beforehand, to have attacked you when off your guard. However it will suffice, if even in this way I should be able to attain my purpose. Nay rather, even as it is, I can attack you when you are off your guard. For that I *shall* question you, I have forewarned you; but *when* I shall question you I do not as yet make evident. For perhaps it may be today; perhaps tomorrow, perhaps after twenty or thirty days, perhaps after fewer, perhaps after more. Thus has God also made uncertain the day of our death. Nor hath He allowed it be

clear to us, whether it shall befall us today, or tomorrow, or after a whole year, or after many years; that through the uncertainty of the expectation we may through all time keep ourselves firm in virtue. And that we shall indeed depart, He hath said, — but when, He hath not yet said. Thus too I have said that I shall question you, but I have not added when, wishing you always to be thoughtful.

And let no man say, I heard these things four or five weeks ago, or more, and I cannot retain them. For I wish the hearer so to retain them as to have his recollection perpetual and not apt to fade, nor yet that he should disown what is spoken. For I wish you to retain them, not, in order to tell them to me, but that ye may have profit; and this is of most serious interest to me. Let no one then say this.

[2.] However, I must now begin with what follows in the epistle. What then is set before us to speak on today?

“For not to angels,” he says, “did He put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.” Is he then discoursing concerning some other world? No, but concerning this. Therefore he added “whereof we speak,” that he might not allow the mind to wander away in search of some other. How then does he call it “the world to come”? Exactly as he also says in another place, “Who is the figure of him that was to come,” (Romans 5:14,) when he is speaking about Adam and Christ in the Epistle to the Romans; calling Christ according to the flesh “Him that was to come” in respect of the times of Adam, (for [then] He was to come). So now also, since he had said, “but when he bringeth in the First-Begotten into the world”: that thou mightest not suppose that he is speaking of another world, it is made certain from many considerations and from his saying “to come.” For the world was to come, but the Son of God always was. This world then which was about to come, He put in subjection not to Angels but to Christ. For that this is spoken with reference to the Son (he says) is evident: for surely no one would assert the other alternative, that it had reference to Angels.

Then he brings forward another testimony also and says, “but one in a certain place testified, saying.” Wherefore did he not mention the name of the prophet, but hid it? Yea, and in other testimonies also he doth this: as when he saith, “but when He bringeth in again the First-Begotten into the

world, He saith, And let all the Angels of God worship Him. And again, I will be to Him a Father. And of the Angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth" (c. 1:6, 5, 7, 10): — so also here he saith, "but one in a certain place testified, saying." And this very thing (I conceive) is the act of one that conceals himself, and shows that they were well skilled in the Scriptures; his not setting down him who uttered the testimony, but introducing it as familiar and obvious.

"What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels: Thou crownedst him with glory and honor." (Verse 8) "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet."

Now although these things were spoken of human nature generally, they would nevertheless apply more properly to Christ according to the flesh. For this, "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet," belongs to Him rather than to us. For the Son of God visited us when we were nothing: and after having assumed our [nature], and united it to Himself, He became higher than all.

"For," he says, "in that He hath put all things in subjection under Him, He left nothing not put under Him: but now we see not yet all things put under Him." What he means is this: — since he had said, "Until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool" (c. 1:13), — and it was likely that they would still be grieved, — then having inserted a few things after this parenthetically, he added this testimony in confirmation of the former. For that they might not say, How is it that He hath put His enemies under His feet, when we have suffered so much? he sufficiently hinted at it in the former place indeed (for the word "until" showed, not what should take place immediately, but in course of time) but here he followeth it up. For do not suppose (he says) that because they have not vet been made subject, they are not to be made subject: for that they must be made subject, is evident; for, on this account was the prophecy spoken. "For," he says, "in that He hath put all things under Him, He left nothing not put under Him." How then is it that all things have not been put under Him? Because they are hereafter to be put under Him.

If then all things must be made subject to Him, but have not yet been made subject, do not grieve, nor trouble thyself. If indeed when the end were come, and all things were made subject, thou wert still suffering these things, with reason wouldst thou repine: “But now we see not yet all things put under Him.” The King has not yet clearly conquered. Why then art thou troubled when suffering affliction? the preaching [of the Gospel] hath not yet prevailed over all; it is not yet time that they should be altogether made subject.

[3.] Then again there is another consolation if indeed He who is hereafter to have all put in subjection under Him, hath Himself also died and submitted to sufferings innumerable. (Verse 9) “But,” he says, “we see Him who was made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, for the suffering of death” — then the good things again, — “crowned with glory and honor.” Seest thou, how all things apply to Him? For the [expression], “a little,” would rather suit Him, who was only three days in Hades, but not ourselves who are for a long time in corruption. Likewise also the [expression] “with glory and honor” will suit Him much more than us.

Again, he reminds them of the Cross, thereby effecting two things; both showing His care [for them] and persuading them to bear all things nobly, looking to the Master. For (he would say) if He who is worshipped of Angels, for thy sake endured to have a little less than the Angels, much more aughtest thou who art inferior to the Angels, to bear all things for His sake. Then he shows that the Cross is “glory and honor,” as He Himself also always calls it, saying, “That the Son of Man might be glorified” (John 11:5); and, “the Son of Man is glorified.” (John 12:23) If then He calls the [sufferings] for His servants’ sake “glory,” much more shouldest thou the [sufferings] for the Lord.

Seest thou the fruit of the Cross, how great it is? fear not the matter: for it seemeth to thee indeed to be dismal, but it brings forth good things innumerable. From these considerations he shows the benefit of trial. Then he says, “That He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

“That by the grace of God,” he says. And He indeed because of the grace of God towards us suffered these things. “He who spared not His Own Son,” he says, “but delivered Him up for us all.” (Romans 8:32) Why? He did not owe us this, but has done it of grace. And again in the Epistle to

the Romans he says, “Much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.” (Romans 5:15)

“That by the grace of God He should taste death for every man,” not for the faithful only, but even for the whole world: for He indeed died for all; But what if all have not believed? He hath fulfilled His own [part].

Moreover he said rightly “taste death for every man,” he did not say “die.” For as if He really was tasting it, when He had spent a little time therein, He immediately arose.

By saying then “for the suffering of death,” he signified real death, and by saying “superior to angels,” he declared the resurrection. For as a physician though not needing to taste the food prepared for the sick man, yet in his care for him tastes first himself, that he may persuade the sick man with confidence to venture on the food, so since all men were afraid of death, in persuading them to take courage against death, He tasted it also Himself though He needed not. “For,” He says, “the prince of this world cometh and findeth nothing in Me.” (John 14:30) So both the words “by grace” and “should taste death for every man,” establish this.

[4.] Verse 10. *“For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”*

He speaks here of the Father. Seest thou how again he applies the [expression] “by whom” to Him? Which he would not have done, had it been [an expression] of inferiority, and only applicable to the Son. And what he says is this: — He has done what is worthy of His love towards mankind, in showing His First-born to be more glorious than all, and in setting Him forth as an example to the others, like some noble wrestler that surpasses the rest.

“The Captain of their salvation,” that is, the Cause of their salvation. Seest thou how great is the space between? Both He is a Son, and we are sons; but He saves, we are saved. Seest thou how He both brings us together and then separates us; “bringing,” he says, “many sons unto glory”: here he brings us together, — “the Captain of their salvation,” again he separates.

“To make perfect through sufferings.” Then sufferings are a perfecting, and a cause of salvation. Seest thou that to suffer affliction is not the portion of those who are utterly forsaken; if indeed it was by this that God first honored His Son, by leading Him through sufferings? And truly His taking flesh to suffer what He did suffer, is a far greater thing than making the world, and bringing it out of things that are not. This indeed also is [a token] of His loving-kindness, but the other far more. And [the Apostle] himself also pointing out this very thing, says, “That in the ages to come He might show forth the exceeding riches of His goodness, He both raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 2:7, 6)

“For it became Him for whom are all things and by whom are all things in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through-sufferings.” For (he means) it became Him who taketh tender care, and brought all things into being, to give up the Son for the salvation of the rest, the One for the many. However he did not express himself thus, but, “to make perfect through sufferings,” showing the suffering for any one, not merely profits “him,” but he himself also becomes more glorious and more perfect. And this too he says in reference to the faithful, comforting them by the way: for Christ was glorified then when He suffered. But when I say, He was glorified, do not suppose that there was an accession of glory to Him: for that which is of nature He always had, and received nothing in addition.

[5.] “For,” he says, “both He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Behold again how he brings [them] together, honoring and comforting them, and making them brethren of Christ, in this respect that they are “of one.” Then again guarding himself and showing that he is speaking of that which is according to the flesh, he introduces, “For He who sanctifieth,” [i.e.] Christ, “and they who are sanctified,” ourselves. Dost thou see how great is the difference? He sanctifies, we are sanctified. And above he said, “the Captain of their salvation. For there is one God, of whom are all things.” (1 Corinthians 8:6)

“For which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Seest thou how again he shows the superiority? For by saying, “He is not ashamed,”

he shows that the whole comes not of the nature of the thing, but of the loving affection of Him who was “not ashamed” of anything, [yea] of His great humility. For though we be “of one,” yet He sanctifieth and we are sanctified: and great is the difference. Moreover “He” is of the Father, as a true Son, that is, of His substance; “we,” as created, that is, brought out of things that are not, so that the difference is great. Wherefore he says, “He is not ashamed to call them brethren” (verse 12), “saying, I will declare Thy name unto My brethren.” (Psalm 22:22) For when He clothed Himself with flesh, He clothed Himself also with the brotherhood, and at the same time came in the brotherhood.

This indeed he brings forward naturally. But this (verse 13) “I will put my trust in Him” (2 Samuel 22:3), what does it mean? For what follows this is also [introduced] naturally. “Behold, I and the children which God hath given Me.” (Isaiah 8:18) For as here He shows Himself a Father, so before, a Brother. “I will declare Thy name unto My brethren,” He saith.

And again he indicates the superiority and the great interval [between us], by what follows (verse 14): “Since then the children,” he saith, “are partakers of flesh and blood” (thou seest where he saith the likeness is? in reference to the flesh), “in like manner He also Himself took part of the same.” Let all the Heretics be ashamed, let those hide their faces who say that He came in appearance and not in reality. For he did not say, “He took part of these” only, and then say no more; although had he said thus, it would have been sufficient, but he asserted something more, adding “in like manner,” not in appearance, he means, or by an image (since in that case “in like manner” is not preserved) but in reality; showing the brotherhood.

[6.] Next he sets down also the cause of the economy. “That through death,” he says, “He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

Here he points out the wonder, that by what the devil prevailed, by that was he overcome, and the very thing which was his strong weapon against the world, [namely], Death, by this Christ smote him. In this he exhibits the greatness of the conqueror’s power. Dost thou see how great good death hath wrought?

Verse 15. *"And should deliver them," he says, "who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."*

Why (he means) do ye shudder? Why do you fear him that hath been brought to naught? He is no longer terrible, but has been trodden under foot, hath been utterly despised; he is vile and of no account. (2 Timothy 1:10)

But what is "through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage"? He either means this, that he who fears death is a slave, and submits to all things rather than die; or this, that all men were slaves of death and were held under his power, because he had not yet been done away; or that men lived in continual fear, ever expecting that they should die, and being afraid of death, could have no sense of pleasure, while this fear was present with them. For this he hinted at in saying," All their life-time." He here shows that the afflicted, the harassed, the persecuted, those that are deprived of country and of substance and of all other things, spend their lives more sweetly and more freely than they of old time who were in luxury, who suffered no such afflictions, who were in continual prosperity, if indeed these "all their life-time" were under this fear and were slaves; while the others have been made free and laugh at that which they shudder at. For this is now as if, when one was being led away to a captivity leading to death, and in continual expectation of it, one should feed him up with abundant dainties (something such as this was Death of old); but now, as if some one taking away that fear together with the dainties, were to promise a contest, and propose a combat that should lead no longer to death, but to a kingdom. Of which number wouldst thou have wished to be — those who are fed up in the prison-house, while every day looking for their sentence, or those who contend much and labor willingly, that they may crown themselves with the diadem of the kingdom? Seest thou how he has raised up their soul, and made them elated? He shows too, that not death alone has been put an end to, but that thereby he also who is ever showing that war without trace against us, I mean the devil, hath been brought to naught; since he that fears not death is out of reach of the devil's tyranny. For if "skin for skin, yea all things a man would give for his life" (Job 2:4) — when any one has determined to disregard even this, of what henceforward will he be the slave? He fears no one, he is in terror of no one, he is higher than all, and more free than all. For he that

disregards his own life, much more [doth he disregard] all other things. And when the devil finds a soul such as this, he can accomplish in it none of his works. For what? tell me, shall he threaten the loss of property, and degradation, and banishment from one's country? But these are small matters to him who "counteth not even his life dear" (Acts 20:24) unto him, according to the blessed Paul. Thou seest that in casting out the tyranny of death, he also overthrew the strength of the devil. For he who has learnt to study innumerable [truths] concerning the resurrection, how should he fear death? How should he shudder any more?

[7.] Therefore be ye not grieved, saying, why do we suffer such and such things? For so the victory becomes more glorious. And it would not have been glorious, unless by death He had destroyed death; but the most wonderful thing is that He conquered him by the very means by which he was strong, showing in every point the abundance of His means, and the excellence of His contrivances. Let us not then prove false to the gift bestowed on us. "For we," he says, "have received not a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (Romans 8:15; 2 Timothy 1:7) Let us stand then nobly, laughing death to scorn.

But [I pause] for it comes over me to groan bitterly [at the thought of] whither Christ hath raised us up, and whither we have brought ourselves down. For when I see the wailings in the public places, the groanings over those departing life, the howlings, the other unseemly behavior, believe me, I am ashamed before those heathen, and Jews, and heretics who see it, and before all who for this cause openly laugh us to scorn. For whatever I may afterwards say, I shall talk to no purpose, when philosophizing concerning the resurrection. Why? Because the heathen do not attend to what is said by me, but to what is done by you. For they will say at once, 'when will any of these [fellows] be able to despise death, when he is not able to see another dead?'

Beautiful things were spoken by Paul, beautiful and worthy of Heaven, and of the love of God to man. For what does he say? "And He shall deliver them who through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage." But ye do not allow these things to be believed, fighting against them by your deeds. And yet many things exist for this very end, God building a stronghold against it, that He might destroy this same evil

custom. For tell me, what mean the bright torches? Do we not send them before as athletes? And what [mean] the hymns? Do we not glorify God, and give thanks that at last He has crowned the departed one, that He has freed him from his labors, that taking away uncertainty, He has him with Himself? Are not the Hymns for this? Is not Psalmody for this? All these are the acts of those rejoicing. "For," it is said, "is any merry? let him sing psalms." (James 5:13) But to these things the heathen give no heed. For (one will say) do not tell me of him who is philosophical when out of the affliction, for this is nothing great or surprising; — show me a man who in the very affliction itself is philosophical, and then I will believe the resurrection,

And indeed, that women engaged in the affairs of this life should act thus is no way surprising. And yet indeed this even is dreadful; for from them also is the same philosophy required. Wherefore also Paul says, "But concerning them which are asleep, I would not have you ignorant, that ye sorrow not even as the rest who have no hope." (1 Thessalonians 4:13) He wrote not this to solitaries, nor to perpetual virgins, but to women and men in the world. But however this is not so dreadful. But when any man or woman, professing to be crucified to the world, he tears his hair, and she shrieks violently — what can be more unseemly than this?

Believe me when I say if things were done as they ought, such persons should be excluded for a long time from the thresholds of the Church. For those who are indeed worthy of being grieved for, are these who still fear and shudder at death, who have no faith in the resurrection.

'But I do not disbelieve the resurrection' (one says) 'but I long after his society.' Why then, tell me, when he goes from home, and that for a long absence, dost not thou do the same? Yea, but I do weep then also' (she says) 'and mourn as I long after him.' But that is the conduct of those that really long after their associates, this that of her who despairs of his return.

Think, what thou singest on that occasion, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." (Psalm 116:7) And again, "I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." (Psalm 23:4) And again, "Thou art my refuge from the affliction which encompasseth me." (Psalm

32:7) Think what these Psalms mean. But thou dost not give heed, but art drunk from grief.

Consider carefully the funeral lamentations of others that thou mayest have a remedy in thine own case. “Return, O my soul, to thy rest, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.” Tell me, sayest thou that the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee, and weepest? Is not this mere acting, is it not hypocrisy? For if indeed thou really believest the things thou sayest, thy sorrow is superfluous: but if thou art in sport and acting a part, and thinkest these things fables, why dost thou sing psalms? Why dost thou even endure the attendants? Why dost thou not drive away the singers? But this would be the act of madmen. And yet far more the other.

For the present, then, I advise you: but as time goes on, I shall treat the matter more seriously: for indeed I am greatly afraid that by this practice some grievous disease may make its way into the Church. The case of the wailings then we will hereafter correct. And meanwhile I charge and testify, both to rich and poor, both to women and men.

May God indeed grant that you all depart out of life unwailed, and according to the fitting rule fathers now grown old may be attended to their graves by sons, and mothers by daughters, and grand-children, and great grand-children, in a green old age, and that untimely death may in no case occur. May this then be, and this I pray, and I exhort the prelates and all of you to beseech God for each other, and to make this prayer in common. But if (which God forbid, and may it never happen) any bitter death should occur, bitter, I mean, not in its nature (for henceforth there is no bitter death, for it differs not at all from sleep), but bitter in regard of your disposition, if it should happen, and any should hire these mourning women, believe me when I say (I speak not without meaning but as I have resolved, let him who will, be angry), that person we will exclude from the Church for a long time, as we do the idolater. For if Paul calls “the covetous man an idolater” (Ephesians 5:5), (much more him who brings in the practices of the idolaters over a believer.

For, tell me, for what cause dost thou invite presbyters, and the singers? Is it not to afford consolation? Is it not to honor the departed? Why then dost thou insult him? And why dost thou make him a public show? And why dost thou make game as on a stage? We come, discoursing of the

things concerning the resurrection, instructing all, even those who have not yet been smitten, by the honor shown to him, to bear it nobly if any such thing should happen and dost thou bring those who overthrow our [teachings] as much as in them lieth? What can be worse than this ridicule and mockery? What more grievous than this inconsistency?

[8.] Be ashamed and show reverence: but if ye will not, we cannot endure the bringing in upon the Church of practices so destructive. For, it is said, "them that sin rebuke before all." (1 Timothy 5:20) And as to those miserable and wretched women, we through you forbid them ever to introduce themselves into the funerals of the faithful, lest we should oblige them in good earnest to wail over their own evils, and teach them not to do these things in the ills of others, but rather to weep for their own misfortunes. For an affectionate father too, when he has a disorderly son, not only advises him not to draw near to the wicked, but puts them in fear also. Behold then, I advise you, and those women through you, that you do not invite such persons, and that they do not attend. And may God grant that my words may produce some effect, and that my threat may avail. But if (which God forbid) we should be disregarded, we have no choice henceforward but to put our threat into execution, chastising you by the laws of the Church, and those women as befits them.

Now if any man is obstinate and contemptuous, let him hear Christ saying even now, "If any one trespass against thee, go, tell him his fault between thee and him alone"; but if he will not be persuaded, "take with thee one or two." But if even so he contradict, "tell it to the Church, but if he shall also refuse to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." (Matthew 18:15, 16, 17) Now if when a man trespasses against me, and will not be persuaded, [the Lord] commands me thus to turn away from him, judge ye in what light I ought to hold him who trespasses against himself, and against God. For do not you yourselves condemn us when we come down so gently upon you?

If however any man disregard the bonds which we inflict, again let Christ instruct him, saying, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 18:18) For though we ourselves be miserable and good for

nothing and worthy to be despised, as indeed we are; yet are we not avenging ourselves nor warding off anger, but are caring for your salvation.

Be influenced by reverence, I beseech you, and respect. For if a man bear with a friend when he attacks him more vehemently than he ought, ascertaining his object, and that he does it with kind intention, and not out of insolence; much more [should he bear with] a teacher when rebuking him, and a teacher who does not himself say these things as of authority, nor as one in the position of a ruler, but in that of a kindly guardian. For we do not say these things as wishing to exhibit our authority, (for how could we, praying that we may never come to the trial of them?) but grieving and lamenting for you.

Forgive me then, and let no man disregard the bonds of the Church. For it is not man who binds, but Christ who has given unto us this authority, and makes men lords of this so great dignity. For we indeed wish to use this power for loosing; or rather, we wish to have no need even of that, for we wish that there should not be any bound among us — we are not so miserable and wretched [as that] even though some of us are extreme good-for-nothings. If however we be compelled [so to act], forgive us. For it is not of our own accord, nor wishing it, but rather out of sorrow for you that are bound that we put the chains around you. But if any man despise these chains, the time of judgment will come, which shall teach him. And what comes after I do not wish to speak of, lest I should wound your minds. For in the first place indeed we do not wish to be brought into this necessity; but if we are so brought, we fulfill our own part, we cast around the chains. And if any man burst through them, I have done my part, and am henceforth free from blame, and thou wilt have to give account to Him who commanded me to bind.

For neither, when a king is sitting in public, if any of the guard who stand beside him be commanded to bind one of the attendants, and to put the chains around [him], and he should not only thrust this man away, but also break the bonds in pieces, is it the guard who suffers the insult, and not much more the King who gave the order. For if He claim as His own, the things which are done to the faithful, much more will He feel as if Himself insulted when he is insulted who has been appointed to teach.

But God grant that none of those who are over this Church should be driven to the necessity of [inflicting] these bonds. For as it is a good thing not to sin, so is it profitable to endure reproof. Let us then endure the rebuke, and earnestly endeavor not to sin; and if we should sin let us bear the rebuke. For as it is an excellent thing not to be wounded, but, if this should happen, to apply the remedy to the wound, so also in this case.

But God forbid that any man should need such remedies as these. “But we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.” (c. 6:9) But we have discoursed more vehemently for the sake of greater security. For it is better that I should be suspected by you of being a harsh, and severe, and self-willed person, than that you should do things not approved of God. But we trust in God, that this reproof will not be unserviceable to you, but that ye will be so changed, that these discourses may be devoted to encomiums on you and to praises: that we may all be counted worthy to attain to those good things, which God hath promised to them that love Him in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost be glory, might, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 5

HEBREWS 2:16, 17

"For verily He taketh not hold of Angels, but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold. Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren."

[1.] PAUL wishing to show the great kindness of God towards man, and the Love which He had for the human race, after saying: "Forasmuch then as the children were partakers of blood and flesh, He also Himself likewise took part of the same" (c. 5:14) — follows up the subject in this passage. For do not regard lightly what is spoken, nor think this merely a slight [matter], His taking on Him our flesh. He granted not this to Angels; "For verily He taketh not hold of Angels, but of the seed of Abraham." What is it that he saith? He took not on Him an Angel's nature, but man's. But what is "He taketh hold of"? He did not (he means) grasp that nature, which belongs to Angels, but ours. But why did he not say, "He took on Him," but used this expression, "He taketh hold of"? It is derived from the figure of persons pursuing those who turn away from them, and doing everything to overtake them as they flee, and to take hold of them as they are bounding away. For when human nature was fleeing from Him, and fleeing far away (for we "were far off" — Ephesians 2:13), He pursued after and overtook us. He showed that He has done this only out of kindness, and love, and tender care. As then when he saith, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (c. 1:14) — he shows His extreme interest in behalf of human nature, and that God makes great account of it, so also in this place he sets it forth much more by a comparison, for he says, "He taketh not hold of angels." For in very deed it is a great and a wonderful thing, and full of amazement that our flesh should sit on high, and be adored by Angels and Archangels, by the Cherubim and the Seraphim. For myself having oftentimes thought upon this, I am amazed at it, and imagine to myself great things concerning the human race. For I see that the introductions are great and splendid, and that God has great zeal on behalf of our nature.

Moreover he said not “of men (simply) He taketh hold,” but wishing to exalt them [the Hebrews] and to show that their race is great and honorable, he says, “but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold.”

“Wherefore it behooved [Him] in all things to be made like unto His brethren.” What is this, “in all things”? He was born (he means), was brought up, grew, suffered all things necessary, at last He flied. This is, “in all things to be made like unto His brethren.” For after he had discoursed much concerning His majesty and the glory on high, he then begins concerning the dispensation. And consider with how great power [he doth this,]. How he represents Him as having great zeal to be made like unto us”: which was a sign of much care. For having said above, “Inasmuch then as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner took part of the same”; in this place also he says, “in all things to be made like unto His brethren.” Which is all but saying, He that is so great, He that is “the brightness of His glory,” He that is “the express image of His person,” He that “made the worlds,” He that “sitteth on the right hand of the Father,” He was willing and earnest to become our brother in all things, and for this cause did He leave the angels and the other powers, and come down to us, and took hold of us, and wrought innumerable good things. He destroyed Death, He cast out the devil from his tyranny, He freed us from bondage: not by brotherhood alone did He honor us, but also in other ways beyond number. For He was willing also to become our High Priest with the Father: for he adds,

[2.] “That He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God.” For this cause (he means) He took on Him our flesh, only for Love to man, that He might have mercy upon us. For neither is there any other cause of the economy, but this alone. For He saw us, cast on the ground, perishing, tyrannized over by Death, and He had compassion on us. “To make reconciliation,” he says,” for the sins of the people. That He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest.”

What is “faithful”? True, able. For the Son is a faithful High Priest, able to deliver from their sins those whose High Priest He is. In order then that He might offer a sacrifice able to purify us, for this cause He has become man.

Accordingly he added, “in things pertaining to God,” — that is, for the sake of things in relation to God. We were become altogether enemies to God, (he would say) condemned, degraded, there was none who should offer sacrifice for us. He saw us in this condition, and had compassion on us, not appointing a High Priest for us, but Himself becoming a High Priest. In what sense He was “faithful,” he added [viz.], “to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”

Verse 18. *“For,” he says, “in that He hath suffered Himself being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.”*

This is altogether low and mean, and unworthy of God. “For in that He hath suffered Himself,” he says. It is of Him who was made flesh that he here speaks, and it was said for the full assurance of the hearers, and on account of their weakness. That is (he would say) He went through the very experience of the things which we have suffered; “now” He is not ignorant of our sufferings; not only does He know them as God, but as man also He has known them, by the trial wherewith He was tried; He suffered much, He knows how to sympathize. And yet God is incapable of suffering: but he describes here what belongs to the Incarnation, as if he had said, Even the very flesh of Christ suffered many terrible things. He knows what tribulation is; He knows what temptation is, not less than we who have suffered, for He Himself also has suffered.

(What then is this, “He is able to succor them that are tempted”? It is as if one should say, He will stretch forth His hand with great eagerness, He will be sympathizing.)

[3.] Since they wished for something great, and to have an advantage over the [converts] from the Gentiles, he shows that they have an advantage in this while he did not hurt those from the Gentiles at all. In what respect now is this? Because of them is the salvation, because He took hold of them first, because from that race He assumed flesh. “For,” he says, “He taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold.” Hereby he both gives honor to the Patriarch, and shows also what “the seed of Abraham” is. He reminds them of the promise made to him, saying, “To thee and to thy seed will I give this land” (Genesis 13:15); showing by the very least thing, the nearness [of the relationship] in that they were “all of one.” But that nearness was not great: [so] he comes

back to this, and thenceforward dwells upon the dispensation which was after the flesh, and says, Even the mere willing to become than was a proof of great care and love; but now it is not this alone, but there are also the undying benefits which are bestowed on us through Him, for, he says, "to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

Why said he not, of the world, instead of" the people"? for He bare away the sins of all. Because thus far his discourse was concerning them [the Hebrews]. Since the Angel also said to Joseph, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people." (Matthew 1:21) For this too ought to have taken place first, and for this purpose He came, to save them and then through them the rest, although the contrary came to pass. This also the Apostles said at the first, "To you [God] having raised up His Son, sent [Him] to bless you" (Acts 3:26): and again, "To you was the word of this Salvation sent." (Acts 13:26) Here he shows the noble birth of the Jews, in saying, "to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." For a while he speaks in this way. For that it is He who forgives the sins of all men, He declared both in the case of the paralytic, saying, "Thy sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5); and also in that of Baptism: for He says to the disciples, "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matthew 28:19)

[4.] But when Paul has once taken in hand the flesh, he proceeds to utter all the lowly things, without any fear: for see what he says next:

Chapter 3:1, 2. *"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him that appointed [or made] Him, as also Moses [was faithful] in all His house."*

Being about to place Him before Moses in comparison, he led his discourse to the law of the high-priesthood; for they all had a high esteem for Moses: moreover, he is already beforehand casting down the seeds of the superiority. Therefore he begins from the flesh, and goes up to the Godhead, where there was no longer any comparison. He began from the flesh [from His Human nature], by assuming for a time the equality, and says, "as also Moses in all His house": nor does he at first show His superiority lest the hearer should start away, and straightway stop his ears. For although they were believers, yet nevertheless they still had

strong feeling of conscience as to Moses. “Who was faithful,” he says, “to Him that made Him” — made [Him] what? “Apostle and High Priest.” He is not speaking at all in this place of His Essence, nor of His Godhead; but so far concerning human dignities.

“As also Moses in all His house,” that is, either among the people, or in the temple. But here he uses the expression “in His house,” just as one might say, concerning those in the household; even as some guardian and steward of a household, so was Moses to the people. For that by “house” he means the people, he added, “whose house we are” (c. 3:6); that is, we are in His creation, Then [comes] the superiority.

Verse 3. *“For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses,”*

(Again [he is speaking] of the Flesh), “inasmuch as he who hath builded [the house] hath more honor than the house “; [Moses] himself also (he means) was of the house. (Moreover he did not say, For this one was a servant, but the Other a master, but he covertly intimated it.) If the people were the house and he was of the people, then he certainly was of the household. For so also we are accustomed to say, such an one is of such an one’s house. For here he is speaking of a house, not of the temple, for the temple was not constructed by God, but by men. But He that made him [is] God. Moses he means. And see how he covertly shows the superiority. “Faithful,” he says, “in all His house,” being himself also of the house, that is, of the people. The builder has more honor than the house, yet he did not say “the artificer hath more honor than his works,” but “he that hath builded the house, than the house.” (Verse 4) “But He that built all things is God.” Thou seest that he is speaking not about the temple but about the whole people.

Verse 5. *“And Moses verily [was] faithful in all His house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken.”*

See also another point of superiority, that [which is derived] from the Son and the servants. You see again that by the appellation of The Son, he intimates true relationship.

Verse 6 *“But Christ as a Son over His own house.”*

Perceivest thou how he separates the thing made and the maker, the servant and the son? Moreover He indeed enters into His Father's property as a master, but the other as a servant.

"Whose" [i.e.] God's "house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Here again he encourages them to press forward nobly, and not to fall: for we shall be the "house" of God (he says), as Moses was, "if we hold fist our confidence and our rejoicing firm unto the end." He however (he would say) that is distressed in his trials, and who falls, doth not glory: he that is ashamed, he that hideth himself, has no confidence, he that is perplexed doth not glory.

And then he also commends them, saying, "if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end," implying that they had even made a beginning; but that there is need of the end, and not simply to stand, but to have their hope firm "in full assurance of faith," without being shaken by their trials.

[5.] And be not astonished, that the [words] "Himself being tempted" (c. 2:18) are spoken more after the manner of men. For if the Scripture says of the Father, who was not made flesh, "The Lord looked down from heaven, and beheld all the sons of men" (Psalm 14:2), that is, accurately acquainted Himself with all things; and again, "I will go down, and see whether they do altogether according to the cry of them" (Genesis 18:21); and again, "God cannot endure the evil ways of men" (Genesis 6:5?), the divine Scripture shows forth the greatness of His wrath: much more, who even suffered in the flesh, these things are said of Christ. For since many men consider experience the most reliable means of knowledge, he wishes to show that He that has suffered knows what human nature suffers.

"Whence holy brethren" (he says "whence" instead of "for this cause"), "partakers of an heavenly calling" — (seek nothing here, if ye have been called yonder — yonder is the reward, yonder the recompense. What then?) "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him that appointed Him, as also Moses [was faithful] in all His house." (What is "who was faithful to Him that appointed Him?" it is, well disposed, protecting what belongs to Him, not allowing them to be lightly carried away, "as also Moses in all His house ") that is, know who your High Priest is, and what He is, and ye will need

no other consolation nor encouragement. Now he calls Him “Apostle,” on account of His having been “sent,” and “high priest of our profession,” that is of the Faith. This One also was entrusted with a people, as the other with the leadership of a people, but a greater one and upon higher grounds.

“For a testimony of those things which shall be spoken.” What meanest thou? Doth God receive the witness of man? Yes, certainly. For if He call to witness heaven and earth and hills (saying by the prophet, “Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken” — Isaiah 1:2 — and “Hear ye ravines, foundations of the earth, for the Lord hath a controversy with His people” — Micah 6:2), much more men; that is, that they may be witnesses, when themselves [the Jews] shameless.

Verse 6. *“But Christ as a Son.”*

The one takes care of the property of others, but this One of His own. “And the rejoicing of the hope.” Well said he “of the hope.” For since the good things were all in hope, and yet we ought so “to hold it fast,” as even now to glory as for things which had already come to pass: for this cause he says, “the rejoicing of the hope.”

And adds, “let us hold it firm unto the end.” (Romans 8:24) For “by hope we are saved”; if therefore “we are saved by hope,” and “are. waiting with patience” (Romans 8:25), let us not be grieved at present things, nor seek now those that have been promised afterwards; “For” (he says) “hope which is seen is not hope.” For since the good things are great, we cannot receive them here in this transitory life. With what object then did He even tell us of them beforehand, when He was not about to give them here? In order that by the promise He might refresh our souls, that by the engagement He might strengthen our zeal, that He might anoint [preparing us for our contests] and stir up our mind. For this cause then all these things were done.

[6.] Let us not then be troubled, let no man be troubled, when he seeth the wicked prospering. The recompense is not here, either of wickedness or of virtue; and if in any instance there be either of wickedness or of virtue, yet is it not according to desert, but merely as it were a taste of the judgment, that they who believe not the resurrection may yet even by things that

happen here be brought to their senses. When then we see a wicked man rich, let us not be cast down; when we see a good man suffering, let us not be troubled. For yonder are the crowns, yonder the punishments.

Yea and in another point of view, it is not possible either that a bad man should be altogether bad, but he may have some good things also: nor again that a good man should be altogether good, but he may also have some sins. When therefore the wicked man prospers, it is for evil on his own head, that having here received the reward of those few good things, he may hereafter be utterly punished yonder; for this cause does he receive his recompense in this life. And happy is he most of all who is punished here, that having put away all his sins, he may depart approved, and pure, and without having to be called to account. And this Paul teacheth us when he says, "For this cause many [are] weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." (1 Corinthians 11:30) And again, "I have delivered such an one to Satan." (1 Corinthians 5:5) And the prophet says, "for she hath received of the Lord's hand her sins double" (Isaiah 40:2); and again David, "Behold mine enemies that they are multiplied above the hairs of my head? and [with] an unjust hatred have they hated me": "and forgive Thou all my sins." (Psalm 25:19, 18) And again another: "O Lord, our God, give peace unto us; for Thou hast rendered all things to us again." (Isaiah 26:12)

These however are [the words] of one showing that good men receive here the punishments of their sins. But where are the wicked [mentioned] who receive their good things here, and there are utterly punished? Hear Abraham saying to the rich man, "Thou didst receive good things," and "Lazarus evil things." (Luke 16:25) What good things? For in this place by saying "thou receivest," and not thou "hadst taken," he shows that it was according to what was due to him that each was treated, and that the one was in prosperity, and the other in adversity. And he says, "Therefore he is comforted" here (for thou seest him pure from sins) "and thou art tormented." Let us not then be perplexed when we see sinners well off here; but when we ourselves are afflicted, let us rejoice. For this very thing is paying off the penalty of sins.

[7.] Let us not then seek relaxation: for Christ promised tribulation to His disciples and Paul says, "All Who will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." (2 Timothy 3:12) No noble-spirited wrestler, when in

the lists, seeks for baths, and a table full of food and wine. This is not for a wrestler, but for a sluggard. For the wrestler contendeth with dust, with oil, with the heat of the sun's ray, with much sweat, with pressure and constraint. This is the time for contest and for fighting, therefore also for being wounded, and for being bloody and in pain. Hear what the blessed Paul says, "So fight I, not as one that beateth the air." (1 Corinthians 9:26) Let us consider that our whole life is in combats, and then we shall never seek rest, we shall never feel it strange when we are afflicted: no more than a boxer feels it strange, when he combats. There is another season for repose. By tribulation we must be made perfect.

And even if there be no persecution, nor tribulation, yet there are other afflictions which befall us every day. And if we do not bear these, we should scarcely endure those. "There hath no temptation taken you," it is said, "but such as is common to man." (1 Corinthians 10:13) Let us then pray indeed to God that we may not come into temptation; but if we come into it, let us bear it nobly. For that indeed is the part of prudent men, not to throw themselves upon dangers; but this of noble men and true philosophers. Let us not then lightly cast ourselves upon [dangers], for that is rashness; nor yet, if led into them, and called by circumstances let us give in, for that is cowardice. But if indeed the Gospel call us, let us not refuse; but in a simple case, when there is no reason, nor need, nor necessity which calls us in 'the fear of God, let us not rush in. For this is mere display, and useless ambition. But should any of those things which are injurious to religion occur, then though it be necessary to endure ten thousand deaths, let us refuse nothing. Challenge not trials, when thou findest the things that concern godliness prosper as thou desirest. Why draw down needless dangers which bring no gain?

These things I say, because I wish you to observe the laws of Christ who commands us to "pray that we enter not into temptation" (Matthew 26:41), and commands us to "take up the cross and follow" Him. (Matthew 16:24) For these things are not contradictory, may they are rather exceedingly in harmony. Do thou be so prepared as is a valiant soldier, be continually in thine armor, sober, watchful, ever looking for the enemy: do not however breed wars, for this is not [the act] of a soldier but of a mover of sedition. But if on the other hand the trumpet of godliness call thee, go forth immediately, and make no account of thy life, and enter

with great eagerness into the contests, break the phalanx of the adversaries, bruise the face of the devil, set up thy trophy. If however godliness be in nowise harmed, and no one lay waste our doctrines (those I mean which relate to the soul), nor compel us to do anything displeasing to God, do not be officious.

The life of the Christian must be full of blood-sheddings; I say not in shedding that of others, but in readiness to shed one's own. Let us then pour out our own blood, when it is for Christ's sake, with as great readiness as one would pour out water (for the blood which flows about the body is water), and let us put off our flesh with as much good temper, as one even would a garment. And this shall we do, if we be not bound to riches, if not to houses, if not to affections, if we be detached from all things. For if they who live this life of [earthly] soldiers bid farewell to all things, and whithersoever war calls them there present themselves, and make journeys, and endure all things with ready mind; much more ought we, the soldiers of Christ, so to have prepared ourselves, and to set ourselves firm against the war of the passions.

[8.] There is no persecution now, and God grant there may never be: but there is another war, that of the desire of money, of envy, of the passions. Paul, describing this war, says, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood." (Ephesians 6:12) This war is ever at hand. Therefore he wishes us to stand ever armed. Because he wishes us to stand ever armed, he says, "Stand, having girded yourselves about." (Ephesians 6:14) Which itself also belongs to the time present, and expresses that we ought ever to be armed. For great is the war through the tongue, great that through the eyes; this then we must keep down — great [too] is that of the lusts.

Therefore he begins at that point to arm the soldier of Christ: for" stand," saith he, "having your loins girt about," and he added "with truth." (Ephesians 6:14) Why "with truth"? Because lust is a mockery and a lie: wherefore the prophet says, "My loins are filled with mockings." (Psalm 38:7) The thing is not pleasure, but a shadow of pleasure. "Having your loins," he says, "girt about with truth"; that is, with true pleasure, with temperance, with orderly behavior. For this cause he gives this advice, knowing the unreasonableness of sin, and wishing that all our members

should be hedged round; for “unjust anger.” it is said, “shall not be guiltless.” (Ecclus. 1:22)

Moreover he wishes us to have around us a breastplate and a buckler. For desire is a wild beast which easily springs forth, and we shall have need of walls and fences innumerable, to overcome, and to restrain it. And for this cause God has built this part [of our body] especially with bones, as with a kind of stones, placing around it a support, so that [desire] might not at any time, having broken or cut through, easily injure the whole man. For it is a fire (it is said) and a great tempest, and no other part of the body could endure this violence. And the sons of the physicians too say that for this cause the lungs have been spread under the heart, so that the heart being itself [put] into something soft and tender, by beating as it were into a sort of sponge, may continually be rested, and not [by striking] against the resisting and hard sternum, receive hurt through the violence of its beatings. We have need therefore of a strong breastplate, so as to keep this wild beast alway quiet.

We have need also of an helmet; for since the reasoning faculty is there, and from this it is possible for us either to be saved, when what is right is done, or it is possible for us to be ruined — therefore he says, “the helmet of salvation.” (Ephesians 6:17) For the brain is indeed by nature tender, and therefore is covered above with the skull, as with a kind of shell. And it is to us the cause of all things both good and evil, knowing what is fitting, or what is not so. Yea and our feet too and our hands need armor, not these hands, nor these feet, but as before those of the soul — the former by being employed about what is right, the latter, that they may walk where they ought. Thus then let us thoroughly arm ourselves, and we shall be able to overcome our enemies, and to wreathe ourselves with the crown in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost be glory, might, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 6

HEBREWS 3:7-11

"Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart, and they have not known My ways. So I swear in My wrath they shall not enter into My rest."

[1.] PAUL, having treated of hope, and having said that "We are His house, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (c. 3 verse 6); next shows that we ought to look forward with firmness, and he proves this from the Scriptures. But be attentive, because he has expressed this in a manner somewhat difficult and not readily to be comprehended. And therefore we must first make our own statements, and after we have briefly explained the whole argument, then make clear the words of the Epistle. For you will no longer need us, if you have understood the scope of the Apostle.

His discourse was concerning Hope, and that it behooves us to hope for the things to come, and that for those who have toiled here there will assuredly be some reward and fruit and refreshment. This then he shows from the prophet; and what says he? "Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, they do alway err in their heart, and they have not known My ways. So I swear in My wrath, they shall not enter into My rest."

He says that there are "three" rests: one, that of the Sabbath, in which God rested from His works; the second, that of Palestine, into which when the Jews had entered they would be at rest from their hardships and labors; the third, that which is Rest indeed, the kingdom of Heaven; which

those who obtain, do indeed rest from their labors and troubles. Of these three then he makes mention here.

And why did he mention the three, when he is treating of the one only? That he might show that the prophet is speaking concerning this one. For he did not speak (he says) concerning the first. For how could he, when that had taken place long before? Nor vet again concerning the second, that in Palestine. For how could he? For he says," They shall not enter into My rest." It remains therefore that it is this third.

[2.] But it is necessary also to unfold the history, to make the argument more clear. For when they had come forth out of Egypt, and had accomplished a long journey, and had received innumerable proofs of the power of God, both in Egypt, and in the Red Sea (cf. Acts 7:36), and in the wilderness, they determined to send spies to search out the nature of the land; and these went and returned, admiring indeed the country, and saying that it abounded in noble fruits, nevertheless it was a country of strong and invincible men: and the ungrateful and senseless Jews, when they ought to have called to mind the former blessings of God, and how when they were hemmed in the midst of the armies of so many Egyptians, He rescued them from their perils, and made them masters of their enemies' spoils; and again, in the wilderness He clave the rock, and bestowed on them abundance of waters, and gave them the manna, and the other wonderful things which He wrought; [when they ought, I say, to have remembered this,] and to have trusted in God, they considered none of these things, but being struck with terror, just as if nothing had been done, they said, we wish to go back again into Egypt, "for God hath brought us out thither" (it is said) "to slay us, with our children and wives." (Cf. Numbers 14:3) God therefore being angry that they had so quickly cast off the memory of what had been done, swear that generation, which had said these things, should not enter into the Rest; and they all perished in the wilderness. When David then, he says, speaking at a later period, and after these events, after that generation of men, said, "Today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts," that ye may not suffer the same things which your forefathers did, and be deprived of the Rest; he evidently [said this] as of some [future] rest. For if they had received their Rest (he says) why does He again say to them, "Today if ye will hear His voice harden not your hearts," as your fathers did? What other

rest then is there, except the kingdom of Heaven, of which the Sabbath was an image and type?

[3.] Next having set down the whole testimony (and this is, "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart, and they have not known My ways. So I swear in My wrath, they shall not enter into My rest"), he then adds:

Verse 12. *"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God."*

For from hardness unbelief ariseth: and as in bodies, the parts that have become callous and hard do not yield to the hands of the physicians, so also souls that are hardened yield not to the word of God. For it is probable besides that some even disbelieved as though the things which had been done were not true.

Therefore he says, "Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing From the living God." For since the argument from the future is not so persuasive as from the past, he reminds them of the history, in which they had wanted faith. For if your fathers (he says) because they did not hope as they ought to have hoped, suffered these things, much more will you. Since to them also is this word addressed: for, "Today" (he says) is "ever," so long as the world lasts.

[4.] **Verse 13.** Wherefore *"exhort ye one another daily, while it is called today."* That is, edify one another, raise yourselves up: lest the same things should befall you. "Lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." Seest thou that sin produces unbelief? For as unbelief brings forth an evil life, so also a soul, "when it is come into a depth of evils, becometh contemptuous" (Proverbs 18:3), and having become contemptuous it endures not even to believe, in order thereby to free itself from fear. For "they said" (one says), "The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard." (Psalm 94:7) And again, "Our lips are our own: who is Lord over us?" (Psalm 12:4); and again "Wherefore hath the wicked man provoked God to wrath?" (Psalm 10:13); and again, "The fool

hath said in his heart, there is no God; they are corrupt and become abominable in their doings." (Psalm 14:1) "There is no fear of God before his eyes, for he was deceitful before Him, to find out his iniquity and to hate." (Psalm 36:1, 2) Yea and Christ also says this same thing, "Every one that doeth evil, hateth the light and cometh not to the light." (John 3:20)

Then he adds (verse 14), "For we have been made partakers of Christ." What is this, "We have been made partakers of Christ"? We partake of Him (he means); we were made One, we and He — since He is the Head and we the body, "fellow-heirs and of the same body; we are one body, of His flesh and of His bones." (Ephesians 3:6; Romans 12:5; Ephesians 5:30)

"If we hold fast the beginning of our confidence [or, the principle of our subsistence] steadfast unto the end." What is "the principle of our subsistence "? The faith by which we stand, and have been brought into being and were made to exist, as one may say.

[5.] Then he adds (verse 15), "When it is said, Today if ye hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation." This is a transposition, "when it is said, Today if ye hear His voice, harden not your hearts." [It must be read thus:]

Chapter 4:1, 2 "*Let us fear Jest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it; for to us was the Gospel preached as well as unto them when it is said, Today if ye hear His voice*" (for "Today" is "at every time").

Then [he adds] "but the word of hearing did not profit them, as they were not mixed by faith with them that heard." How did it not profit? Then wishing to alarm them, he shows the same thing by what he says:

Chapter 3:16-19 "*For some when they had heard did provoke, howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses: And with whom was He grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom swear He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not? So we see, that they could not enter in because of unbelief."* After again repeating the testimony, he adds also the question, which makes the argument clear. For he said (he repeats),

“Today if ye hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.” Of whom does he speak (he says) [as] having been hardened? Of whom [as] not believing? Is it not of the Jews?

Now what he says is to this effect. They also heard, as we hear: but no profit came to them. Do not suppose then that by “hearing” what is proclaimed ye will be profited; seeing that they also heard, but derived no benefit because they did not believe.

Caleb then and Joshua, because they agreed not with those who did not believe, escaped the vengeance that was sent forth against them. And see how admirably he said, not, They did not agree, but, “they were not mixed” — that is, they stood apart, but not factiously when all the others had one and the same mind. Here it seems to me that a faction too is hinted at.

[6.] (Chapter 4:3) For “we who have believed,” he says, “do enter into rest.” From what this is evident, he adds: “as He said, as I have sworn in My wrath, if they shall enter into My rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.” This indeed, is not evidence that we shall enter in, but that they did not enter in. What then? Thus far he aims to show that as that rest does not hinder the speaking of another rest, so neither does this [exclude] that of Heaven. Up to this point then, he wishes to show that they [the Israelites] did not attain to the rest. For because he means this, he says (verse 4, 5), “For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all His works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into My rest.” Thou seest how that doth not hinder this from being a rest?

Verse 6, 7. *“Seeing therefore it remaineth”* (he says) “that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: again he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, Today, after so long a time; as it has been said before.” But what is it that he means? “Seeing then” (he means) that “some must” certainly “enter in,” and “they did not enter in.” And that an entrance is proclaimed, and that “some must enter in,” let us hear from what this is clear. Because after so many years (he says) David again says: “To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts” (verse 8), “For if Joshua had given them rest he

would not afterward have spoken of another day." It is evident, that he says these things, as of persons who are to attain some recompense.

[7.] Verse 9. *"There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God."* Whence [does this appear]? From the exhortation, "Harden not your hearts": for if there were no rest, these exhortations would not have been given. Neither would they have been exhorted not to do the same things [with the Jews] lest they should suffer the same things, unless they were about to suffer the same. But how were they who were in possession of Palestine about to suffer the same things [i.e. exclusion from the rest] unless there were some other rest?

And well did he conclude the argument. For he said not rest but "Sabbath-keeping"; calling the kingdom "Sabbath-keeping," by the appropriate name, and that which they rejoiced in and were attracted by. For as, on the Sabbath He commands to abstain from all evil things; and that those things only which relate to the Service of God should be done, which things the Priests were wont to accomplish, and whatsoever profits the soul, and nothing else; so also [will it be] then. However it is not he who spoke thus, but what? (Verse 10), "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God [did] from His." As God ceased from His works, he says, so he that hath entered into His rest [hath ceased]. For since his discourse to them was concerning rest, and they were desirous to hear when this would be, he concluded the argument with this.

[8.] And [he said] "Today," that they might never be without hope. "Exhort one another daily," he says, ["while it is called today,"'] that is, even if a man have sinned, as long as it is "Today," he has hope: let no man then despair so long as he lives. Above all things indeed, he says, "let there not be an evil heart of unbelief." (c. 3:12) But even suppose there should be, let no man despair, but let him recover himself; for as long as we are in this world, the "Today" is in season. But here he means not unbelief only, but also murmurings: "whose carcasses," he says, "fell' in the wilderness."

Then, lest any think that they will simply be deprived of rest only, he adds also the punishment, saying (c. 4:12), "For the Word of God is quick, and powerful; and sharper than any two-edged sword, and pierceth even

to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow: and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Here he is speaking of Hell and of punishment. "It pierceth" (he says) into the secrets of our heart, and cutteth asunder the soul. Here it is not the failing of carcasses nor, as there, the being deprived of a country, but of a heavenly kingdom; and being delivered to an everlasting hell, and to undying punishment and vengeance.

(Chapter 3:13) "But exhort one another." Observe the gentleness and mildness [of the expression]: he said not "Rebuke," but "Exhort." Thus we are required to bear ourselves towards those who are straightened by affliction. This he says also in writing to the Thessalonians, "Warn them that are unruly" (1 Thessalonians 5:14), but in speaking of the feeble-minded, not so, but what? "Comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men"; that is, do not cease to hope; do not despair. For he that does not encourage one who is straightened by affliction, makes him more hardened.

[9.] "Lest any of you," he says, "be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." He means either the deceit of the devil (for it is indeed a deceit, not to look for the things to come, to think that we are without responsibility, and that we shall not pay the penalty for our deeds here, neither will there be a resurrection); or in another sense insensibility [or] despairing is deceit. For to say, 'What is there left? I have sinned once for all, I have no hope of recovering myself,' is deceit.

Then he suggests hopes to them, saying (verse 14), "We are made partakers of Christ"; All but saying, He that so loved us, He that counted us worthy of so great things, as to make us His Body, will not suffer us to perish. Let us consider (he says) of what we have been thought worthy: we and Christ are One: let us not then distrust Him. And again, he hints at that which had been said in another place, that "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." (2 Timothy 2:12) For this is [implied in] "We are made partakers," we partake of the same things whereof Christ also partakes.

He urges them on from the good things; "for we are," he says, "partakers of Christ." Then, again, from gloomy ones (c. 4:1), "Let us fear, lest at any time a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." For that is manifest and confessed.

(Chapter 3:9) “They proved Me,” He says, “and saw My works forty years.” Seest thou that it is not right to call God to account, but whether He defend [our cause] or not, to trust Him? For against those [of old] he now brings this charge, that “they tempted God.” For he that will have proof either of His power, or of His providence, or of His tender care, does not yet believe, either that He is powerful or kind to man. This he hints also in writing to these [Hebrews] who probably already wished, in their trials, to obtain experience and positive evidence of His power and His providential care for them. Thou seest that in all cases the provocation and the angering arises from unbelief.

What then does he say? (c. 4:9) “There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God.” And see how he has summed up the whole argument. “He swear,” saith he, to those former ones, “that they should not enter into” the “rest,” and they did not enter in. Then long after-their time discoursing to the Jews, he says, “Harden not your hearts,” as your fathers, showing that there is another rest. For of Palestine we have not to speak: for they were already in possession of it. Nor can he be speaking of the seventh [day]; for surely he was not discoursing about that which had taken place long before. It follows therefore that he hints at some other, that which is rest indeed.

[10.] For that is indeed rest, where “pain, sorrow and sighing are fled away” (Isaiah 35:10): where there are neither cares, nor labors, nor struggle, nor fear stunning and shaking the soul; but only that fear of God which is full of delight. There is not, “In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat thy bread,” nor “thorns and thistles” (Genesis 3:19, 18); no longer, “In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and to thy husband shall be thy desire and he shall rule over thee.” (Genesis 3:16) All is peace, joy, gladness, pleasure, goodness, gentleness. There is no jealousy, nor envy, no sickness, no death whether of the body, or that of the soul. There is no darkness nor night; all [is] day, all light, all things are bright. It is not possible to be weary, it is not possible to be satiated: we shall always persevere in the desire of good things.

Would you that I should also give you some image of the condition there? It is impossible. But yet, so far as it is possible, I will try to give you some image. Let us look up into the heaven when without any intervening

cloud it shows forth its crown [of stars]. Then when we have dwelt long on the beauty of its appearance, let us think that we too shall have a pavement, not indeed such [as this], but as much more beautiful as the gold is than the clay, and [let us think] on the higher roof which is again beyond; then on the Angels, the Archangels, the infinite multitude of unbodied powers, the very palace of God itself, the Throne of the Father.

But language is too weak (as I said) to set forth the whole. Experience is necessary, and the knowledge which [cometh] by experience. Tell me, how was it (think you) with Adam in Paradise? This course of life is far better than that, as much as heaven [is better] than earth.

[11.] But however let us search after another image still. If it happened that he who now reigns was master of the whole world, and then was troubled neither by wars nor by cares, but was honored only and lived delicately; and had large tributes, and on every side gold flowed in to him, and he was looked up to, what feelings do you think he would have, if he saw that all the wars in all parts of the world had ceased? Something such as this will it be. But rather I have not even yet arrived at that image [which I seek]; therefore I must search after another too.

Consider then, I pray you: for as some royal child, so long as he is in the womb, has no sense of anything, but should it happen that he suddenly came forth from thence, and ascended the royal throne, not gradually, but all at once received possession of all things; so is it as regards this [present] and that [future] state. Or, if some captive, having suffered innumerable evils, should be caught up at once to the royal throne.

But not even thus have I attained to the image exactly. For here indeed whatever good things a person may obtain, even shouldst thou say the kingdom itself, during the first day indeed his desires are in full vigor, and for the second too, and the third, but as time goes on, he continues indeed to have pleasure, but not so great. For whatever it be, it always ceases from familiarity with it. But yonder it not Only does not diminish, but even increases. For consider how great a thing it is, that a soul after departing thither, should no longer look for an end of those good things, nor yet change, but increase, and life that has no end, and life set free from all danger, and from all despondency and care, full of cheerfulness and blessings innumerable.

For if when we go out into a plain, and there see the soldiers' tents fixed with curtains, and the spears, and helmets, and bosses of the bucklers glittering, we are lifted up with wonder; but if we also chance to see the king himself running in the midst or even riding with golden armor, we think we have everything; what thinkest thou [it will be] when thou seest the everlasting tabernacles of the saints pitched in heaven? (For it is said, "They shall receive you into their everlasting tabernacles" — Luke 16:9) when thou seest each one of them beaming with light above the rays of the sun, not from brass and steel, but from that glory whose gleamings the eye of man cannot look upon? And this indeed with respect to the men. But what, if one were to speak of the thousands of Angels, of Archangels, of Cherubim, of Seraphim, of thrones, of dominions, of principalities, of powers, whose beauty is inimitable, passing all understanding?

But how far shall I go in pursuing what cannot be overtaken? "For eye hath not seen," it is said, "nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." (1 Corinthians 2:9) Therefore nothing is more pitiable than those who miss, nor anything more blessed than those who attain. Let us then be of the blessed, that we may attain to the everlasting good things that are in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost be glory, might, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 7

HEBREWS 4:11-13

"Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. For the word of God is quick [i.e. living] and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

[1.] FAITH is indeed great and bringeth salvation, and without it, it is not possible ever to be saved. It suffices not however of itself to accomplish this, but there is need of a right conversation also. So that on this account Paul also exhorts those who had already been counted worthy of the mysteries; saying, "Let us labor to enter into that rest." "Let us labor" (he says), Faith not sufficing, the life also ought to be added thereto, and our earnestness to be great; for truly there is need of much earnestness too, in order to go up into Heaven. For if they who suffered so great distress in the Wilderness, were not counted worthy of [the promised] land, and were not able to attain [that] land, because they murmured and because they committed fornication: how shall we be counted worthy of Heaven, if we live carelessly and indolently? We then have need of much earnestness.

And observe, the punishment does not extend to this only, the not entering in (for he said not, "Let us labor to enter into the rest," lest we fail of so great blessings), but he added what most of all arouses men. What then is this? "Lest any man fall, after the same example of unbelief." What means this? It means that we should have our mind, our hope, our expectation, yonder, lest we should fail. For that [otherwise] we shall fail, the example shows, "lest [etc.] after the same," he says.

[2.] In the next place, lest hearing [the words] "after the same [example]," thou shouldest think that the punishment is the same, hear what he adds; "For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and pierceth even to the dividing asunder of soul and

spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." In these words he shows that He, the Word of God, wrought the former things also, and lives, and has not been quenched.

Do not then when hearing the Word, think of it lightly. For "He is sharper," he says, "than a sword." Observe His condescension; and hence consider why the prophets also needed to speak of saber and bow and sword. "If ye turn not," it is said, "He will whet His sword, He hath bent His bow and made it ready." (Psalm 7:12) For if now, after so long a time, and after their being perfected, He cannot smite down by the name of the WORD alone, but needs these expressions in order to show the superiority [arising] from the comparison [of the Gospel with the law]: much more then [of old].

"Piercing," he says, "even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit." What is this? He hinted at something more fearful. Either that He divides the spirit from the soul, or that He pierces even through them disembodied, not as a sword through bodies only. Here he shows, that the soul also is punished, and that it thoroughly searches out the most inward things, piercing wholly through the whole man.

"And is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight." In these words most of all he terrified them. For do not (he says) be confident if ye still stand fast in the Faith, but without full assurance. He judges the inner heart, for there He passes through, both punishing and searching out.

And why speak I of men? he says. For even if thou speak of Angels, of Archangels, of the Cherubim, of the Seraphim, even of any "creature" whatsoever: all things are laid open to that Eye, all things are clear and manifest; there is nothing able to escape it; "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him, with whom we have to do."

But what is "opened"? [It is] a metaphor from the skins which are drawn off from the victims. For as in that case, when a man has killed them, and has drawn aside the skin from the flesh, he lays open all the inward parts, and makes them manifest to our eyes; so also do all things lie open before God. And observe, I pray thee, how he constantly needs bodily images; which arose from the weakness of the hearers. For that they were weak, he

made plain, when he said that they were “dull,” and “had need of milk, not of strong meat.” “All things are naked,” he says, “and opened unto the eyes of Him, with whom we have to do.” c. 5:11, 12)

[3.] But what is, “after the same example of unbelief”? As if one should say, why did they of old not see the land? They had received an earnest of the power of God; they ought to have believed, but yielding too much to fear and imagining nothing great concerning God, and being faint-hearted, — so they perished. And there is also something more to be said, as, that after they had accomplished the most part of the journey, when they were at the very doors, at the haven itself, they were sunk into the sea. This I fear (he says) for you also. This is [the meaning of] “after the same example of unbelief.”

For that these also [to whom he is writing] had suffered much, he afterwards testifies, saying, “Call to mind the former days, in which after that ye had been enlightened, ye endured a great fight of afflictions.” (c. 10:32) Let no man then be faint-hearted, nor fall down near the end through weariness. For there are, there are those who at the beginning engage in the fight with the full vigor of zeal; but a little after, not being willing to add to all, they lose all. Your forefathers (he says) are sufficient to instruct you not to fall into the same [sins], not to suffer the same things which they suffered. This is, “After the same example of unbelief.” Let us not faint, he means (which he says also near the end [of the Epistle]. “Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees”): “lest any man,” he says, “fall after the same example.” (c. 12:12) For this is to fall indeed.

Then, lest when thou hearest, “any man fall after the same example,” thou shouldest conceive of the same death which they also underwent, see what he says: “For the Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword.” For the Word falls upon the souls of these [men] more severely than any sword, causing grievous wounds; and inflicts fatal blows. And of these things he need not give the proof, nor establish them by argument, having a history so fearful. For (he would say) what kind of war destroyed them? What sort of sword? Did they not fall simply of themselves? For let us not be careless because we have not suffered the

same things. While “it is called. Today,” it is in our power to recover ourselves.

For lest on hearing the things that belong to the soul we should grow negligent, he adds also what concerns the body. For then it is as a king, when his officers are guilty of some great fault, first strips them (say) of their command, and after depriving them of their belt, and their rank, and their herald, then punishes them: so also in this case the sword of the Spirit works.

[4.] Next he discourses of the Son, “with whom we have to do,” he says. What is “with whom we have to do”? To Him (he would say) we have to render account for the things we have done? Even so. How then [must we act] that we fall not, nor be faint-hearted?

These things indeed (he would say) are sufficient to instruct us. But we have also “a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.” Because he added [it], for this reason he went on, “For we have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” Therefore he said above, “In that He hath suffered Himself being tempted, He is able to succor them which are tempted.” See then how here also he does the same. And what he says is to this effect: He went (he says) the road which we also [are going] now, or rather even a more rugged one. For He had experience of all human [sufferings].

He had said above “There is no creature that is not manifest in His sight,” intimating His Godhead; then, since he had touched on the flesh, he again discourses more condescendingly, saying (verse 14), “Having then a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens”: and shows that His care is greater and that He protects them as His own, and would not have them fall away. For Moses indeed (he says) did not enter into the rest, while He [Christ] did enter in. And it is wonder fill how he has nowhere stated the same, lest they might seem to find an excuse; he however implied it, but that he might not appear to bring an accusation against the man, he did not say it openly. For if, when none of these things had been said, they yet brought forward these [charges], saying, This man hath spoken against Moses and against the law (see Acts 21:21, 28); much more, if he had said, It is not Palestine but Heaven, would they have said stronger things than these.

[5.] But he attributes not all to the Priest, but requires also what is [to come] from us, I mean our profession. For "having," he says, "a great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens, JESUS the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession" [or "confession"]. What sort of profession does he mean? That there is a Resurrection, that there is a retribution: that there are good things innumerable; that Christ is GOD, that the Faith is right. These things let us profess, these things let us hold fast. For that they are true, is manifest from the fact, that the High Priest is within. We have not failed of [our hopes], let us confess; although the realities are not present, yet let us confess: if already they were present they were but a lie. So that this also is true, that [our good things] are deferred. For our High Priest also is Great.

Verse 15. *"For we have not an High Priest, who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities."*

He is not (he means) ignorant of what concerns us, as many of the High Priests, who know not those in tribulations, nor that there is tribulation at any time. For in the case of men it is impossible that one should know the affliction of the afflicted who has not had experience, and gone through the actual sensations. Our High Priest endured all things. Therefore He endured first and then ascended, that He might be able to sympathize with us.

But was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Observe how both above he has used the word "in like manner," and here "after the likeness." (c. 2:14) That is, He was persecuted, was spit upon, was accused, was mocked at, was falsely informed against, was driven out, at last was crucified.

"After our likeness, without sin." In these words another thing also is suggested, that it is possible even for one in afflictions to go through them without sin. So that when he says also "in the likeness of flesh" (Romans 8:3), he means not that He took on Him [merely] "the likeness of flesh," but "flesh." Why then did he say "in the likeness"? Because he was speaking about" sinful flesh": for it was "like" our flesh, since in nature it was the same with us, but in sin no longer the same.

[6.] Verse 16. *"Let us come then boldly [with confidence] unto the throne of His grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."*

What "throne of grace" is he speaking of? that royal throne concerning which it is said, "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand." (Psalm 110:1)

What is "let us come boldly"? Because "we have a sinless High Priest" contending with the world. For, saith He, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33); for, this is to suffer all things, and yet to be pure from sins. Although we (he means) are under sin, yet He is sinless.

How is it that we should "approach boldly"? Because *now* it is a throne of Grace, not a throne of Judgment. Therefore boldly, "that we may obtain mercy," even such as we are seeking. For the affair is [one of] munificence, a royal largess.

"And may find grace to help in time of need [for help in due season]." He well said, "for help in time of need." If thou approach now (he means) thou wilt receive both grace and mercy, for thou approachest "in due season"; but if thou approach *then*, no longer [wilt thou receive it]. For *then* the approach is unseasonable, for it is not "then a throne of Grace." Till that time He sitteth granting pardon, but when the end [is come], then He riseth up to judgment. For it is said, "Arise, O God, judge the earth." (Psalm 82:8) ("Let us come boldly," or he says again having no "evil conscience," that is, not being in doubt, for such an one cannot "come with boldness.") On this account it is said, "I have heard thee in an accepted time and in a day of salvation have I succored thee." (2 Corinthians 6:2) Since even *now* for those to find repentance who sin after baptism is of grace.

But lest when thou hearest of an High Priest, thou shouldst think that He standeth, he forthwith leads to the throne. But a Priest doth not sit, but stands. Seest thou that [for Him] to be made High Priest, is not of nature," but of grace and condescension, and humiliation?

This is it seasonable for us also now to say, "Let us draw near" asking "boldly": let us only bring Faith and He gives all things. Now is the time

of the gift; let no man despair of himself. Then [will be] the time of despairing, when the bride-chamber is shut, when the King is come in to see the guests, when they who shall be accounted worthy thereof, shall have received as their portion the Patriarch's bosom: but now it is not as yet so. For still are the spectators assembled, still is the contest, still is the prize in suspense.

[7.] Let us then be earnest. For even Paul saith, "I so run not as uncertainly." (1 Corinthians 9:26) There is need of running, and of running vehemently. He that runneth [a race] seeth none of those that meet him; whether he be passing through meadows, or through dry places: he that runneth looketh not at the spectators, but at the prize. Whether they be rich or whether they be poor, whether one mock at him, or praise him, whether one insult, or cast stones at him, or plunder his house, whether he see children, or wife, or anything whatever. He is occupied in one thing alone, in running, in gaining the prize. He that runneth, never standeth still, since even if he slacken a little, he has lost the whole. He that runneth, not only slackens nothing before the end, but then even especially straineth his speed.

This have I spoken for those who say; In our younger days we used discipline, in our younger days we fasted, *now* we are grown old. *Now* most of all it behooves you to make your carefulness more intense. Do not count up to me the old things especially done well: be now youthful and vigorous. For he that runneth this bodily race, when gray hairs have overtaken him, probably is not able to run as he did before: for the whole contest depends on the body; but thou — wherefore dost thou lessen thy speed? For in this race there is need of a soul, a soul thoroughly awakened: and the soul is rather strengthened in old age; then it is in its full vigor, then is it in its pride.

For as the body, so long as it is oppressed by fevers and by one sickness after another, even if it be strong, is exhausted, but when it is freed from this attack, it recovers its proper force, so also the soul in youth is feverish, and is chiefly possessed by the love of glory, and luxurious living, and sensual lusts, and many other imaginations; but old age, when it comes on, drives away all these passions, some through satiety, some through philosophy. For old age relaxes the powers of the body, and does

not permit the soul to make use of them even if it wish, but repressing them as enemies of various kinds, it sets her in a place free from troubles and produces a great calm, and brings in a greater fear.

For if none else does, it is said, yet they who are grown old know, that they are drawing to their end, and that they certainly stand near to death. When therefore the desires of this life are withdrawing, and the expectation of the judgment-seat is coming on, softening the stubbornness of the soul, does it not become more attentive, if one be willing?

[8.] What then (you allege) when we see old men more intractable than young ones? Thou tellest me of an excess of wickedness. For in the case of madmen too, we see them going over precipices, when no man pushes them. When therefore, an old man has the diseases of the young, this is an excess of wickedness; besides not even in youth would such an one have an excuse: since he is not able to say, “Remember not the sins of my youth, and my ignorances.” (Psalm 25:7) For he who in old age remains the same, shows that even in youth, he was what he was not from ignorance, nor from inexperience, nor from the time of life, but from slothfulness. For that man may say, “Remember not the sins of my youth, and mine ignorances,” who does such things as become an old man, who changes in old age. But if even in age he continue the same unseemly courses, how can such an one be worthy of the name of an old man, who has no reverence even for the time of life? For he who says, “Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my ignorances,” utters this, as one doing right in his old age. Do not then, by the deeds of age, deprive thyself also of pardon for the sins of youth.

For how can what is done be otherwise than unreasonable, and beyond pardon? An old man sits in taverns. An old man hurries to horse-races--an old man goes up into theaters, running with the crowd like children. Truly it is a shame and a mockery, to be adorned outside with gray hairs, but within to have the mind of a child.

And indeed if a young man insult [him], he immediately puts forward his gray hairs. Reverence them first thyself; if however thou dost not reverence thy own even when old, how canst thou demand of the young to reverence them? Thou dost not reverence the gray hairs, but puttest them to shame. God hath honored thee with whiteness of hairs: He hath given

thee high dignity. Why dost thou betray the honor? How shall the young man reverence thee, when thou art more wanton than he? For the hoary head is then venerable, when it acts worthily of the gray head; but when it plays youth, it will be more ridiculous than the young. How then will you old men be able to give these exhortations to the young man when you are intoxicated by your disorderliness?

[9.] I say not these things as accusing the old, but the young. For in my judgment they who act thus even if they have come to their hundredth year, are young; just as the young if they be but little children, yet if they are sober-minded, are better than the old. And this doctrine is not my own, but Scripture also recognizes the same distinction. “For,” it says, “honorable age is not that which standeth in length of time, and an unspotted life is old age.” (Wisd. 4:8, 9)

For we honor the gray hair, not because we esteem the white color above the black, but because it is a proof of a virtuous life; and when we see them we conjecture therefrom the inward hoariness. But if men continue to do what is inconsistent with the hoary head, they will on that account become the more ridiculous. Since we also honor the Emperor, and the purple and the diadem, because they are symbols of his office. But if we should see him, with the purple, spitted on, trodden under foot by the guards, seized by the throat, cast into prison, torn to pieces, shall we then reverence the purple or the diadem, and not rather weep over the pomp itself? Claim not then to be honored for thy hoary head, when thou thyself wrongest it. For it ought indeed itself to receive satisfaction from thee, because thou bringest disgrace on a form so noble and so honorable.

We say not these things against all [old persons], nor is our discourse against old age simply (I am not so mad as that), but against a youthful spirit bringing dishonor on old age. Nor is it concerning those who are grown old that we sorrowfully say these things, but concerning those who disgrace the hoary head.

For the old man is a king, if you will, and more royal than he who wears the purple, if he master his passions, and keep them under subjection, in the rank of guards. But if he be dragged about and thrust down from his throne, and become a slave of the love of money, and vainglory, and personal adornment, and luxuriousness, and drunkenness, anger, and

sensual pleasures, and has his hair dressed out with oil, and shows an age insulted by his way of life, of what punishment would not such an one be worthy?

[10.] But may ye not be such, O young men! for not even for you is there the excuse for sinning. Why so? Because it is possible to be old in youth: just as there are youths in old age, so also the reverse. For as in the one case the white hair saves no one, so in the other the black is no impediment. For if it is disgraceful for the old man to do these things of which I have spoken, much more than for the young man, yet still the young man is not freed from accusation. For a young man can have an excuse only, in case he is called to the management of affairs, when he is still inexperienced, when he needs time and practice; but no longer when it is necessary to display temperance and courage, nor yet when it is needful to keep his property.

For it sometimes happens that the young man is blamed more than the old. For the one needs much service, old age making him feeble: but the other being able, if he will, to provide for himself, what sort of excuse should he meet with, when he plunders more than the old, when he remembers injuries, when he is contemptuous, when he does not stand forward to protect others more than the old man, when he utters many things unseasonably, when he is insolent, when he reviles, when he is drunken?

And if in the [matter of] chastity he think that he cannot be impleaded, consider that here also he has many helps, if he will. For although desire trouble him more violently than it doth the old, yet nevertheless there are many things which he can do more than an old man, and so charm that wild beast. What are these things? Labors, readings, watchings through the night, fastings.

[11.] What then are these things to us (one says) who are not monastics? Sayest thou this to me? Say it to Paul, when he says, “Watching with all perseverance and supplication” (Ephesians 6:18), when he says, “Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.” (Romans 13:14) For surely he wrote not these things to solitaries only, but to all that are in cities. For ought the man who lives in the world to have any advantage over the solitary, save only the living with a wife? In this point he has

allowance, but in others none, but it is his duty to do all things equally with the solitary.

Moreover the Beatitudes [pronounced] by Christ, were not addressed to solitaries only: since in that case the whole world would have perished, and we should be accusing God of cruelty. And if these beatitudes were spoken to solitaries only, and the secular person cannot fulfill them, yet He permitted marriage, then He has destroyed all men. For if it be not possible, with marriage, to perform the duties of solitaries, all things have perished and are destroyed, and the [functions] of virtue are shut up in a strait.

And, how can marriage be honorable, which so hinders us? What then? It is possible, yea very possible, even if we have wives, to pursue after virtue, if we will. How? If having “wives,” we “be as though we had none,” if we rejoice not over our “possessions,” if we “use the world as not abusing it.” (1 Corinthians 7:29, 31)

And if any persons have been hindered by marriage state, let them know that marriage is not the hindrance, but their purpose which made an ill use of marriage. Since it is not wine which makes drunkenness, but the evil purpose, and the using it beyond due measure. Use marriage with moderation, and thou shall be first in the kingdom, and shalt enjoy all good things, which may we all attain by the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost be glory, might, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 8

HEBREWS 5:1-3

For every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity; and by reason hereof he ought, as for the people so also for himself to offer for sins."

[1.] THE blessed Paul wishes to show in the next place that this covenant is far better than the old. This then he does by first laying down remote considerations. For inasmuch as there was nothing bodily or that made a show, no temple for instance, nor Holy of Holies, nor Priest with so great apparel, no legal observances, but all things higher and more perfect, and there was nothing of bodily things, but all was in things spiritual, and things spiritual did not attract the weak, as things bodily; he thoroughly sifts this whole matter.

And observe his wisdom: he makes his beginning from the priest first, and continually calls Him an High Priest, and from this first [point] shows the difference [of the two Dispensations]. On this account he first of all defines what a Priest is, and shows whether He has any things proper to a Priest, and whether there are any signs of priesthood. It was however an objection in his way that He [Christ] was not even well-born, nor was He of the sacerdotal tribe, nor a priest on earth. How then was He a Priest? some one may say.

And just as in the Epistle to the Romans having taken up an argument of which they were not easily persuaded, that Faith effects that which the labor of the Law could not, nor the sweat of the daily life, he betook himself to the Patriarch and referred the whole [question] to that time: so now here also he opens out the other path of the Priesthood, showing its superiority from the things which happened before. And as, in [the matter of] punishment, he brings before them not Hell alone, but also what happened to their fathers, so now here also, he first establishes this position from things present. For it were right indeed that earthly things

should be proved from heavenly, but when the hearers are weak, the opposite course is taken.

[2.] Up to a certain point he lays down first the things which are common [to Christ and their High Priests], and then shows that He is superior. For comparative excellence arises thus, when in some respects there is community, in others superiority; otherwise it is no longer comparative.

"For every High Priest taken from among men," this is common to Christ; "is ordained for men in things pertaining to God," and this also; "that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for the people," and this too, [yet] not entirely: what follows however is no longer so: "who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way," from this point forward is the superiority, "inasmuch as himself also is encompassed with infirmity; and by reason hereof he ought as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins."

Then also [there are] other [points]: He is made [Priest] (he says) by Another and does not of Himself intrude into [the office]. This too is common (verse 4), "And no man taketh this honor to himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron."

Here again he conciliates them in another point, because He was sent from God: which Christ was wont to say throughout to the Jews. "He that sent Me is greater than I," and, "I came not of Myself." (John 12:49; 14:28; 8:42)

He appears to me in these words also to hint at the priests of the Jews, as being no longer priests, [but] intruders and corrupters of the law of the priesthood; (verse 5) "So Christ also glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest."

How then was He appointed (one says)? For Aaron was many times appointed as by the Rod, and when the fire came down and destroyed those who wished to intrude into the priesthood. But in this instance, on the contrary, they [the Jewish Priests] not only suffered nothing, but even are in high esteem. Whence then [His appointment]? He shows it from the prophecy. He has nothing [to allege] perceptible by sense, nothing visible. For this cause he affirms it from prophecy, from things future; "But He that said unto Him Thou art My Son, today have I begotten Thee." What

has this to do with the Son? Yea (he says) it is a preparation for His being appointed by God.

Verse 6. *"As He saith also in another place, Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedech." Unto whom now was this spoken?*

Who is "after the order of Melchisedech"? No other [than He]. For they all were under the Law, they all kept sabbaths, they all were circumcised; one could not point out any other [than Him].

[3.] Verse 7, 8. *"Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, to Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered."* Seest thou that he sets forth nothing else than His care and the exceeding greatness of His love? For what means the [expression] "with strong crying"? The Gospel nowhere says this, nor that He wept when He prayed, nor yet that He uttered a cry. Seest thou that it was a condescension? For he could not [merely] say that He prayed, but also "with strong crying."

"And was heard," (he says), "in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He, obedience by the things which He suffered." (Verse 9, 10), "And being made perfect He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him: called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedech."

Be it with "crying," why also "strong [crying] and tears"?

"Having offered," (he says), "and having been heard in that He feared." What sayest thou? Let the Heretics be ashamed. The Son of God "was heard in that He feared." And what more could any man say concerning the prophets? And what sort of connection is there, in saying, "He was heard in that He feared, though He were Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered"? Would any man say these things concerning God? Why, who was ever so mad? And who, even if he were beside himself, would have uttered these things? "Having been heard," (he says), "in that He feared, He learned obedience by the things which He suffered." What obedience? He that before this had been obedient even

unto death, as a Son to His Father, how did He afterwards learn? Seest thou that this is spoken concerning the Incarnation?

Tell me now, did He pray the Father that He might be saved from death? And was it for this cause that He was "exceeding sorrowful, and said, If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me"? (Matthew 26:38, 39) Yet He nowhere prayed the Father concerning His resurrection, but on the contrary He openly declares, "Destroy this temple and within three days I will raise it up." (John. 2:19) And, "I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again. No man taketh it from Me, I lay it down of Myself." (John 10:18) What then is it; why did He pray? (And again He said, "Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death. And they shall deliver Him to the Gentiles, to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him; and the third day He shall rise again" (Matthew 20:18, 19), and said not, "My Father shall raise Me up again.") How then did He pray concerning this? But for whom did He pray? For those who believed on Him.

And what he means is this, 'He is readily listened to.' For since the), had not yet the right opinion concerning Him, he said that He was heard. Just as He Himself also when consoling His disciples said, "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I go to My Father" (John 14:28), and "My Father is greater than I." But how did He not glorify Himself, He who "made Himself of no reputation" (Philippians 2:7), He who gave Himself up? For, it is said, "He gave Himself" up "for our sins." (See Galatians 1:4) And again, "Who gave Himself a ransom for us all." (1 Timothy 2:6) What is it then? Thou seest that it is in reference to the flesh that lowly things are spoken concerning Himself: So also here, "Although He were Son, He was heard in that He feared," it is said. He wishes to show, that the success was of Himself, rather than of God's favor. So great (he says) was His reverence, that even on account thereof God had respect unto Him.

"He learned," he saith, to obey God. Here again he shows how great is the gain of sufferings. "And having been made perfect," he says, "He became the Author of salvation to them that obey Him." (Cf. *supra*, pp. 384, 391) But if He, being the SON, gained obedience from His sufferings, much more shall we. Dost thou see how many things he discourses about obedience,

that they might be persuaded to it? For it seems to me that they would not be restrained. “From the things,” he says, “which He suffered He” continually “learned” to obey God. And being “made perfect” through sufferings. This then is perfection, and by this means must we arrive at perfection. For not only was He Himself saved, but became to others also an abundant supply of salvation. For “being made perfect He became the Author of salvation to them that obey Him.”

[4.] “Being called,” he says, “of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedech”: (verse 11) “Of whom we have many things to say and hard to be uttered [or explained].” When he was about to proceed to the difference of the Priesthood, he first reproves them, pointing out both that such great condescension was “milk,” and that it was because they were children that he dwelt longer on the lowly subject, relating to the flesh, and speaks [about Him] as about any righteous man. And see, he neither kept silence as to the doctrine altogether, nor did he utter it; that on the one hand, he might raise their thoughts, and persuade them to be perfect, and that they might not be deprived of the great doctrines; and on the other, that he might not overwhelm their minds.

“Of whom,” he says, “we have many things to say and hard to be explained, seeing ye are dull of hearing.” Because they do not hear, the doctrine is “hard to be explained.” For when one has to do with men who do not go along with him nor mind the things that are spoken, he cannot well explain the subject to them.

But perhaps some one of you that stand here, is puzzled, and thinks it a hard case, that owing to the Hebrews, he himself is hindered from hearing the more perfect doctrines. Nay rather, I think that perhaps here also except a few, there are many such [as they], so that this may be said concerning yourselves also: but for the sake of those few I will speak.

Did he then keep entire silence, or did he resume the subject again in what follows; and do the same as in the Epistle to the Romans? For there too, when he had first stopped the mouths of the gainsayers, and said, “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?” (Romans 9:20), he then subjoined the solution. And for my own part I think that he was not even altogether silent, and yet did not speak it out, in order to lead the hearers to a longing [for the knowledge]. For having mentioned [the

subject], and said that certain great things were stored up in the doctrine, see how he frames his reproof in combination with panegyric.

For this is ever a part of Paul's wisdom, to mix painful things with kind ones. Which he also does in the Epistle to the Galatians, saying, "Ye did run well; who did hinder you?" (Galatians 5:7) And, "Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain" (Galatians 3:4), and, "I have confidence in you in the Lord." (Galatians 5:10) Which he says also to these [Hebrews], "But we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation." (c. 6:9) For these two things he effects, he does not overstrain them, nor suffer them to fall back; for if the examples of others are sufficient to arouse the hearer, and to lead him to emulation; when a man has himself for an example and is bidden to emulate himself, the possibility follows at the same time. He therefore shows this also, and does not suffer them to fall back as men utterly condemned, nor as being alway evil, but [says] that they were once even good; (verse 12) for "when for the time ye ought to be teachers," he says. Here he shows that they had been believers a long while, and he shows also that they ought to instruct others.

[5.] At all events observe him continually travailing to introduce the discourse concerning the High Priest, and still putting it off. For hear how he began: "Having a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens" (c. 4:14); and omitting to say how He was great, he says again, "For every High Priest taken from among men, is appointed for men in things pertaining to God." (c. 5:1) And again, "So Christ also glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest." (c. 5:5) And again after saying, "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedech" (c. 5:6), he again puts off [the subject], saying, "Who in the days of His Flesh offered prayers and supplications." (c. 5:7) When therefore he had been so many times repulsed, he says, as if excusing himself, The blame is with you. Alas! how great a difference! When they ought to be teaching others, they are not even simply learners, but the last of learners. (Verse 12), "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God." Here he means the Human Nature [of Christ]. For as in external literature it is necessary to learn the elements first, so also here they were first taught concerning the human nature.

Thou seest what is the cause of his uttering lowly things. So Paul did to the Athenians also, discoursing and saying, “The times of this ignorance God winked at: but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead.” (Acts 17:30, 31) Therefore, if he says anything lofty, he expresses it briefly, while the lowly statements are scattered about in many parts of the Epistle. And thus too he shows the lofty; since the very lowliness [of what is said] forbids the suspicion that these things relate to the Divine Nature. So here also the safe ground was kept.

But what produces this dullness? This he pointed out especially in the Epistle to the Corinthians, saying, “For whereas there is among you envy and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal?” (1 Corinthians 3:3) But observe, I beseech you, his great wisdom, how he always deals according to the distempers before him. For there the weakness arose more from ignorance, or rather from sin; but here not from sins only, but also from continual afflictions. Wherefore he also uses expressions calculated to show the difference, not saying, “ye are become carnal,” but” dull”: in that case” carnal,” but in this the pain is greater. For they [the Corinthians] indeed were not able to endure [his reproof], because they were carnal: but these were able. For in saying, “Seeing ye are become dull of hearing” (c. 5:11), he shows that formerly they were sound in health, and were strong, fervent in zeal, which he also afterwards testifies respecting them.

[6.] “And are become such as have need of milk, not of strong meat.” He always calls the lowly doctrine “milk,” both in this place and in the other. “When,” he says, “for [i.e. “because of”] the time ye ought to be teachers”: because of that very thing, namely the time, for which ye ought especially to be strong, for this especially ye are become backsliding. Now he calls it “milk,” on account of its being suited to the more simple. But to the more perfect it is injurious, and the dwelling on these things is hurtful. So that it is not fitting that matters of the Law should be introduced now or the comparison made from them, [such as] that He was an High Priest, and offered sacrifice, and needed crying and supplication. Wherefore see how these things are unhealthful to “us”; but at that time they nourished them being by no means unhealthful to them.

So then the oracles of God are true nourishment. “For I will give unto them,” he saith, “not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but a famine of hearing the word of the Lord.” (Amos 8:11)

“I gave you milk to drink, and not meat” (1 Corinthians 3:2); He did not say, I fed you, showing that such [nourishment] as this is not food, but that [the case is] like that of little children who cannot be fed with bread. For such have not drink given them, but their food is to them instead of drink.

Moreover he did not say, “ye have need,” but “ye are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat.” That is, ye willed [it]; ye have reduced yourselves to this, to this need.

Verse 13. *“For every one that partaketh of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.”*

What is “the Word [doctrine] of righteousness”? He seems to me here to hint at conduct also. That which Christ also said, “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees” (Matthew 5:20), this he says likewise, “unskilled in the word of righteousness,” that is, he that is unskilled in the philosophy that is above, is unable to embrace a perfect and exact life. Or else by “righteousness” he here means Christ, and the high doctrine concerning Him.

That they then were” become dull,” he said; but from what cause, he did not add, leaving it to themselves to know it, and not wishing to make his discourse hard to bear. But in the case of the Galatians he both “marveled” (Galatians 1:6) and “stood in doubt” (Galatians 4:20), which tends much more to encourage, as [it is the language] of one who would never have expected that this should happen. For this is [what] the doubting [implies].

Thou seest that there is another infancy, Thou seest that there is another full age. Let us become of “full age” in this sense: It is in the power even of those who are children, and the young to come to that “full age”: for it is not of nature, but of virtue.

[7.] Verse 14. *“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age [perfect], even them who by reason of use have their senses exercised to*

discern both good and evil." Those had not "their senses exercised," nor did they "know good and evil." He is not speaking now concerning life [conduct], when he says "to discern good and evil," for this is possible and easy for every man to know, but concerning doctrines that are wholesome and sublime, and those that are corrupted and low. The babe knows not how to distinguish bad and good food. Oftentimes at least it even puts dirt into its mouth, and takes what is hurtful; and it does all things without judgment; but not [so] the full grown man. Such [babes] are they who lightly listen to everything, and give up their ears indiscriminately: which seems to me to blame these [Hebrews] also, as being lightly "carried about," and now giving themselves to these, now to those. Which he also hinted near the end [of the Epistle], saying, "Be not carried aside by divers and strange doctrines." (c. 13:9) This is the meaning of "to discern good and evil." "For the mouth tasteth meat, but the soul trieth words." (Job 34:3)

[8.] Let us then learn this lesson. Do not, when thou hearest that a man is not a Heathen nor a Jew, straightway believe him to be a Christian; but examine also into all the other points; for even Manichaeans, and all the heresies, have put on this mask, in order thus to deceive the more simple. But if we "have the senses" of the soul "exercised to discern both good and evil," we are able to discern such [teachers].

But how do our "senses" become "exercised"? By continual hearing; by experience of the Scriptures. For when we set forth the error of those [Heretics], and thou hearest today and tomorrow; and provest that it is not right, thou hast learnt the whole, thou hast known the whole: and even if thou shouldest not comprehend today, thou wilt comprehend to-morrow.

"That have," he says, their "senses exercised." Thou seest that it is needful to exercise our hearing by divine studies, so that they may not sound strangely. "Exercised," saith he, "for discerning," that is, to be skilled.

One man says, that there is no Resurrection; and another looks for none of the things to come; another says there is a different God; another that He has His beginning from Mary. And see at once how they have all fallen away from want of moderation, some by excess, others by defect. As for

instance, the first Heresy of all was that of Marcion; this introduced another different God, who has no existence. See the excess. After this that of Sabellius, saying that the Son and the Spirit and the Father are One. Next that of Marcellus and Photinus, setting forth the same things. Moreover that of Paul of Samosata, saying that He had His beginning from Mary. Afterwards that of the Manichaeans; for this is the most modern of all. After these the heresy of Arius. And there are others too.

And on this account have we received the Faith, that we might not be compelled to attack innumerable heresies, and to deal with them, but whatever any man might have endeavored either to add or take away, that we might consider spurious. For as those who give the standards do not oblige [people] to busy themselves about measures innumerable, but bid them keep to what is given them; so also in the case of doctrines.

[9.] But no man is willing to give heed to the Scriptures. For if we did give heed, not only should we not be ourselves entangled by deceit, but we should also set others free who are deceived, and should draw them out of dangers. For the strong soldier is not only able to help himself, but also to protect his comrade, and to free him from the malice of the enemy. But as it is, some do not even know that there are any Scriptures. Yet the Holy Spirit indeed made so many wise provisions in order that they might be safely kept.

And look at it from the first, that ye may learn the unspeakable love of God. He inspired the blessed Moses; He engraved the tables, He detained him on the mount forty days; and again as many [more] to give the Law. And after this He sent prophets who suffered woes innumerable. War came on; they slew them all, they cut them to pieces, the books were burned. Again, He inspired another admirable man to publish them, Ezra I mean, and caused them to be put together from the remains, And after this He arranged that they should be translated by the seventy. They did translate them. Christ came, He receives them; the Apostles disperse them among men. Christ wrought signs and wonders.

What then after so great painstaking? The Apostles also wrote, even as Paul likewise said, “they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” (1 Corinthians 10:11) And again Christ said, “Ye do err not knowing the Scriptures” (Matthew 22:29): and again Paul

said, “That through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we may have hope.” (Romans 15:4) And again, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable.” (2 Timothy 3:16) And “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” (Colossians 3:16) And the prophet, “he shall meditate in His Law day and night” (Psalm 1:2), and again in another place, “Let all thy communication be in the law of the Most High.” (Ecclus. 9:15) And again, “How sweet are Thy words unto my throat.” (He said not to my hearing, but to my “throat”); “more than honey and the honeycomb to my mouth.” (Psalm 119:103) And Moses says, “Thou shalt meditate in them continually, when thou risest up, when thou sittest, when thou liest down.” (Deuteronomy 6:7) “Be in them” (1 Timothy 4:15), saith he. And innumerable things one might say concerning them. But notwithstanding, after so many things there are some who do not even know that there are Scriptures at all. For this cause, believe me, nothing sound, nothing profitable comes from us.

[10.] Yet, if any one wished to learn military affairs, of necessity he must learn the military laws. And if any one sought to learn navigation or carpentry or anything else, of necessity he must learn the [principles] of the art. But in this case they will not do anything of the kind, although this is a science which needs much wakeful attention. For that it too is an art which needs teaching, hear the prophet saying, “Come, ye children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord.” (Psalm 34:11) It follows therefore certainly that the fear of God needs teaching. Then he says, “What man is he that desireth life?” (Psalm 34:12) He means the life yonder; and again, “Keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile; depart from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it.” (Psalm 34:13, 14)

Do you know indeed who said these things, a prophet or a historian, or an apostle, or an evangelist? For my own part I do not think you do, except a few. Yea and these themselves again, if we bring forward a testimony from some other place, will be in the same case as the rest of you. For see, I repeat the same statement expressed in other words. “Wash ye, make you clean, put away your wickedness from your souls before Mine eyes, learn to do well, seek out judgment. Keep thy tongue from evil, and do good: learn to do well.” (Isaiah 1:16, 17) Thou seest that virtue needs to be

taught? For this one says, “I will teach you the fear of the Lord,” and the other, “Learn to do well.”

Now then do you know where these words are? For myself I do not think you do, except a few. And yet every week these things are read to you twice or even three times: and the reader when he goes up [to the desk] first says whose the book is, [the book] of such a prophet, and then says what he says, so that it shall be more intelligible to you and you may not only know the contents of the Book, but also the reason of the writings, and who spake these things. But all in vain; all to no purpose. For your zeal is spent on things of this life, and of things spiritual no account is made. Therefore not even those matters turn out according to your wishes, but there also are many difficulties. For Christ says, “Seek ye the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:33) These things He said, shall also be given in the way of addition: but we have inverted the order and seek the earth and the good things which are in the earth, as if those other [heavenly] things were to be given us in addition. Therefore we have neither the one nor the other. Let us then at last wake up and become coveters of the things which shall be hereafter; for so these also will follow. For it is not possible that he who seeks the things that relate to God, should not also attain human [blessings]. It is the declaration of the Truth itself which says this. Let us not then act otherwise, but let us hold fast to the counsel of Christ, lest we fail of all. But God is able to give you compunction and to make you better, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost be glory, power, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 9

HEBREWS 6:1-3

"Therefore leaving the principles of the Doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God; of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands; and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do, if God permit."

[1.] YOU have heard how much Paul found fault with the Hebrews for wishing to be always learning about the same things. And with good reason: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the elements of the first principles of the oracles of God." (c. 5:12)

I am afraid that this might fitly be said to you also, that "when for the time ye ought to be teachers," ye do not maintain the rank of learners, but ever hearing the same things, and on the same subjects, you are in the same condition as if you heard no one. And if any man should question you, no one will be able to answer, except a very few who may soon be counted.

But this is no trifling loss. For oftentimes when the teacher wishes to go on further, and to touch on higher and more mysterious themes, the want of attention in those who are to be taught prevents.

For just as in the case of a grammar-master, if a boy though hearing continually the first elements does not master them, it will be necessary for him to be continually dinning the same things into the boy, and he will not leave off teaching, until the boy has been able to learn them accurately; for it is great folly to lead him on to other things, without having put the first well into him; so too in the Church, if while we constantly say the same things you learn nothing more, we shall never cease saying the same things.

For if our preaching were a matter of display and ambition, it would have been right to jump from one subject to another and change about continually, taking no thought for you, but only for your applauses. But

since we have not devoted our zeal to this, but our labors are all for your profit, we shall not cease discoursing to you on the same subjects, till you succeed in learning them. For I might have said much about Gentile superstition, and about the Manichaeans, and about the Marcionists, and by the grace of God have given them heavy blows, but this sort of discourse is out of season. For to those who do not yet know accurately their own affairs, to those who have not yet learned that to be covetous is evil, who would utter such discourses as those, and lead them on to other subjects before the time?

We then shall not cease to say the same things, whether ye be persuaded or not. We fear however, that by continually saying the same things, if ye hearken not, we may make the condemnation heavier for the disobedient.

I must not however say this in regard to you all; for I know many who are benefited by their coming here, who might with justice cry out against those others, as insidiously injuring them by their ignorance and inattention. But not even so will they be injured. For hearing the same things continually is useful even to those who know them, since by often hearing what we know we are more deeply affected. We know, for instance, that Humility is an excellent thing, and that Christ often discoursed about it; but when we listen to the words themselves and the reflections made upon them, we are yet more affected, even if we hear them ten thousand times.

[2.] It is then a fitting time for us also to say now to you, “Wherefore leaving the beginning of the doctrine of Christ, let us go unto perfection.”

What is” the beginning of the doctrine”? He goes on to state it himself, saying, “not laying again” (these are his words) “the foundation of repentance from dead works, and faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands, of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”

But if this be “the Beginning,” what else is our doctrine save to repent “from dead works,” and through the Spirit to receive “the faith,” in “the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment”? But what is “the Beginning”? “The Beginning,” he says, is nothing else than this, when there is not a strict life. For as it is necessary to instruct one who is

entering on the study of grammar, in the Elements first, so also must the Christian know these things accurately, and have no doubt concerning them. And should he again have need of teaching, he has not yet the foundation. For one who is firmly grounded ought to be fixed and to stand steady, and not be moved about. But if one who has been catechized and baptized is going ten years afterwards to hear again about the Faith, and that we ought to "believe" in "the resurrection of the dead," he does not yet have the foundation, he is again seeking after the beginning of the Christian religion. For that the Faith is the foundation, and the rest the building, hear him [the Apostle] saying; "I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereupon." (1 Corinthians 3:10) "If any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble." (1 Corinthians 3:12)

"Not laying again" (he says) "the foundation of repentance from dead works."

[3.] But what is, "let us go on unto perfection"? Let us henceforth proceed (he means) even to the very roof, that is, let us have the best life. For as in the case of the letters the Alpha involves the whole, and as the foundation, the whole building, so also does full assurance concerning the Faith involve purity of life. And without this it is not possible to be a Christian, as without foundations there can be no building; nor skill in literature without the letters. Still if one should be always going round about the letters, or if about the foundation, not about the building, he will never gain anything.

Do not however think that the Faith is depreciated by being called elementary: for it is indeed the whole power: for when he says, "For every one that useth milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe" (c. 5:13), it is not this which he calls "milk." But to be still doubting about these things is [a sign] of a mind feeble, and needing many discourses. For these are the wholesome doctrines. For we call him "a perfect man" [i.e. "of full age"] who with the faith has a right life; but if any one have faith, yet does evil, and is in doubt concerning [the faith] itself, and brings disgrace on the doctrine, him we shall with reason call "a babe," in that he has gone back again to the beginning. So that even if we have been ten thousand years in the faith, yet are not firm in it, we are

babes; when we show a life not in conformity with it; when we are still laying a foundation.

[4.] But besides [their way of] life he brings another charge also against these [Hebrews], as being shaken to and fro, and needing "to lay a foundation of repentance from dead works." For he who changes from one to another, giving up this, and choosing that, ought first to condemn this, and to be separated from the system, and then to pass to the other. But if he intends again to lay hold on the first, how shall he touch the second?

What then of the Law (he says)? We have condemned it, and again we run back to it. This is not a shifting about, for here also [under the Gospel] we have a law. "Do we then" (he says) "make void the law through faith? God forbid, yea we establish the Law." (Romans 3:31) I was speaking concerning evil deeds. For he that intends to pursue virtue ought to condemn wickedness first, and then go in pursuit of it. For repentance cannot prove them clean. For this cause they were straightway baptized, that what they were unable to accomplish by themselves, this might be effected by the grace of Christ. Neither then does repentance suffice for purification, but men must first receive baptism. At all events, it was necessary to come to baptism, having condemned the sins thereby and given sentence against them.

But what is "the doctrine of baptisms"? Not as if there were many baptisms, but one only. Why then did he express it in the plural? Because he had said, "not laying again a foundation of repentance." For if he again baptized them and catechized them afresh, and having been baptized at the beginning they were again taught what things ought to be done and what ought not, they would remain perpetually incorrigible.

"And of laying on of hands." For thus did they receive the Spirit, "when Paul had laid his hands on them" (Acts 19:6), it is said.

"And of the resurrection of the dead." For this is both effected in baptism, and is affirmed in the confession.

"And of eternal judgment." But why does he say this? Because it was likely that, having already believed, they would either be shaken [from their faith], or would lead evil and slothful lives, he says, "be wakeful."

It is not open to them to say, If we live slothfully we will be baptized again, we will be catechized again, we will again receive the Spirit; even if now we fall from the faith, we shall be able again by being baptized, to wash away our sins, and to attain to the same state as before. Ye are deceived (he says) in supposing these things.

[5.] Verse 4, 5. *"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly girl, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh, and putting Him to an open shame."*

And see how putting them to shame, and forbiddingly he begins. "Impossible." No longer (he says) expect that which is not possible; (For he said not, It is not seemly, or, It is not expedient, or, It is not lawful, but "impossible," so as to cast [them] into despair), if ye have once been altogether enlightened.

Then he adds, "and have tasted of the heavenly gift. If ye have tasted" (he says) "of the heavenly gift," that is, of forgiveness. "And been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted the good word of God" (he is speaking here of the doctrine) "and the powers of the world to come" (what powers is he speaking of? either the working of miracles, or "the earnest of the Spirit"-2 Corinthians 1:22) "and have fallen away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame." "Renew them," he says, "unto repentance," that is, by repentance, for unto repentance is by repentance. What then, is repentance excluded? Not repentance, far from it! But the renewing again by the layer. For he did not say, "impossible" to be renewed "unto repentance," and stop, but added how "impossible, [by] crucifying afresh.

To "be renewed," that is, to be made new, for to make men new is [the work] of the layer only: for (it is said) "thy youth shall be renewed as the eagle's." (Psalm 103:5) But it is [the work of] repentance, when those who have been made new, have afterwards become old through sins, to set them free from this old age, and to make them strong. To bring them to that former brightness however, is not possible; for there the whole was Grace.

[6.] “Crucifying to themselves,” he says, “the Son of God afresh, and putting Him to an open shame.” What he means is this. Baptism is a Cross, and “our old man was crucified with [Him]” (Romans 6:6), for we were “made conformable to the likeness of His death” (Romans 6:5; Philippians 3:10), and again, “we were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death.” (Romans 6:4) Wherefore, as it is not possible that Christ should be crucified a second time, for that is to “put Him to an open shame.” For “if death shall no more have dominion over Him” (Romans 6:9), if He rose again, by His resurrection becoming superior to death; if by death He wrestled with and overcame death, and then is crucified again, all those things become a fable and a mockery. He then that baptizeth a second time, crucifies Him again.

But what is “crucifying afresh”? [It is] crucifying over again. For as Christ died on the cross, so do we in baptism, not as to the flesh, but as to sin. Behold two deaths. He died as to the flesh; in our case the old man was buried, and the new man arose, made conformable to the likeness of His death. If therefore it is necessary to be baptized [again], it is necessary that this same [Christ] should die again. For baptism is nothing else than the putting to death of the baptized, and his rising again.

And he well said, “crucifying afresh unto themselves.” For he that does this, as having forgotten the former grace, and ordering his own life carelessly, acts in all respects as if there were another baptism. It behooves us therefore to take heed and to make ourselves safe.

[7.] What is, “having tasted of the heavenly gift”? it is, “of the remission of sins”: for this is of God alone to bestow, and the grace is a grace once for all. “What then? shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Far from it!” (Romans 6:1, 2) But if we should be always going to be saved by grace we shall never be good. For where there is but one grace, and we are yet so indolent, should we then cease sinning if we knew that it is possible again to have our sins washed away? For my part I think not.

He here shows that the gifts are many: and to explain it, Ye were counted worthy (he says) of so great forgiveness; for he that was sitting in darkness, he that was at enmity, he that was at open war, that was alienated, that was hated of God, that was lost, he having been suddenly enlightened, counted worthy of the Spirit, of the heavenly gift, of adoption

as a son, of the kingdom of heaven, of those other good things, the unspeakable mysteries; and who does not even thus become better, but while indeed worthy of perdition, obtained salvation and honor, as if he had successfully accomplished great things; how could he be again baptized?

On two grounds then he said that the thing was impossible, and he put the stronger last: first, because he who has been deemed worthy of such [blessings], and who has betrayed all that was granted to him, is not worthy to be again renewed; neither is it possible that [Christ] should again be crucified afresh: for this is to "put Him to an open shame."

There is not then any second layer: there is not [indeed]. And if there is, there is also a third, and a fourth; for the former one is continually disannulled by the later, and this continually by another, and so on without end.

"And tasted," he says, "the good word of God"; and he does not unfold it; "and the powers of the world to come," for to live as Angels and to have no need of earthly things, to know that this is the means of our introduction to the enjoyment of the worlds to come; this may we learn through the Spirit, and enter into those sacred recesses.

What are "the powers of the world to come"? Life eternal, angelic conversation. Of these we have already received the earnest through our Faith from the Spirit. Tell me then, if after having been introduced into a palace, and entrusted with all things therein, thou hadst then betrayed all, wouldest thou have been entrusted with them again?

[8.] What then (you say)? Is there no repentance? There is repentance, but there is no second baptism: but repentance there is, and it has great force, and is able to set free from the burden of his sins, if he will, even him that hath been baptized much in sins, and to establish in safety him who is in danger, even though he should have come unto the very depth of wickedness. And this is evident from many places. "For," says one, "doth not he that falleth rise again? or he that turneth away, doth not he turn back to [God]?" (Jeremiah 8:4) It is possible, if we will, that Christ should be formed in us again: for hear Paul saying, "My little children of whom I

travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." (Galatians 4:19) Only let us lay hold on repentance.

For behold the love of God to man! We ought on every ground to have been punished at the first; in that having received the natural law, and enjoyed innumerable blessings, we have not acknowledged our Master, and have lived an unclean life. Yet He not only has not punished us, but has even made us partakers of countless blessings, just as if we had accomplished great things. Again we fell away, and not even so does He punish us, but has given medicine of repentance, which is sufficient to put away and blot out all our sins; only if we knew the nature of the medicine, and how we ought to apply it.

What then is the medicine of Repentance? and how is it made up? First, of the condemnation of our own sins; "For" (it is said) "mine iniquity have I not hid" (Psalm 32:5); and again, "I will confess against myself my lawlessness unto the Lord, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my heart." And "Declare thou at the first thy sins, that thou mayest be justified." (Isaiah 43:26) And, "The righteous man is an accuser of himself at the first speaking." (Proverbs 18:17)

Secondly, of great humbleness of mind: For it is like a golden chain; if one have hold of the beginning, all will follow. Because if thou confess thy sin as one ought to confess, the soul is humbled. For conscience turning it on itself causeth it to be subdued.

Other things too must be added to humbleness of mind if it be such as the blessed David knew, when he said, "A broken and a contrite heart God will not despise." (Psalm 51:17) For that which is broken does not rise up, does not strike, but is ready to be ill-treated and itself riseth not up. Such is contrition of heart: though it be insulted, though it be evil entreated, it is quiet, and is not eager for vengeance.

And after humbleness of mind, there is need of intense prayers, of many tears, tears by day, and tears by night: for, he says, "every night, will I wash my bed, I will water my couch with my tears. I am weary with my groaning." (Psalm 6:6) And again, "For I have eaten ashes as it were bread, and mingled my drink with weeping." (Psalm 102:9)

And after prayer thus intense, there is need of much almsgiving: for this it is which especially gives strength to the medicine of repentance. And as there is a medicine among the physicians' helps which receives many herbs, but one is the essential, so also in case of repentance this is the essential herb, yea, it may be everything. For hear what the Divine Scripture says, "Give alms, and all things shall be clean." (Luke 11:41) And again, "By alms-giving and acts of faithfulness sins are purged away." (Proverbs 16:6) And, "Water will quench a flaming fire, and alms will do away with great sins." (Ecclus. 3:30)

Next not being angry with any one, not bearing malice; the forgiving all their trespasses. For, it is said, "Man retaineth wrath against man, and yet seeketh healing from the Lord." (Ecclus. 28:3) "Forgive that ye may be forgiven." (Mark 11:25)

Also, the converting our brethren from their wandering. For, it is said, "Go thou, and convert thy brethren, that thy sins may be forgiven thee." And from one's being in close relations with the priests, "and if," it is said, "a man hath committed sins it shall be forgiven him." (James 5:15) To stand forward in defense of those who are wronged. Not to retain anger: to bear all things meekly.

[9.] Now then, before you learned that it is possible to have our sins washed away by means of repentance, were ye not in an agony, because there is no second laver, and were ye not in despair of yourselves? But now that we have learned by what means repentance and remission is brought to a successful issue, and that we shall be able entirely to escape, if we be willing to use it aright, what forgiveness can we possibly obtain, if we do not even enter on the thought of our sins? since if this were done, all would be accomplished.

For as he who enters the door, is within; so he who reckons up his own evils will also certainly come to get them cured. But should he say, I am a sinner, without reckoning them up specifically, and saying, This and this sin have I committed, he will never leave off, confessing indeed continually, but never caring in earnest for amendment. For should he have laid down a beginning, all the rest will unquestionably follow too, if only in one point he have shown a beginning: for in every case the beginning and

the preliminaries are difficult. This then let us lay as a foundation, and all will be smooth and easy.

Let us begin therefore, I entreat you, one with. making his prayers intense: another with continual weeping: another with downcast countenance. For not even is this, which is so small, unprofitable: for “I saw” (it is said) “that he was grieved and went downcast, and I healed his ways.” (Isaiah 57:17, 18)

But let us all humble our own souls by alms-giving and forgiving our neighbors their trespasses, by not remembering injuries, nor avenging ourselves. If we continually reflect on our sins, no external circumstances can make us elated: neither riches, nor power, nor authority, nor honor; nay, even should we sit in the imperial chariot itself, we shall sigh bitterly: Since even the blessed David was a King, and yet he said, “Every night I will wash my bed,” [etc.] (Psalm 6:6): and he was not at all hurt by the purple robe and the diadem: he was not puffed up; for he knew himself to be a man, and inasmuch as his heart had been made contrite, he went mourning.

[10.] For what are all things human? Ashes and dust, and as it were spray before the wind; a smoke and a shadow, and a leaf driven here and there; and a flower; a dream, and a tale, and a fable, wind and air vainly puffed out and wasting away; a feather that hath no stay, a stream flowing by, or if there be aught of more nothingness than these.

For, tell me, what dost thou esteem great? What dignity thinkest thou to be great? is it that of the Consul? For the many think no greater dignity than that. He who is not Consul is not a whit inferior to him who is in so great splendor, who is so greatly admired. Both one and the other are of the same dignity; both of them alike, after a little while, are no more.

When was he made [Consul]? For how long a time? tell me: for two days? Nay, this takes place even in dreams. But that is [only] a dream, you say. And what is this? For (tell me) what is by day, is it [therefore] not a dream? Why do we not rather call these things a dream? For as dreams when the day comes on are proved, to be nothing: so these things also, when the night comes on, are proved to be nothing. For night and day have received each an equal portion of time, and have equally divided all

duration. Therefore as in the day a person rejoices not in what happened at night, so neither in the night is it possible for him to reap the fruit of what is done in the day. Thou hast been made Consul? So was I in the night; only I in the night, thou in the day. And what of this? Not even so hast thou any advantage over me, except haply its being said, Such an one is Consul, and the pleasure that springs from the words, gives him the advantage.

I mean something of this kind, for I will express it more plainly: if I say "Such an one is Consul," and bestow on him the name, is it not gone as soon as it is spoken? So also are the things themselves; no sooner doth the Consul appear, than he is no more. But let us suppose [that he is Consul] for a year, or two years, or three or four years. Where are they who were ten times Consul? Nowhere.

But Paul is not so. For he was, and also is living continually: he did not live one day, nor two, nor ten, and twenty, nor thirty; nor ten and twenty, nor yet thirty years — and die. Even the four hundredth year is now past, and still even yet is he illustrious, yea much more illustrious than when he was alive. And these things indeed [are] on earth; but the glory of the saints in heaven what word could set forth?

Wherefore I entreat you, let us seek this glory; let us pursue after it, that we may attain it. For this is the true glory. Let us henceforth stand aloof from the things of this life, that we may find grace and mercy in Christ Jesus our Lord: with whom to the Father, together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor and worship, now and for ever, and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 10

HEBREWS 6:7, 8

"For the Earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. But if it bear thorns and briars it is rejected, and nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned."

[1.] LET us hear the oracles of God with fear, with fear and much trembling. For (it is said) "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto Him with trembling." (Psalm 2:11) But if even our joy and our exultation ought to be "with trembling," of what punishment are we not worthy, if we listen not with terror to what is said, when the things spoken, as now, are themselves fearful?

For having said that "it is impossible for those who have fallen away" to be baptized a second time, and to receive remission through the layer, and having pointed out the awfulness of the case, he goes on: "for the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. But if it bear thorns and thistles, it is rejected, and nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned."

Let us then fear, beloved! This threat is not Paul's, these words are not of man: they are of the Holy Ghost, of Christ that speaketh in him. Is there then any one that is clear from these thorns? And even if we were clear, not even so ought we to be confident, but to fear and tremble lest at any time thorns should spring up in us. But when we are "thorns and thistles" through and through, whence (tell me) are we confident? And are becoming supine? What is it which makes us inert? If "he that thinketh he standeth" ought to fear "test he fall"; for (he says) "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12); he that falleth, how anxious ought he to be that he may rise up again! If Paul fears, "lest that by any means, when he had preached to others, he himself should be a castaway" (1 Corinthians 9:27); and he who had been so approved is

afraid lest he should become disapproved: what pardon shall we have who are already disapproved, if we have no fear, but fulfill our Christianity as a custom, and for form's sake. Let us then fear, beloved: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven." (Romans 1:18) Let us fear, for it "is revealed" not "against impiety" only, but "against all unrighteousness." What is "against all unrighteousness"? [Against all] both small and great.

[2.] In this passage he intimates the loving-kindness of God towards man: and the teaching [of the Gospel] he calls "rain": and what he said above, "when for the time ye ought to be teachers" (c. 5:12), this he says here also. Indeed in many places the Scripture calls the teaching "rain." For (it says) "I will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it" (Isaiah 5:6), speaking of "the vineyard." The same which in another place it calls "a famine of bread, and a thirst of water." (Amos 8:11) And again, "The river of God is full of waters." (Psalm 65:9)

"For land," he says, "which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it." Here he shows that they received and drank in the word, yea and often enjoyed this, and yet even so they were not profited. For if (he means) thou hadst not been tilled, if thou hadst enjoyed no rains, the evil would not have been so great. For (it is said) "If I had not come and spoken unto them they had not had sin." (John 15:22)But if thou hast often drunk and received [nourishment], wherefore hast thou brought forth other things instead of fruits? For (it is said) "I waited that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth thorns." (Isaiah 5:2)

Thou seest that everywhere the Scripture calleth sins "thorns." For David also saith, "I was turned into mourning when a thorn was fixed in me." (Psalm 32:4, so LXX.) For it does not simply come on us, but is fixed in; and even if but a little of it remain in, even if we take it not out entirely, that little of itself in like manner causes pain, as in the case of a thorn. And why do I say, 'that little of itself'? Even after it has been taken out, it leaves therein for a long time the pain of the wound. And much care and treatment is necessary, that we may be perfectly freed from it. For it is not enough merely to take away the sin, it is necessary also to heal the wounded place.

But I fear however lest the things said apply to us more than to others. "For," he says, "the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon

it." We are ever drinking, ever hearing, but "when the sun is risen" (Matthew 13:6) we straightway lose our moisture, and therefore bring forth thorns. What then are the thorns? Let us hear Christ saying, that "the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful." (Matthew 13:22)

[3.] "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it," he says, "and bringeth forth meet herbs." Because nothing is so meet as purity of life, nothing so suitable as the best life, nothing so meet as virtue.

"And bringeth forth" (saith he) "herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God." Here he says that God is the cause of all things, giving the heathen a blow, who ascribed the production of fruits to the power of the earth. For (he says) it is not the hands of the husbandman which stir up the earth to bear fruits, but the command from God. Therefore he says, "receives blessing from God."

And see how in speaking of the thorns, he said not, "bringing forth thorns," nor did he use this word expressive of what is useful; but what? "Bearing" [literally "putting out"] "thorns," as if one should say, "forcing out," "throwing out."

"Rejected" (he says) "and nigh unto cursing." Oh! how great consolation in this word! For he said "nigh unto cursing," not "a curse." Now he that hath not yet fallen into a curse, but is come to be near [thereto], may also come to be far off [therefrom].

And not by this only did he encourage them, but also by what follows. For he did not say "rejected and nigh unto cursing," "which shall be burned," but what? "Whose end is to be burned," if he continue [such] (he means) unto the end. So that, if we cut out and burn the thorns, we shall be able to enjoy those good things innumerable and to become approved, and to partake of blessing.

And with good reason did he call sin "a thistle," saying "that which beareth thorns and thistles"; for on whatever side you lay hold on it, it wounds and stings, and it is unpleasant even to look at.

[4.] Having therefore sufficiently rebuked them, and alarmed and wounded them, he in turn heals them, so as not to cast them down too much, and

make them supine. For he that strikes one that is "dull," makes him more dull. So then he neither flatters them throughout, test he should make them supine, nor does he wound them throughout, but having inserted a little to wound them, he applies much to heal in what follows.

For what does he say? We speak not these things, as having condemned you, nor as thinking you to be full of thorns, but fearing test this should come to pass. For it is better to terrify you by words, that ye may not suffer by the realities. And this is specially of Paul's wisdom.

Moreover he did not say, We think, or, we conjecture, or, we expect, or, we hope, but what? (Verse 9) "But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." Which word he also used in writing to the Galatians: "But I am persuaded of you in the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded." (Galatians 5:10) For in that instance, inasmuch as they were greatly to be condemned, and he could not praise them from things present, he does it from things future ("that ye will be none otherwise minded," he says): he said not, ye are, but "ye will be none otherwise minded." But here he encourages them from things present. "We are persuaded better things of you, beloved, and things that accompany to salvation, though we thus speak." And since he was not able to say so much from things present, he confirms his consolation from things past; and says,

Verse 10. *"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and the love, which ye have showed toward His name, in that ye have ministered unto the saints and do minister."*

O how did he here restore their spirit, and give them fresh strength, by reminding them of former things, and bringing them to the necessity of not supposing that God had forgotten. (For he cannot but sin who is not fully assured concerning his hope, and says that God is unrighteous. Accordingly he obliged them by all means to look forward to those future things. For one who despairs of present things, and has, given up exerting himself, may be restored by [the prospect of] things future.) As he himself also said in writing to the Galatians, "Ye did run well" (Galatians 5:7): and again, "Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain." (Galatians 3:4)

And as in this place he puts the praise with the reproof, saying, “When for the time ye ought to be teachers” (c. 5:12), so also there, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed.” (Galatians 1:6) With the reproof is the praise. For respecting great things we marvel, when they fail. Thou seest that praise is concealed under the accusation and the blame. Nor does he say this concerning himself only, but also concerning all. For he said not, I am persuaded, but “we are persuaded better things of you,” even good things (he means). He says this either in regard to matters of conduct, or to the recompense. In the next place, having said above, that it is “rejected and nigh unto a curse,” and that it “shall be for burning,” he says, we do not by any means speak this of you. “For God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and love.” (Verse 10)

[5.] Why then did we say these things? (Verse 11, 12) “But we desire that everyone of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end; that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

“We desire,” he says, and we do not therefore merely labor for, or even so far as words go, wish this. But what? “We desire” that ye should hold fast to virtue, not as condemning your former conduct (he means), but fearing for the future. And he did not say, ‘not as condemning your former conduct, but your present; for ye have fainted, ye are become too indolent’; but see how gently he indicated it, and did not wound them.

For what does he say? “But we desire that every, one of you do show the same diligence unto the end.” For this is the admirable part of Paul’s wisdom, that he does not expressly show that they “had” given in, that they “had” become negligent. For when he says, “We desire that every one of you” — it is as if one should say, I wish thee to be always in earnest; and such as thou weft before, such to be now also, and for the time to come. For this made his reproof more gentle and easy to be received.

And he did not say, “I will,” which would have been expressive of the authority of a teacher, but what is expressive of the affection of a father, and what is more than “willing,” “we desire.” All but saying, Pardon us, even if we say what is distasteful.

“We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of your hope unto the end.” Hope (he means) carries us through: it recovers us again. Be not wearied out, do not despair, lest your hope be in vain. For he that worketh good hopeth also good, and never despairs of himself.

“That ye may not become dull.” Still “become”; and yet he said above, “seeing ye are become dull of hearing.” (c. 5:11) Observe however how he limited the dullness to the hearing. And here he hints the very same thing; instead of that ye may not continue in it,’ he says [this]. But again he leads on to that future time for which they were not yet responsible; saying in effect “that ye may not become too slothful”: since for that which is not yet come we could not be responsible. For he who in regard to the present time is exhorted to be in earnest, as being remiss, will perhaps become even more slothful, but he who is exhorted with reference to the future, not so.

“We desire” (he says) “that every one of you.” Great is his affection for them: he cares equally for great and small; moreover he knows all, and overlooks no one, but shows the same tender care for each, and equal value for all: from which cause also he the rather persuaded them to receive what was distasteful in his words.

“That ye be not slothful,” he says. For as inactivity hurts the body, so also inactivity as to what is good renders the soul more supine and feeble.

[6.] “But followers” (he says) “of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” And who they are, he tells afterwards. He said before, “Imitate your own former well-doings.” Then, lest they should say, What? He leads them back to the Patriarch: bringing before them examples of well-doing indeed from their own history, but of the thought of being forsaken, from the Patriarch; that they might not suppose that they were disregarded and forsaken as worthy of no account, but might know that it is [the portion] of the very noblest men to make the journey of life through trials; and that God has thus dealt with great and admirable men.

Now we ought (he says) to bear all things with patience: for this also is believing: whereas if He say that He gives and thou immediately receivest,

how hast thou also believed? Since in that case this is no longer of thy faith, but of Me, the Giver. But if I say that I give, and give after an hundred years, and thou hast not despaired; then hast thou accounted Me worthy to be believed, then thou hast the right opinion concerning Me. Thou seest that oftentimes unbelief arises not from want of hope only, but also from faintheartedness, and want of patience, not from condemning him who made the promise.

"For God" (he says) "is not unrighteous to forget your love" and the zeal "which ye have showed toward His Name, in that ye have ministered unto the saints, and do minister." He testifies great things of them, not deeds only; but deeds done with alacrity, which he says also in another place, "and not only so, but they gave themselves also to the Lord and to us." (2 Corinthians 8:5)

"Which" (he says) "ye have showed toward His Name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." See how again he soothes them, by adding "and do minister." Still even at this time (he says) ye are ministering, and he raises them up by showing that they had done [what they did] not to them [the saints], but to God. "Which ye have showed" (he says); and he said not "unto the saints," but "towards God," for this is "toward His Name." It is for His Name's sake (he means) that ye have done all. He therefore who has the enjoyment from you of so great zeal and love, will never despise you nor forget you.

[7.] Hearing these things, let us, I beseech you, "minister to the saints." For every believer is a saint in that he is a believer. Though he be a person living in the world, he is a saint. "For" (he says) "the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife by the husband." (1 Corinthians 7:14) See how the faith makes the saintship. If then we see even a secular person in misfortune, let us stretch out a hand [to him]. Let us not be zealous for those only who dwell in the mountains; they are indeed saints both in manner of life and in faith; these others however are saints by their faith, and many of them also in manner of life. Let us not, if we see a monk [cast] into prison, in that case go in; but if it be a secular person, refuse to go in. He also is a saint and a brother.

What then (you say) if he be unclean and polluted? Listen to Christ saying, "Judge not that ye be not judged." (Matthew 7:1) Do thou act for

GOD'S sake. Nay, what am I saying? Even if we see a heathen in misfortune, we ought to show kindness to him, and to every man without exception who is in misfortunes, and much more to a believer who is in the world. Listen to Paul, saying, "Do good unto all men, but especially to those who are of the household of faith." (Galatians 6:10)

But I know not whence this [notion] has been introduced, or whence this custom hath prevailed. For he that only seeks after the solitaries, and is willing to do good to them alone, and with regard to others on the contrary is over-curious in his inquiries, and says, 'unless he be worthy, unless he be righteous, unless he work miracles, I stretch out no hand'; [such an one] has taken away the greater part of charity, yea and in time he will in turn destroy the very thing itself. And yet that is charity, [which is shown] towards sinners, towards the guilty. For this is charity, not the pitying those who have done well, but those who have done wrong.

[8.] And that thou mayest understand this, listen to the Parable: "A certain man" (it is said) "went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves" (Luke 10:30, etc.); and when they had beaten him, they left him by the way-side, having badly bruised him. A certain Levite came, and when he saw him, he passed by; A priest came, and when he saw him, he hastened past; a certain Samaritan came, and bestowed great care upon him. For he "bound up his wounds" (Luke 10:34), dropped oil on them, set him upon his ass, "brought him to the inn, said to the host, Take care of him" (Luke 10:35); and (observe his great liberality), "and I," he says, "will give thee whatsoever thou shalt expend." Who then is his neighbor? "He," it is said, "that showed mercy on him. Go thou then also," He says, "and do likewise." (Luke 10:37) And see what a parable He spake. He said not that a Jew did [so and so] to a Samaritan, but that a Samaritan showed all that liberality. Having then heard these things, let us not care only for "those that are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10), and neglect others. So then also thou, if thou see any one in affliction, be not curious to inquire further. His being in affliction involves a just claim on thy aid. For if when thou seest an ass choking thou raisest him up, and dost not curiously inquire whose he is, much more about a man one ought not to be over-curious in inquiring whose he is. He is God's, be he heathen or be he Jew; since even if he is an unbeliever, still he needs help. For if indeed it had been committed to thee to inquire and to judge, thou wouldst have

well said thus, but, as it is, his misfortune does not suffer thee to search out these things. For if even about men in good health it is not right to be over-curious, nor to be a busybody in other men's matters, much less about those that are in affliction.

[9.] But on another view what [shall we say]? Didst thou see him in prosperity, in high esteem, that thou shouldst say that he is wicked and worthless? But if thou seest him in affliction, do not say that he is wicked. For when a man is in high credit, we fairly say these things; but when he is in calamity, and needs help, it is not right to say that he is wicked. For this is cruelty, inhumanity, and arrogance. Tell me what was ever more iniquitous than the Jews. But nevertheless while God punished them, and that justly, yea, very justly, yet He approved of those who had compassion on them, and those who rejoiced over them He punished. (Amos 6:6) For "they were not grieved," it is said, "at the affliction of Joseph."

And again it is said "Redeem [Ransom] those who are ready to be slain: spare not." (Proverbs 24:11) (He said not, inquire curiously, and learn who he is; and yet, for the most part, they who are led away to execution are wicked,) for this especially is charity. For he that doeth good to a friend, doeth it not altogether for God's sake: but he that [doeth good] to one unknown, this man acts purely for God's sake. "Do not spare" thy money, even if it be necessary to spend all, yet give.

But we, when we see persons in extreme distress, bewailing themselves, suffering things more grievous than ten thousand deaths, and oftentimes unjustly, we [I say] are sparing of our money, and unsparing of our brethren; we are careful of lifeless things, but neglect the living soul. And yet Paul says, "in meekness instruct those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God should give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil who are taken captive by him, at His will." (2 Timothy 2:25, 26) "If peradventure," he says; thou seest of how great long-suffering the word is full.

Let us also imitate Him, and despair of no one. For the fishermen too, when they have cast many times [suppose it], have not succeeded; but afterwards having cast again, have gained all. So we also expect that ye will

all at once show to us ripe fruit. For the husbandman too, after he has sown, waits one day or two days, and is a long while in expectation: and all at once he sees the fruits springing up on every side. This we expect will take place in your case also by the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father and also to the Holy Ghost be glory, might, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 11

HEBREWS 6:13-16

"For when God made promise to Abraham, because lie could swear by no greater, He swear by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife."

[1.] HAVING boldly reflected on the faults of the Hebrews, and sufficiently alarmed them, he consoles them, first, by praises, and secondly (which also is the stronger ground), by the [thought] that they would certainly attain the object of their hope. Moreover he draws his consolation, not from things future, but again from the past, which indeed would the rather persuade them. For as in the case of punishment, he alarms them rather by those [viz. things future], so also in the case of the prizes [set before them], he encourages them by these [viz. by things past], showing [herein] God's way of dealing. And that is, not to bring in what has been promised immediately, but after a long time. And this He does, both to present the greatest proof of His power, and also to lead us to Faith, that they who are living in tribulation without having received the promises, or the rewards, may not faint under their troubles.

And omitting all [the rest], though he had many whom he might have mentioned, he brought forward Abraham both on account of the dignity of his person, and because this had occurred in a special way in his case.

And yet at the end of the Epistle he says, that "all these, having seen the promises afar off, and having embraced them, received them not, that they without us should not be made perfect." (c. 11:13) "For when God made promise to Abraham" (he says) "because He could swear by no greater, He swear by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise." (c. 11:39, 40) How then does he say at the end [of the Epistle] that "he received not the promises," and here, that "after he had patiently endured he obtained the promise"? How did he not receive?

How did he obtain? He is not speaking of the same things in this place and in the other, but makes the consolation twofold. God made promises to Abraham, and after a long space of time He gave the things [spoken of] in this place, but those others not yet.

"And so after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise." Seest thou that the promise alone did not effect the whole, but the patient waiting as well? Here he alarms them, showing that oftentimes a promise is thwarted through faintheartedness. And this he had indeed shown through [the instance of] the [Jewish] people: for since they were faint-hearted, therefore they obtained not the promise. But now he shows the contrary by means of Abraham. Afterwards near the end [of the Epistle] he proves something more also: [viz.] that even though they had patiently endured, they did not obtain; and yet not even so are they grieved.

[2.] "For men verily swear by the greater, and an Oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. But God because He could swear by no greater, swear by Himself." Well, who then is He that swear unto Abraham? Is it not the SON? No, one says. Certainly indeed it was He: however, I shall not dispute [thereon]. So when He [the Son] sweareth the same oath, "Verily, verily, I say unto you," is it not plain that it was because He could not swear by any greater? For as the Father swear, so also the Son sweareth by Himself, saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." He here reminds them also of the oaths of Christ, which He was constantly uttering. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, he that believeth on Me shall never die." (John 11:26)

What is, "And an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife"? it is instead of, "by this every doubtful question is solved": not this, or this, but every one.

God, however, ought to have been believed even without an oath: (verse 17) "wherein" (he says) "God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it [lit. "mediated"] by an oath." In these words he comprehends also the believers, and therefore mentions this "promise" which was made to us in common [with them]. "He mediated" (he says) "by an oath." Here again he says that the Son was mediator between men and God.

Verse 18. *"That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible that God should lie."*

What are these two? The speaking and promising; and the adding an oath to the promise. For since among men that which is [confirmed] by an oath is thought more worthy of credit, on this account He added that also.

Seest thou that He regardeth not His own dignity, but how He may persuade men, and endures to have unworthy things said concerning Himself. That is He wishes to impart full assurance. And in the case of Abraham indeed [the Apostle] shows that the whole was of God, not of his patient endurance, since He was even willing to add an oath, for He by whom men swear, by Him also God "swear," that is "by Himself." They indeed as by one greater, but He not as by one greater. And yet He did it. For it is not the same thing for man to swear by himself, as for God. For man has no power over himself. Thou seest then that this is said not more for Abraham than for ourselves: "that we" (he says) "might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us." Here too again, "after he had patiently endured he obtained the promise."

"Now" he means, and he did not say "when He swore." But what the oath is, he showed, by speaking of swearing by a greater. But since the race of men is hard of belief, He condescends to the same [things] with ourselves. As then for our sake He swears, although it be unworthy of Him that He should not be believed, so also did [the Apostle] make that other statement "He learned from the things which He suffered" (c. 5:8), because men think the going through experience more worthy of reliance.

What is "the hope set before us"? From these [past events] (he says) we conjecture the future. For if these came to pass after so long a time, so certainly the others will. So that the things which happened in regard to Abraham give us confidence also concerning the things to come.

[3.] (Verse 19, 20) *"Which [hope] we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil: whither the forerunner is for us entered, even JESUS, made High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec."*

He shows, that while we are still in the world, and not yet departed from [this] life, we are already among the promises. For through hope we are already in heaven. He said, “Wait; for it shall surely be.” Afterwards giving them full assurance, he says, “nay rather by hope.” And he said not, “We are within,” but ‘It hath entered within,’ which was more true and more persuasive. For as the anchor, dropped from the vessel, does not allow it to be carried about, even if ten thousand winds agitate it, but being depended upon makes it steady, so also does hope.

And see how very suitable an image he has discovered: For he said not, Foundation; which was not suitable; but, “Anchor.” For that which is on the tossing sea, and seems not to be very firmly fixed, stands on the water as upon land, and is shaken and yet is not shaken. For in regard to those who are very firm, and philosophic, Christ with good reason made that statement, saying, “Whosoever hath built his house on a rock.” (Matthew 7:24) But in respect of those who are giving way, and who ought to be carried through by hope, Paul hath suitably set down this. For the surge and the great storm toss the boat; but hope suffers it not to be carried hither and thither, although winds innumerable agitate it: so that, unless we had this [hope] we should long ago have been sunk. Nor is it only in things spiritual, but also in the affairs of this life, that one may find the power of hope great. Whatever it may be, in merchandise, in husbandry, in a military expedition, unless one sets this before him, he would not even touch the work. But he said not simply “Anchor,” but “sure and steadfast” [i.e.] not shaken. “Which entereth into that within the veil”; instead of ‘which reacheth through even to heaven.’

[4.] Then after this he led on to Faith also, that there might not only be hope, but a very true [hope]. For after the oath he lays down another thing too, even proof by facts, because “the forerunner is for us entered in, even JESUS.” But a forerunner is a forerunner of some one, as John was of Christ.

Now he did not simply say, “He is entered in,” but “where He is entered in a forerunner for us,” as though we also ought to attain. For there is no great interval between the forerunner and those who follow: otherwise he would not be a forerunner; for the forerunner and those who follow ought to be in the same road, and to arrive after [each other].

“Being made an High Priest forever after the order,” he says, “of Melchisedec.” Here is also another consolation, if our High Priest is on high, and far better than those among the Jews, not in the kind [of Priesthood] only, but also in the place, and the tabernacle, and the covenant, and the person. And this also is spoken according to the flesh.

[5.] Those then, whose High Priest He is, ought to be greatly superior. And as great as the difference is between Aaron and Christ, so great should it be between us and the Jews. For see, we have our victim on high, our priest on high, our sacrifice on high: let us bring such sacrifices as can be offered on that altar, no longer sheep and oxen, no longer blood and fat. All these things have been done away; and there has been brought in their stead “the reasonable service.” (Romans 12:1) But what is “the reasonable service”? The [offerings made] through the soul; those made through the spirit. (“God,” it is said, “is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” — John 4:24); things which have no need of a body, no need of instruments, nor of special places, whereof each one is himself the Priest, such as, moderation, temperance, mercifulness, enduring ill-treatment, long-suffering, humbleness of mind.

These sacrifices one may see in the Old [Testament] also, shadowed out beforehand. “Offer to God,” it is said, “a sacrifice of righteousness” (Psalm 4:5); “Offer a sacrifice of praise” (Psalm 1:14); and, “a sacrifice of praise shall glorify Me” (Psalm 1:23), and, “the sacrifice of God is a broken spirit” (Psalm 51:17); and “what doth the Lord require of thee but” to hearken to Him? (Micah 6:8) “Burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure in: then I said, Lo I come to do Thy will, O God!” (Psalm 40:6, 7), and again, “To what purpose do ye bring the incense from Sheba?” (Jeremiah 6:20) “Take thou away from Me the noise of thy songs, for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.” (Amos 5:23) But instead of these “I will have mercy and not sacrifice.” (Hosea 6:6) Thou seest with what kind of “sacrifices God is well pleased.” (c. 13:16) Thou seest also that already from the first the one class have given place, and these have come in their stead.

These therefore let us bring, for the other indeed are [the offerings] of wealth and of persons who have [possessions], but these of virtue: those from without, these from within: those any chance person even might

perform; these only a few. And as much as a man is superior to a sheep, so much is this sacrifice superior to that; for here thou offerest thy soul as a victim.

[6.] And other sacrifices also there are, which are indeed whole burnt-offerings, the bodies of the martyrs: there both soul and body [are offered]. These have a great savor of a sweet smell. Thou also art able, if thou wilt, to bring such a sacrifice.

For what, if thou dost not burn thy body in the fire? Yet in a different fire thou canst; for instance, in that of voluntary poverty, in that of affliction. For to have it in one's power to spend one's days in luxury and expense, and yet to take up a life of toil and bitterness, and to mortify the body, is not this a whole burnt-offering? Mortify thy body, and crucify it, and thou shalt thyself also receive the crown of this martyrdom. For what in the other case the sword accomplishes, that in this case let a willing mind effect. Let not the love of wealth burn, or possess you, but let this unreasonable appetite itself be consumed and quenched by the fire of the Spirit; let it be cut in pieces by the sword of the Spirit.

This is an excellent sacrifice, needing no priest but him who brings it. This is an excellent sacrifice, performed indeed below but forthwith taken up on high. Do we not wonder that of old time fire came down and consumed all? It is possible now also that fire may come down far more wonderful than that, and consume all the presented offerings: nay rather, not consume, but bear them up to heaven. For it does not reduce them to ashes, but offers them as gifts to God.

[7.] Such were the offerings of Cornelius. For (it is said) "thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." (Acts 10:4) Thou seest a most excellent union. Then are we heard, when we ourselves also hear the poor who come to us. "He" (it is said) "that stoppeth his ears that he may not hear the poor" (Proverbs 21:13), his prayer God will not hearken to. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy: the Lord will deliver him in the evil day." (Psalm 40:1) But what day is evil except that one which is evil to sinners?

What is meant by "he that considereth"? He that understandeth what it is to be a poor man, that has thoroughly learned his affliction. For he that has

learned his affliction, will certainly and immediately have compassion on him. When thou seest a poor man, do not hurry by, but immediately reflect what thou wouldest have been, hadst thou been he. What wouldest thou not have wished that all should do for thee? “He that considereth” (he says). Reflect that he is a free-man like thyself, and shares the same noble birth with thee, and possesses all things in common with thee; and yet oftentimes he is not on a level even with thy dogs. On the contrary, while they are satiated, he oftentimes lies, sleeps, hungry, and the free-man is become less honorable than thy slaves.

But they perform needful services for thee. What are these? Do they serve thee well? Suppose then I show that this [poor man] too performs needful services for thee far greater than they do. For he will stand by thee in the Day of judgment, and will deliver thee from the fire. What do all thy slaves do like this? When Tabitha died, who raised her up? The slaves who stood around or the poor? But thou art not even willing to put the free-man on an equality with thy slaves. The frost is hard, and the poor man is cast out in rags, well-nigh dead, with his teeth chattering, both by his looks and his air fitted to move thee: and thou passeth by, warm and full of drink; and how dost thou expect that God should deliver thee when in misfortune?

And oftentimes thou sayest this too: ‘If it had been myself, and I had found one that had done man), wrong things, I would have forgiven him; and does not God forgive?’ Say not this. Him that has done thee no wrong, whom thou art able to deliver, him thou neglectest. How shall He forgive thee, who art sinning against Him? Is not this deserving of hell?

And how amazing! Oftentimes thou adornest with vestments innumerable, of varied colors and wrought with gold, a dead body, insensible, no longer perceiving the honor; whilst that which is in pain, and lamenting, and tormented, and racked by hunger and frost, thou neglectest; and givest more to vainglory, than to the fear of God.

[8.] And would that it stopped here; but immediately accusations are brought against the applicant. For why does he not work (you say)? And why is he to be maintained in idleness? But (tell me) is it by working that thou hast what thou hast, didst thou not receive it as an inheritance from thy fathers? And even if thou dost work, is this a reason why thou shouldest reproach another? Hearest thou not what Paul saith? For after

saying, “He that worketh not, neither let him eat” (2 Thessalonians 3:10), he says, “But ye be not weary in well doing.” (2 Thessalonians 3:13)

But what say they? He is an impostor. What sayest thou, O man? Callest thou him an impostor, for the sake of a single loaf or of a garment? But (you say) he will sell it immediately. And dost thou manage all thy affairs well? But what? Are all poor through idleness? Is no one so from shipwreck? None from lawsuits? None from being robbed? None from dangers? None from illness? None from any other difficulties? If however we hear any, one bewailing such evils, and crying out aloud, and looking up naked toward heaven, and with long hair, and clad in rags, at once we call him, The impostor! The deceiver! The swindler! Art thou not ashamed? Whom dost thou call impostor? Give nothing, and do not accuse the man.

But (you say) he has means, and pretends. This is a charge against thyself, not against him. He knows that he has to deal with the cruel, with wild beasts rather than with men, and that, even if he utter a pitiable story, he attracts no one’s attention: and on this account he is forced to assume also a more miserable guise, that he may melt thy soul. If we see a person coming to beg in a respectable dress, This is an impostor (you say), and he comes in this way that he may be supposed to be of good birth. If we see one in the contrary guise, him too we reproach. What then are they to do? O the cruelty, O the inhumanity!

And why (you say) do they expose their maimed limbs? Because of thee. If we were compassionate, they would have no need of these artifices: if they persuaded us at the first application, they would not have contrived these devices. Who is there so wretched, as to be willing to cry out so much, as to be willing to behave in an unseemly way, as to be willing to make public lamentations, with his wife destitute of clothing, with his children, to sprinkle ashes on [himself]. How much worse than poverty are these things? Yet on account of them not only are they not pitied, but are even accused by us.

[9.] Shall we then still be indignant, because when we pray to God, we are not heard? Shall we then still be vexed, because when we entreat we do not persuade? Do we not tremble for fear, my beloved?

But (you say) I have often given. But dost thou not always eat? And dost thou drive away thy children often begging of thee? O the shamelessness! Dost thou call a poor man shameless? And thou indeed art not shameless when plundering, but he is shameless when begging for bread! Considerest thou not how great are the necessities of the belly? Dost not thou do all things for this? Dost thou not for this neglect things spiritual? Is not heaven set before thee and the kingdom of heaven? And thou fearing the tyranny of that [appetite] endurest all things, and thinkest lightly of that [kingdom]. This *is* shamelessness.

Seest thou not old men maimed? But O what trifling! 'Such an one' (you say) 'lends out so many pieces of gold, and such an one so many, and yet begs.' You repeat the stories and trifles of children; for they too are always hearing such stories from their nurses. I am not persuaded of it. I do not believe this. Far from it. Does a man lend money, and beg when he has abundance? For what purpose, tell me? And what is more disgraceful than begging? It were better to die than to beg. Where does our in inhumanity stop? What then? Do all lend money? Are all impostors? Is there no one really poor? "Yea" (you say) "and many." Why then dost thou not assist those persons, seeing thou art a strict inquirer into their lives? This is an excuse and a pretense.

"Give to every one that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." (Matthew 5:42) Stretch out thy hand, let it not be closed up. We have not been constituted examiners into men's lives, since so we should have compassion on no one. When thou callest upon God why dost thou say, Remember not my sins? So then, if that person even be a great sinner, make this allowance in his case also, and do not remember his sins. It is the season of kindness, not of strict inquiry; of mercy, not of account. He wishes to be maintained: if thou art willing, give; but if not willing, send him away without raising doubts. Why art thou wretched and miserable? Why dost thou not even thyself pity him, and also turnest away those who would? For when such an one hears from thee, This [fellow] is a cheat; that a hypocrite; and the other lends out money; he neither gives to the one nor to the other; for he suspects all to be such. For you know that we easily suspect evil, but good, not [so easily].

[10.] Let us “be merciful,” not simply so, but “as our heavenly Father is.” (Luke 6:36) He feeds even adulterers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and what shall I say? Those having every kind of wickedness. For in so large a world there must needs be many such. But nevertheless He feeds all; He clothes all. No one ever perished of hunger, unless one did so of his own choice. So let us be merciful. If one be in want and in necessity, help him.

But now we are come to such a degree of unreasonableness, as to act thus not only in regard to the poor who walk up and down the alleys, but even in the case of men that live in [religious] solitude. Such an one is an impostor, you say. Did I not say this at first, that if we give to all indiscriminately, we shall always be compassionate; but if we begin to make over-curious inquiries, we shall never be compassionate? What dost thou mean? Is a man an impostor in order to get a loaf? If indeed he asks for talents of gold and silver, or costly clothes, or slaves, or anything else of this sort, one might with good reason call him a swindler. But if he ask none of these things, but only food and shelter, things which are suited to a philosophic life, tell me, is this the part of a swindler? Cease we from this unseasonable fondness for meddling, which is Satanic, which is destructive.

For indeed, if a man say that he is on the list of the Clergy, or calls himself a priest, then busy thyself [to inquire], make much ado: since in that case the communicating without inquiry is not without danger. For the danger is about matters of importance, for thou dost not give but receivest. But if he want food, make no inquiry.

Inquire, if thou wilt, how Abraham showed hospitality towards all who came to him. If he had been over-curious about those who fled to him for refuge, he would not have “entertained angels.” (c. 13:2) For perhaps not thinking them to be angels, he would have thrust them too away with the rest. But since he used to receive all, he received even angels.

What? Is it from the life of those that receive [thy bounty] that God grants thee thy reward? Nay [it is] from thine own purpose, from thy abundant liberality; from thy loving-kindness; from thy goodness. Let this be [found], and thou shalt attain all good things, which may we all attain, through the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with

whom to the Father and together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 12

HEBREWS 7:1-3

"For this Melchisedec, King of Salem, Priest of the most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the Kings, and blessed him: to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of Righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of Peace, without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, But made like unto the Son of God, abideth a Priest continually."

[1.] PAUL wishing to show the difference between the New and Old [Covenant], scatters it everywhere; and shoots from afar, and noises it abroad, and prepares beforehand. For at once even from the introduction, he laid down this saying, that "to them indeed He spake by prophets, but to us by the Son" (c. 1:1, 2), and to them "at sundry times and in divers manners," but to us through the Son. Afterwards, having discoursed concerning the Son, who He was and what He had wrought, and given an exhortation to obey Him, lest we should suffer the same things as the Jews; and having said that He is "High Priest after the order of Melchisedec" (c. 6:20), and having oftentimes wished to enter into [the subject of] this difference, and having used much preparatory management; and having rebuked them as weak, and again soothed and restored them to confidence; then at last he introduces the discussion on the difference [of the two dispensations] to ears in their full vigor. For he who is depressed in spirits would not be a ready hearer. And that you may understand this, hear the Scripture saying, "They hearkened not to Moses for anguish of spirit." (Exodus 6:9) Therefore having first cleared away their despondency by many considerations, some fearful, some more gentle, he then from this point enters upon the discussion of the difference [of the dispensations].

[2.] And what does he say? "For this Melchisedec, King of Salem, Priest of the Most High God." And, what is especially noteworthy, he shows the difference to be great by the Type itself. For as I said, he continually confirms the truth from the Type, from things past, on account of the

weakness of the hearers. “For” (he says) “this Melchisedec, King of Salem, Priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the Kings, and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all.” Having concisely set down the whole narrative, he looked at it mystically.

And first from the name. “First” (he says) “being by interpretation King of righteousness”: for Sedec means “righteousness”; and Melchi, “King”: Melchisedec, “King of righteousness.” Seest thou his exactness even in the names? But who is “King of righteousness,” save our Lord Jesus Christ? “King of righteousness. And after that also King of Salem,” from his city, “that is, King of Peace,” which again is [characteristic] of Christ. For He has made us righteous, and has “made peace” for “things in Heaven and things on earth.” (Colossians 1:20) What man is “King of Righteousness and of Peace”? None, save only our Lord JESUS Christ.

[3.] He then adds another distinction, “Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a Priest continually.” Since then there lay in his way [as an objection] the [words] “Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec,” whereas he [Melchisedec] was dead, and was not” Priest for ever,” see how he explained it mystically.

‘And who can say this concerning a man?’ I do not assert this in fact (he says); the meaning is, we do not know when [or] what father he had, nor what mother, nor when he received his beginning, nor when he died. And what of this (one says)? For does it follow, because we do not know it, that he did not die, [or] had no parents? Thou sayest well: he both died and had parents. How then [was he] “without father, without mother”? How “having neither beginning of days nor end of life”? How? [Why] from its not being expressed? And what of this? That as this man is so, from his genealogy not being given, so is Christ from the very nature of the reality.

See the “without beginning”; see the “without end.” As in case of this man, we know not either “beginning of days,” or “end of life,” because they have not been written; so we know [them] not in the case of JESUS, not because they have not been written, but because they do not exist. For that indeed is a type, and therefore [we say] ‘because it is not written,’

but this is the reality, and therefore [we say] 'because it does not exist.' For as in regard to the names also (for there "King of Righteousness" and "of Peace" are appellations, but here the reality) so these too are appellations in that case, in this the reality. How then hath He a beginning? Thou seest that the Son is "without beginning," not in respect of His not having a cause; (for this is impossible: for He has a Father, otherwise how is He Son?) but in respect of His "not having beginning or end of life."

"But made like unto the Son of God." Where is the likeness? That we know not of the one or of the other either the end or the beginning. Of the one because they are not written; of the other, because they do not exist. Here is the likeness. But if the likeness were to exist in all respects, there would no longer be type and reality; but both would be type. [Here] then just as in representations [by painting or drawing], there is somewhat that is like and somewhat that is unlike. By means of the lines indeed there is a likeness of features, but when the colors are put on, then the difference is plainly shown, both the likeness and the unlikeness.

[4.] Verse 4. *"Now consider" (saith he) "how great this man is to whom even the Patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils."* Up to this point he has been applying the type: hence-forward he boldly shows him [Melchisedec] to be more glorious than the Jewish realities. But if he who bears a type of Christ is so much better not merely than the priests, but even than the forefather himself of the priests, what should one say of the reality? Thou seest how super-abundantly he shows the superiority.

"Now consider" (he says) "how great this man is to whom even the Patriarch Abraham gave a tenth out of the choice portions." Spoils taken in battle are called "choice portions." And it cannot be said that he gave them to him as having a part in the war, because (he said) he met him "returning from the slaughter of the kings," for he had staid at home (he means), yet [Abraham] gave him the first-fruits of his labors.

Verse 5. *"And verily they that are of the sons of Levi who receive the office of Priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham."*

So great (he would say) is the superiority of the priesthood, that they who from their ancestors are of the same dignity, and have the same forefather, are yet far better than the rest. At all events they "receive tithes" from them. When then one is found, who receives tithes from these very persons, are not they indeed in the rank of laymen, and he among the Priests?

And not only this; but neither was he of the same dignity with them, but of another race: so that he would not have given tithes to a stranger unless his dignity had been great. Astonishing! What has he accomplished? He has made quite clear a greater point than those relating to faith which he treated in the Epistle to the Romans. For there indeed he declares Abraham to be the forefather both of our polity and also of the Jewish. But here he is exceeding bold against him, and shows that the uncircumcised person is far superior. How then did he show that Levi paid tithes? Abraham (he says) paid them. 'And how does this concern us?' It especially concerns you: for you will not contend that the Levites are superior to Abraham. (Verse 6) "But he whose descent is not counted from them, received tithes of Abraham."

And after that he did not simply pass on, but added, "and blessed him that had the promises." Inasmuch as throughout, this was regarded with reverence, he shows that [Melchisedec] was to be reverenced more than Abraham, from the common judgment of all men. (Verse 7) "And without all contradiction," he says, "the less is blessed of the better," i.e. in the opinion of all men it is the inferior that is blessed by the superior. So then the type of Christ is superior even to "him that had the promises."

(Verse 8) "And here men that die receive tithes: but there he of whom it is testified that he liveth." But lest we should say, Tell us, why goest thou so far back? He says, (verse 9) "And as I may so say" (and he did well in softening it) "Levi also who receiveth tithes payed tithes in Abraham." How? (Verse 10) "For he was yet in his loins when Melchisedec met him," i.e. Levi was in him, although he was not yet born. And he said not the Levites but Levi.

Hast thou seen the superiority? Hast thou seen how great is the interval between Abraham and Melchisedec, who bears the type of our High Priest? And he shows that the superiority had been caused by authority,

not necessity. For the one paid the tithe, which indicates the priest: the other gave the blessing, which indicates the superior. This superiority passes on also to the descendants.

In a marvelous and triumphant way he cast out the Jewish [system]. On this account he said, “Ye are become dull,” (c. 5:12), because he wished to lay these foundations, that they might not start away. Such is the wisdom of Paul, first preparing them well, he so leads them into what he wishes. For the human race is hard to persuade, and needs much attention, even more than plants. Since in that case there is [only] the nature of material bodies, and earth, which yields to the hands of the husbandmen: but in this there is will, which is liable to many alterations, and now prefers this, now that. For it quickly turns to evil.

[5.] Wherefore we ought always to “guard” ourselves, test at any time we should fall asleep. For “Lo” (it is said) “he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep” (Psalm 121:4), and “Do not suffer thy foot to be moved.” (Psalm 121:3) He did not say, ‘be not moved’ but “do not thou suffer,” etc. The suffering depends then on ourselves, and not on any other. For if we will stand “steadfast and unmoveable” (1 Corinthians 15:58), we shall not be shaken.

What then? Does nothing depend on God? All indeed depends on God, but not so that our free-will is hindered. ‘If then it depend on God,’ (one says), ‘why does He blame us?’ On this account I said, ‘so that our free-will is no hindered.’ It depends then on us, and on Him For we must first choose the good; and then He leads us to His own. He does not anticipate our choice, lest our free-will should be outraged. But when we have chosen, then great is the assistance he brings to us.

How is it then that Paul says, “not of him that willeth,” if it depend on ourselves also “nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.” (Romans 9:16)

In the first place, he did not introduce it as his own opinion, but inferred it from what was before him and from what had been put forward [in the discussion]. For after saying, “It is written, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion” (Romans 9:15),he says, “It follows then that it is not of him

that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." "Thou wilt say then unto me, why doth He yet find fault?" (Romans 9:16, 19)

And secondly the other explanation may be given, that he speaks of all as His, whose the greater part is. For it is ours to choose and to wish; but God's to complete and to bring to an end. Since therefore the greater part is of Him, he says all is of Him, speaking according to the custom of men. For so we ourselves also do. I mean for instance: we see a house well built, and we say the whole is the Architect's [doing], and yet certainly it is not all his, but the workmen's also, and the owner's, who supplies the materials, and many others', but nevertheless since he contributed the greatest share, we call the whole his. So then [it is] in this case also. Again, with respect to a number of people, where the many are, we say All are: where few, nobody. So also Paul says, "not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."

And herein he establishes two great truths: one, that we should not be lifted up: even shouldst thou run (he would say), even shouldst thou be very earnest, do not consider that the well doing is thine own. For if thou obtain not the impulse that is from above, all is to no purpose. Nevertheless that thou wilt attain that which thou earnestly strivest after is very evident; so long as thou runnest, so long as thou willest.

He did not then assert this, that we run in vain, but that, if we think the whole to be our own, if we do not assign the greater part to God, we run in vain. For neither hath God willed that the whole should be His, lest He should appear to be crowning us without cause: nor again our's, lest we should fall away to pride. For if when we have the smaller [share], we think much of ourselves, what should we do if the whole depended on us?

[6.] Indeed God hath done away many things for the purpose of cutting away our boastfulness, and still there is the high hand. With how many afflictions hath He encompassed us, so as to cut away our proud spirit! With how many wild beasts hath He encircled us! For indeed when some say, 'why is this?' 'Of what use is this?' They utter these things against the will of God. He hath placed thee in the midst of so great fear, and yet not even so art thou lowly-minded; but if thou ever attain a little success, thou reachest to Heaven itself in pride.

For this cause [come] rapid changes and reverses; and yet not even so are we instructed. For this cause are there continual and untimely deaths, but are minded as if we were immortal, as if we should never die. We plunder, we over-reach, as though we were never to give account. We build as if we were to abide here always. And not even the word of God daily sounded into our ears, nor the events themselves instruct us. Not a day, not an hour can be mentioned, in which we may not see continual funerals. But all in vain: and nothing reaches our hardness [of heart]: nor are we even able to become better by the calamities of others; or rather, we are not willing. When we ourselves only are afflicted, then we are subdued, and yet if God take off His hand, we again lift up our hand: no one considers what is proper for man, no one despises the things on earth; no one looks to Heaven. But as swine turn their heads downwards, stooping towards their belly, wallowing in the mire; so too the great body of mankind defile themselves with the most intolerable filth, without being conscious of it.

[7.] For better were it to be defiled with unclean mud than with sins; for he who is defiled with the one, washes it off in a little time, and becomes like one who had never from the first fallen into that slough; but he who has fallen into the deep pit of sin has contracted a defilement that is not cleansed by water, but needs long time, and strict repentance, and tears and lamentations, and more wailing, and that more fervent, than we show over the dearest friends. For this defilement attaches to us from without, wherefore we also speedily put it away; but the other is generated from within, wherefore also we wash it off with difficulty, and cleanse ourselves from it. “For from the heart” (it is said) “proceed evil thoughts, fornications, adulteries, thefts, false witnesses.” (Matthew 15:19) Wherefore also the Prophet said, “Create in me a clean heart, O God.” (Psalm 51:10) And another, “Wash thine heart from wickedness, O Jerusalem.” (Jeremiah 4:14) (Thou seest that it is both our [work] and God’s.) And again, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:8)

Let us become clean to the utmost of our power. Let us wipe away our sins. And how to wipe them away, the prophet teaches, saying, “Wash you, make you clean, put away your wickedness from your souls, before Mine eyes.” (Isaiah 1:16) What is “before Mine eyes”? Because some seem to be free from wickedness, but only to men, while to God they are

manifest as being “whited sepulchers.” Therefore He says, so put them away as I see. “Learn to do well, seek judgment, do justice for the poor and lowly.” “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: and though your sins be as scarlet, I will make you white as snow, and if they be as crimson, I will make you white as wool.” (Isaiah 1:17, 18) Thou seest that we must first cleanse ourselves, and then God cleanses us. For having said first, “Wash you, make you clean,” He then added “I will make you white.”

Let no one then, [even] of those who are come to the extremist wickedness, despair of himself. For (He says) even if thou hast passed into the habit, yea and almost into the nature of wickedness itself, be not afraid. Therefore taking [the instance of] colors that are not superficial but almost of the substance of the materials, He said that He would bring them into the opposite state. For He did not simply say that He would “wash” us, but that He would “make” us “white, as snow and as wool,” in order to hold out good hopes before us. Great then is the power of repentance, at least if it makes us as snow, and whitens us as wool, even if sin have first got possession and dyed our souls.

Let us labor earnestly then to become clean; He has enjoined nothing burdensome. “Judge the fatherless, and do justice for the widow.” (Isaiah 1:17) Thou seest everywhere how great account God makes of mercy, and of standing forward in behalf of those that are wronged. These good deeds let us pursue after, and we shall be able also, by the grace of God, to attain to the blessings to come: which may we all be counted worthy of, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 13

HEBREWS 7:11-14

"If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood; (for under it the people have received the law') what further need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken, pertained to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests."

[1.] "IF therefore" (he says) "perfection were by the Levitical priesthood." Having spoken concerning Melchisedec, and shown how much superior he was to Abraham, and having set forth the great difference between them, he begins from this point forward to prove the wide difference as to the covenant itself, and how the one is imperfect and the other perfect. However he does not even yet enter on the matters themselves, but first contends on the ground of the priesthood, and the tabernacle. For these things would be more easily received by the unbelieving, when the proof was derived from things already allowed, and believed.

He had shown that Melchisedec was greatly superior both to Levi and to Abraham, being to them in the rank of the priests. Again he argues from a different point. What then is this? Why (he says) did he not say, "after the order of Aaron"? And observe, I pray you, the great superiority [of his argument]. For from the very circumstance which naturally excluded His priesthood, viz. that He was not "after the order of Aaron," from that he establishes Him, and excludes the others. For this is the very thing that I say (he declares); why has He " not been made after the order of Aaron"?

And the [saying] "what further need" has much emphasis. For if Christ had been "after the order of Melchisedec" according to the flesh, and then afterwards the law had been introduced, and all that pertained to Aaron, one might reasonably say that the latter as being more perfect, annulled the former, seeing that it had come in after it. But if Christ comes later, and takes a different type, as that of His priesthood, it is evident that it is

because those. were imperfect. For (he would say) let us suppose for argument's sake, that all has been fulfilled, and that there is nothing imperfect in the priesthood. "What need" was there in that case that He should be called "after the order of Melchisedec and not after the order of Aaron"? Why did He set aside Aaron, and introduce a different priesthood, that of Melchisedec? "If then perfection," that is the perfection of the things themselves, of the doctrines, of life, "had been by the Levitical priesthood."

And observe how he goes forward on his path. He had said that [He was] "after the order of Melchisedec," implying that the [priesthood] "after the order of Melchisedec" is superior: for [he was] far superior. Afterwards he shows this from the time also, in that He was after Aaron; evidently as being better.

[2.] And what is the meaning of what follows? "For" (he says) "under [or "upon"] it the people have received the Law for "have been legislated for"]." What is "under it" [etc.]? Ordereth itself by it; through it does all things. You cannot say that it was given to others, "the people under it have received the law," that is, have used it, and did use it. You cannot say indeed that it was perfect, it did not govern the people; "they have been legislated for upon it," that is, they used it.

What need was there then of another priesthood? "For the priesthood being changed, there is of necessity a change of the law also." But if there must be another priest, or rather another priesthood, there must needs be also another law. This is for those who say, What need was there of a new Covenant? For he could indeed have alleged a testimony from prophecy also. "This is the covenant which I made with your fathers" [etc.]. (c. 8:10) But for the present he contends on the ground of the priesthood. And observe, how be says this from the first. He said, "According to the order of "Melchisedec." By this he excluded the order of Aaron. For he would not have said "After the order of Melchisedec," if the other had been better. If therefore another priesthood has been brought in, there must be also [another] Covenant; for neither is it possible that there should be a priest, without a covenant and laws and ordinances, nor that having received a different priesthood He should use the former [covenant].

In the next place, as to the ground of objection: “How could He be a priest if He were not a Levite?” Having overthrown this by what had been said above, he does not even think it worth answering, but introduces it in passing. I said (he means) that the priesthood was changed, therefore also the Covenant is. And it was changed not only in its character, or in its ordinances, but also in its tribe. For of necessity [it must be changed] in its tribe also. How? “For the priesthood being changed [or “transferred “],” from tribe to tribe, from the sacerdotal to the regal [tribe], that the same might be both regal and sacerdotal.

And observe the mystery. First it was royal, and then it is become sacerdotal: so therefore also in regard to Christ: for King indeed He always was, but has become Priest from the time that He assumed the Flesh, that He offered the sacrifice. Thou seest the change, and the very things which were ground of objection these he introduces, as though the natural order of things required them. “For” (he says) “He of whom these things are spoken pertained to another tribe.” I myself also say it, I know that this tribe [of Judah] had nothing of priesthood. For there is a transferring.

[3.] Yea and I am showing another difference also (he would say): not only from the tribe, nor yet only from the Person, nor from the character [of the Priesthood], nor from the covenant, but also from the type itself., (Verse 16) “Who was made [“ became” so], not according to the law of a carnal commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. He became” (he says) “a priest not according to the law of a carnal commandment “: for that law was in many respects unlawful.

What is, “of a carnal commandment”? Circumcise the flesh, it says; anoint the flesh; wash the flesh; purify the flesh; shave the flesh; bind upon the flesh; cherish the flesh; rest as to the flesh. And again its blessings, what are they? Long life for the flesh; milk and honey for the flesh; peace for the flesh; luxury for the flesh. From this law Aaron received the priesthood; Melchisedec however not so.

Verse 15. *“And it is yet far more evident, if after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest.”*

What is evident? The interval between the two priesthoods, the difference; how much superior He is “who was made not according to the law of a

carnal commandment." (Who? Melchisedec? Nay; but Christ.) "But according to the power of an endless life. For He testifieth, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec"; that is, not for a time, nor having any limit, "but according to the power of an endless life," that is, by means of power, by means of "endless life."

And yet this does not follow after, "who was made not according to the law of a carnal commandment": for what would follow would be to say, "but according to that of a spiritual one." However by "carnal," he implied temporary. As he says also in another place, carnal ordinances imposed until the time of reformation." (c. 9:10)

"According to the power of life," that is, because He lives by His own power.

[4.] He had said, that there is also a change of law, and up to this point he has shown it; henceforward he inquires into the cause, that which above all gives full assurance to men's minds, [I mean] the knowing the cause thoroughly; and it leads us more to faith when we have learned also the cause, and the principle according to which [the thing] comes to pass.

Verse 18. *"For there is verily" (he says) "a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof."*

Here the Heretics press on. But listen attentively. He did not say "for the evil," nor, "for the viciousness," but "for the weakness and unprofitableness [thereof]," yea and in other places also he shows the weakness; as when he says "In that it was weak through the flesh." (Romans 8:3 [The law] itself then is not weak, but we.

Verse 19. *"For the Law made nothing perfect." What is, "make nothing perfect"?*

Made no man perfect, being disobeyed. And besides, even if it had been listened to, it would not have made one perfect and virtuous. But as yet he does not say this here, but that it had no strength: and with good reason. For written precepts were there set down, Do this and Do not that, being enjoined only, and not giving power within. But "the Hope" is not such.

What is “a disannulling”? A casting out. A “disannulling” is a disannulling of things which are of force. So that he implied, that it [once] was of force, but henceforward was of no account, since it accomplished nothing. Was the Law then of no use? It was indeed of use; and of great use: but to make men perfect it was of no use. For in this respect he says, “The Law made nothing perfect.” All were figures, all shadows; circumcision, sacrifice, sabbath. Therefore they could not reach through the soul, wherefore they pass away and gradually withdraw. “But the bringing in of a better hope did, by which we draw nigh unto God.”

[5.] Verse 20 *“And forasmuch as not without the taking of an oath.”* Thou seest that the matter of the oath becomes necessary for him here. Accordingly for this reason he previously treated much [hereon], how that God swore; and swore for the sake of [our] fuller assurance.

“But the bringing in of a better hope.” For that system also had a hope, but not such as this. For they hoped that, if they were well pleasing [to God], they should possess the land, that they should suffer nothing fearful. But in this [dispensation] we hope that, if we are well pleasing [to God], we shall possess not earth, but heaven; or rather (which is far better than this) we hope to stand near to God, to come unto the very throne of the Father, to minister unto Him with the Angels. And see how he introduces these things by little and little. For above he says “which entereth into that within the veil”, (c. 6:19), but here, “by which we draw nigh unto God.”

“And inasmuch as not without an oath.” What is “And inasmuch as not without an oath”? That is, Behold another difference also. And these things were not merely promised (he says). “For those priests were made without an oath,” (verse 21, 22) “but This with an oath, by Him that said unto Him, The Lord swore and will not repent, Thou art Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better covenant.” He lays down two points of difference, that it hath no end as the [covenant] of the Law had; and this he proves from [its being] Christ who exercises [the priesthood]; for he says “according to the power of an endless life.” And he proves it also from the oath, because “He swore,” etc., and from the fact; for if the other was cast out, because it was weak, this stands firm, because it is powerful. He proves it also from the

priest. How? Because He is One [only]; and there would not have been One [only], unless He had been immortal. For as there were many priests, because they were mortal, so [here is] The One, because He is immortal. "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better covenant," inasmuch as He swear to Him that He should always be [Priest]; which He would not have done, if He were not living.

[6.] (Verse 25) "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Thou seest that he says this in respect of that which is according to the flesh. For when He [appears] as Priest, then He also intercedes. Wherefore also when Paul says, "who also maketh intercession for us" (Romans 8:34), he hints the same thing; the High Priest maketh intercession. For He "that raiseth the dead as He will, and quickeneth them," (John 5:21), and that "even as the Father" [doth], how [is it that] when there is need to save, He "maketh intercession"? (John 5:22) He that hath "all judgment," how [is it that] He "maketh intercession"? He that "sendeth His angels" (Matthew 13:41, 42), that they may "cast" some into "the furnace," and save others, how [is it that] He "maketh intercession"? Wherefore (he says) "He is able also to save." For this cause then He saves, because He dies not. Inasmuch as "He ever liveth," He hath (he means) no successor: And if He have no successor, He is able to aid all men. For there [under the Law] indeed, the High Priest although he were worthy of admiration during the time in which he was [High Priest] (as Samuel for instance, and any other such), but, after this, no longer; for they were dead. But here it is not so, but "He" saves "to the uttermost."

What is "to the uttermost"? He hints at some mystery. Not here only (he says) but there also He saves them that "come unto God by Him." How does He save? "In that He ever liveth" (he says) "to make intercession for them." Thou seest the humiliation? Thou seest the manhood? For he says not, that He obtained this, by making intercession once for all, but continually, and whensoever it may be needful to intercede for them.

"To the uttermost." What is it? Not for a time only, but there also in the future life. ' Does He then always need to pray? Yet how can [this] be reasonable? Even righteous men have oftentimes accomplished all by one

entreaty, and is He always praying? Why then is He throned with [the Father]?' Thou seest that it is a condescension. The meaning is: Be not afraid, nor say, Yea, He loves us indeed, and He has confidence towards the Father, but He cannot live always. For He doth live alway.

[7.] (Verse 26) "For such an High Priest also became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from the sinners." Thou seest that the whole is said with reference to the manhood. (But when I say 'the manhood,' I mean [the manhood] having Godhead; not dividing [one from the other], but leaving [you] to suppose what is suitable.) Didst thou mark the difference of the High Priest? He has summed up what was said before, "in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin." (c. 4:15) "For" (he says) "such an High Priest also became us, who is holy, harmless." "Harmless ": what is it? Without wickedness: that which another Prophet says: "guile was not found in His mouth" (Isaiah 53:9), that is, [He is] not crafty. Could any one say this concerning God? And is one not ashamed to say that God is not crafty, nor deceitful? Concerning Him, however, in respect of the Flesh, it might be reasonable [to say it]. "Holy, undefiled." This too would any one say concerning God? For has He a nature capable of defilement? "Separate from sinners."

[8.] Does then this alone show the difference, or does the sacrifice itself also? How? (Verse 27) "He needeth not" (he says) "daily, as the High Priest, to offer up sacrifices for his sins, for this He did once for all, when He offered up Himself. "This," what? Here what follows sounds a prelude concerning the exceeding greatness of the spiritual sacrifice and the interval [between them]. He has mentioned the point of the priest; he has mentioned that of the faith; he has mentioned that of the Covenant; not entirely indeed, still he has mentioned it. In this place what follows is a prelude concerning the sacrifice itself. Do not then, having heard that He is a priest, suppose that He is always executing the priest's office. For He executed it once, and thenceforward "sat down." (c. 10:12) Lest thou suppose that He is standing on high, and is a minister, he shows that the matter is [part] of a dispensation [or economy]. For as He became a servant, so also [He became] a Priest and a Minister. But as after becoming a servant, He did not continue a servant, so also, having become a Minister, He did not continue a Minister. For it belongs not to a minister to sit, but to stand.

This then he hints at here, and also the greatness of the sacrifice, if being [but] one, and having been offered up once only, it affected that which all [the rest] were unable to do. But he does not yet [treat] of these points.

"For this He did," he says. "This"; what? "For" (he says) "it is of necessity that this [Man] have somewhat also to offer" (c. 8:3); not for Himself; for how did He offer Himself? But for the people. What sayest thou? And is He able to do this? Yea (he says). "For the Law maketh men high priests, which have infirmity." (c. 7:28) And doth He not need to offer for Himself? No, he says. For, that you may not suppose that the [words, "this "] "He did once for all," are said respecting Himself also, hear what he says: "For the law maketh men high priests, which have infirmity." On this account they both offer continually, and for themselves. He however who is mighty, He that hath no sin, why should He offer for Himself, or oftentimes for others?

"But the word of the oath which was since the Law [maketh] the Son who has been consecrated for evermore." "Consecrated": what is that? Paul does not set down the common terms of contradistinction; for after saying "having Infirmity," he did not say "the Son" who is mighty, but "consecrated": i.e. mighty, as one might say. Thou seest that the name Son is used in contradistinction to that of servant. And by "infirmity" he means either sin or death.

What is, "for evermore"? Not now only without sin but always. If then He is perfect, if He never sins, if He lives always, why shall He offer many sacrifices for us? But for the present he does not insist strongly on this point: but what he does strongly insist upon is, His not offering on His own behalf.

[9.] Since then we have such an High Priest, let us imitate Him: let us walk in His footsteps. There is no other sacrifice: one alone has cleansed us, and after this, fire and hell. For indeed on this account he repeats it over and over, saying, "one Priest," "one Sacrifice," lest any one supposing that there are many [sacrifices] should sin without fear. Let us then, as many as have been counted worthy of The Seal, as many as have enjoyed The Sacrifice, as many as have partaken of the immortal Table, continue to guard our noble birth and our dignity for failing away is not without danger.

And as many as have not yet been counted worthy these [privileges], let not these either be confident on that account. For when a person goes on in sin, with the view of receiving holy baptism at the last gasp, oftentimes he will not obtain it. And, believe me, it is not to terrify you that I say what I am going to say. I have myself known many persons, to whom this has happened, who in expectation indeed of the enlightening sinned much, and on the day of their death went away empty. For God gave us baptism for this cause, that He might do away our sins, not that He might increase our sins. Whereas if any man have employed it as a security for sinning more, it becomes a cause of negligence. For if there had been no Washing, they would have lived more warily, as not having [the means of] forgiveness. Thou seest that we are the ones who cause it to be said "Let us do evil, that good may come." (Romans 3:8)

Wherefore, I exhort you also who are uninitiated, be sober. Let no man follow after virtue as an hireling, no man as a senseless person, no man as after a heavy and burdensome thing, Let us pursue it then with a ready mind, and with joy. For if there were no reward laid up, ought we not to be good? But however, at least with a reward, let us become good. And how is this anything else than a disgrace and a very great condemnation? Unless thou give me a reward (says one), I do not become self-controlled. Then am I bold to say something: thou wilt never be self-controlled, no not even when thou livest with self-control, if thou dost it for a reward. Thou esteemest not virtue at all, if thou dost not love it. But on account of our great weakness, God was willing that for a time it should be practiced even for reward, yet not even so do we pursue it.

But let us suppose, if you will, that a man dies, after having done innumerable evil things, having also been counted worthy of baptism (which however I think does not readily happen), tell me, how will he depart thither? Not indeed called to account for the deeds he had done, but yet without confidence; as is reasonable. For when after living a hundred years, he has no good work to show, but only that he has not sinned, or rather not even this, but that he was saved by grace only, and when he sees others crowned, in splendor, and highly approved: even if he fall not into hell, tell me, will he endure his despondency?

[10.] But to make the matter clear by an example, Suppose there are two soldiers, and that one of them steals, injures, overreaches, and that the other does none of these things, but acts the part of a brave man, does important things well, sets up trophies in war, stains his right hand with blood; then when the time arrives, suppose that (from the same rank in which the thief also was) he is at once conducted to the imperial throne and the purple; but suppose that the other remains there where he was, and merely of the royal kindness does not pay the penalty of his deeds, let him however be in the last place, and let him be stationed under the King. Tell me, will he be able to endure his despair when he sees him who was [ranked] with himself ascended even to the very highest dignities, and made thus glorious, and master of the world, while he himself still remains below, and has not even been freed from punishment with honor, but through the grace and kindness of the King? For even should the King forgive him, and release him from the charges against him, still he will live in shame; for surely not even will others admire him: since in such forgiveness, we admire not those who receive the gifts, but those who bestow them. And as much as the gifts are greater, so much the more are they ashamed who receive them, when their transgressions are great.

With what eyes then will such an one be able to took on those who are in the King's courts, when they exhibit their sweatings out of number and their wounds, whilst he has nothing to show, but has his salvation itself of the mere loving-kindness of God? For as if one were to beg off a murderer, a thief, an adulterer, when he was going to be arrested, and were to command him to stay at the porch of the King's palace, he will not afterwards be able to look any man in the face, although he has been set free from punishment: so too surely is this man's case.

For do not, I beseech you, suppose that because it is called a palace, therefore all attain the same things. For if here in Kings' courts there is the Prefect, and all who are about the King, and also those who are in very inferior stations, and occupy the place of what are called Decani (though the interval be so great between the Prefect and the Decanus) much more shall this be so in the royal court above.

And this I say not of myself. For Paul layeth down another difference greater even than these. For (he says) as many differences as there are

between the sun and the moon and the stars and the very smallest star, so many also between those in the kingdom [of Heaven]. And that the difference between the sun and the smallest star is far greater than that between the Decanus (as he is called) and the Prefect, is evident to all. For while the sun shines upon all the world at once, and makes it bright, and hides the moon and the stars, the other often does not appear, not even in the dark. For there are many of the stars which we do not see. When then we see others become suns, and we have the rank of the very smallest stars, which are not even visible, what comfort shall we have?

Let us not, I beseech you, let us not be so slothful, not so inert, let us not barter away the salvation of God for an easy life, but let us make merchandise of it, and increase it. For even if one be a Catechumen, still he knows Christ, still he understands the Faith, still he is a hearer of the divine oracles, still he is not far from the knowledge; he knows the will of his Lord. Wherefore does he procrastinate? wherefore does he delay and postpone? Nothing is better than a good life whether here or there, whether in case of the Enlightened or of the Catechumens,

[11.] For tell me what burdensome command have we enjoined? Have a wife (it is said) and be chaste. Is this difficult? How? when many, not Christians only but heathens also, live chastely without a wife. That which the heathen surpasses for vainglory, thou dost not even keep for the fear of God.

Give (He says) to the poor out of what thou hast. Is this burdensome? But in this case also heathen condemn us who for vainglory only have emptied out their whole possessions.

Use not filthy communication. Is this difficult? For if it had not been enjoined, ought we not to have done right in this, to avoid appearing degraded? For that the contrary conduct is troublesome, I mean the using filthy communication, is manifest from the fact that the soul is ashamed and blushes if it have been led to say any such thing and would not unless perhaps it were drunk. For when sitting in a public place, even if thou doest it at home, why dost thou not do it there? Because of those that are present. Why dost thou not readily do the same thing before thy wife? That thou mayest not insult her. So then thou dost it not, lest thou

shouldest insult thy wife; and dost thou not blush at insulting God? For He is everywhere present, and heareth all things.

Be not drunken, He says. For this very thing of itself, is it not a chastisement? He did not say, Put thy body on the rack, but what? Do not give it free rein so as to take away the authority of the mind: on the contrary "make not provision for the lusts thereof." (Romans 13:14)

Do not (He says) seize by violence what is not thine own; do not overreach; do not forswear thyself. What labors do these things require! what sweatings!

Speak evil of no man (He says) nor accuse falsely. The contrary indeed is a labor. For when thou hast spoken ill of another, immediately thou art in danger, in suspicion, [saying] Did he of whom I spake, hear? whether he be great or small. For should he be a great man, immediately thou wilt be indeed in danger; but if small, he will requite thee with as much, or rather with what is far more grievous; for he will say evil of thee in a greater degree. We are enjoined nothing difficult, nothing burdensome, if we have the will. And if we have not the will, even the easiest things will appear burdensome to us. What is easier than eating? but from great effeminacy many feel disgust even at this, and I hear many say, that it is weariness even to eat. None of these things is wearisome if thou hast but the will. For everything depends on the will after the grace from above. Let us will good things that we may attain also to the good things eternal, in Christ Jesus our Lord, whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost be glory, might, honor, now and for ever, and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 14

HEBREWS 8:1, 2

***"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum:
We have such an High Priest; who is set down on the right hand
of the throne of the majesty in the heavens: a minister of the sanctuary
and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man."***

[1.] PAUL mixes the lowly things with the lofty, ever imitating his Master, so that the lowly become the path to the lofty, and through the former we are led to the latter, and when we are amid the great things we learn that these [lowly ones] were a condescension. This accordingly he does here also. After declaring that "He offered up Himself," and showing Him to be a "High Priest," what does he say? "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: we have such an High Priest who is set down on the right hand of the throne of the majesty." And yet this is not [the office] of a Priest, but of Him whom the Priest should serve.

"A minister of the sanctuary," not simply a minister, but "a minister of the sanctuary. And of the true Tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man." Thou seest the condescension. Did he not a little before make a separation, saying: "Are they not all ministering spirits?" (*supra*, 1:14) and therefore (he says) it is not said to them, "Sit thou on my right hand," (*supra*, 1:13) for He that sitteth is not a minister. How is it then that it is here said, "a minister," and "a minister of the Sanctuary "? for he means here the Tabernacle.

See how he raised up the minds of the believing Jews. For as they would be apt to imagine that we have no such tabernacle [as they had], see here (he says) is the Priest, Great, yea, much greater than the other, and who has offered a more wonderful sacrifice. But is not all this mere talk? is it not a boast, and merely said to win over our minds? on this account he established it first from the oath, and afterwards also from "the tabernacle." For this difference too was manifest: but the Apostle thinks of another also, "which" (he says) "the Lord pitched [or "made firm "]

and not man.” Where are they who say that the heaven whirls around? where are they who declare that it is spherical? for both of these notions are overthrown here.

“Now” (he says) “of the things which we have spoken this is the sum.” By “the sum” is always meant what is most important. Again he brings down his discourse; having said what is lofty, henceforward he speaks fearlessly.

[2.] In the next place that thou mayest understand that he used the word “minister” of the manhood, observe how he again indicates it: “For” (verse 3) (he says) “every high priest is ordained to offer both gifts and sacrifices, wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.”

Do not now, because thou hearest that He sitteth, suppose that His being called High Priest is mere idle talk. For the former, viz. His sitting, belongs to the dignity of the Godhead, but this to His great loving-kindness, and His tender care for us. On this account he repeatedly urges this very thing, and dwells more upon it: for he feared lest the other [truth] should overthrow it. Therefore he again brings down his discourse to this: since some were inquiring why He died. He was a Priest. But there is no Priest without a sacrifice. It is necessary then that He also should have a sacrifice.

And in another way; Having said that He is on high, he affirms and proves that He is a Priest from every consideration, from Melchisedec, from the oath, from offering sacrifice. From this he also frames another and necessary syllogism. “For if” (he says) “He had been on earth, He would not be a Priest, seeing that there are priests who offer the gifts according to the Law.” If then He is a Priest (as He really is), we must seek some other place for Him. “For if He were” indeed “on earth, He should not be a priest.” For how [could He be]? He offered no sacrifice, He ministered not in the Priest’s office. And with good reason, for there were the priests. Moreover he shows, that it was impossible that [He] should be a priest upon earth. For how [could He be]? There was no rising up against [the appointed Priests], he means.

[3.] Here we must apply our minds attentively, and consider the Apostolic wisdom; for again he shows the difference of the Priesthood. "Who" (he says) "serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things."

What are the heavenly things he speaks of here? The spiritual things. For although they are done on earth, yet nevertheless they are worthy of the Heavens. For when our Lord Jesus Christ lies slain [as a sacrifice], when the Spirit is with us, when He who sitteth on the right hand of the Father is here, when sons are made by the Washing, when they are fellow-citizens of those in Heaven, when we have a country, and a city, and citizenship there, when we are strangers to things here, how can all these be other than "heavenly' things "? But what! Are not our Hymns heavenly? Do not we also who are below utter in concert with them the same things which the divine choirs of bodiless powers sing above? Is not the altar also heavenly? How? It hath nothing carnal, all spiritual things become the offerings. The sacrifice does not disperse into ashes, or into smoke, or into steamy savor, it makes the things placed there bright and splendid. How again can the rites which we celebrate be other than heavenly? For when He says, "Whose soever sins ye retain they are retained, whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted" (John 20:23) when they have the keys of heaven, how can all be other than heavenly?

"Who" (he says) "serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle, for see, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." Inasmuch as our hearing is less ready of apprehension than our sight (for the things which we hear we do not in such wise lay up in our soul, as those which we see with our very eyes), He showed him all. Either then he means this by "the example and shadow," or else he [speaks] of the Temple. For, he went on to say, "See" (His words are), that "thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." Was it then only what concerned the furniture of the temple that he saw, or was it also what related, to the sacrifices, and all the rest? Nay, one would not be wrong in saying even this; for The Church is heavenly, and is nothing else than Heaven.

[4.] **Verse 6** *"But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the Mediator of a better covenant."*

Thou seest (he means) how much better is the one ministration than the other, if one be an example and type, and the other truth [reality]. But this did not profit the hearers, nor cheer them. Therefore he says what especially cheered them: “Which was established upon better promises.” Having raised them up by speaking of the place, and the priest, and the sacrifice, he then sets forth also the wide difference of the covenant, having also said before that it was “weak and unprofitable.” (See Hebrews 7:18)

And observe what safeguards he lays down, when intending to find fault with it. For in the former place after saying, “according to the power of an endless life” (Hebrews 7:16), he then said that “there is a disannulling of the commandment going before” (Hebrews 7:18); and then after that, he set forth something great, saying, “by which we draw nigh unto God.” (Hebrews 7:19) And in this place, after leading us up into Heaven, and showing that instead of the temple, we have Heaven, and that those things were types of ours, and having by these means exalted the Ministration [of the New Covenant], he then proceeds suitably to exalt the priesthood.

But (as I said) he sets down that which especially cheers them, in the words, “Which was established upon better promises.” Whence does appear? In that this the one was cast out, and the other introduced in its place: for it is therefore of force because it is better. For as he says, “If perfection were by” it, “what further need was there, that another priest should rise, after the order of Melchisedec?” (Hebrews 7:11); so also here he used the same syllogism, saying (verse 7) “For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second”; that is, if it made men “faultless.” For it is because he is speaking of this that he did not say, “But finding fault with” it, but (verse 8, 9) “But finding fault with them, He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt: because they continued not in My covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.”

Yea, verily. And whence does it appear that [the first Covenant] came to an end? He showed it indeed also from the Priest, but now he shows more clearly by express words that it has been cast out.

But how is it “upon better promises “? For how, tell me, can earth and heaven be equal? But do thou consider, how he speaks of promises there [in that other covenant] also, that thou mayest not bring this charge against it. For there also, he says “a better hope, by which we draw nigh unto God” (Hebrews 7:19), showing that a Hope was *there* also; and in this place “better promises,” hinting that *there* also He had made promises.

But inasmuch as they were forever making objections, he says, “Behold! the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.” He is not speaking of any old Covenant: for, that they might not assert this, he determined the time also. Thus he did not say simply, “according to the covenant which I made with their fathers,” lest thou shouldest say [it was] the one made with Abraham, or that with Noah: but he declares what [covenant it was], “not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers “in the Exodus. Wherefore he added also, “in the day that I took them by the hand, to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in My covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.” Thou seest that the evils begin first from ourselves (“ they” themselves first, saith he,” continued not in [the “covenant “] “) and the negligence is from ourselves, but the good things from Him; I mean the [acts] of bounty. He here introduces, as it were, an apology showing the cause why He forsakes them.

[5.] (Verse 10) “For this,” he says, “is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people.” Thus He says this concerning the New [covenant] because His words are “not according to the covenant which I covenanted.”

But what other difference is there beside this? Now if any person should say that “the difference is not in this respect, but in respect to its being put into their hearts; He makes no mention of any difference of ordinances, but points out the mode of its being given: for no longer” (he says) “shall the covenant be in writings, but in hearts;” let the Jew in that case show that this was ever carried into effect; but he could not, for it was made a second time in writings after the return from Babylon. But I

show that the Apostles received nothing in writing, but received [it] in their hearts through the Holy Ghost. Wherefore also Christ said, “When He cometh, He will bring all things to your remembrance, and He shall teach you.” (John 14:26)

[6.] (Verse 11, 12) “And they shall not teach” (he says) “every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” Behold also another sign. “From the least even to the greatest of them” (he says) “they shall know Me, and they shall not say, Know the Lord.” When hath this been fulfilled save now? For our [religion] is manifest: but theirs [i.e. the Jews’] was not manifest, but had been shut up in a corner.

[A covenant] is then said to be “new,” when it is different and shows some advantage over the old. “Nay surely,” says one, “it is new also when part of it has been taken away, and part not. For instance, when an old house is ready to fall down, if a person leaving the whole, has patched up the foundation, straightway we say, he has made it new, when he has taken some parts away, and brought others into their place. For even the heaven also is thus called ‘new,’ when it is no longer ‘ of brass,’ but gives rain; and the earth likewise is new when it is not unfruitful, not when it has been changed; and the house is likewise new, when portions of it have been taken away, and portions remain. And thus, he says, he hath well termed it ‘a New Covenant.’”

If then I show that that covenant had become “Old” in this respect, that it yielded no fruit? And that thou mayest know this exactly, read what Haggai says, what Zechariah, what the Messenger, when the return from the Captivity had not yet fully taken place; and what Esdras charges. How then did [the people] receive him? And how no man inquired of the Lord, inasmuch as they [the priests] themselves also transgressed, and knew it not even themselves? Dost thou see how thy [interpretation] is broken down, whilst I maintain my own: that this [covenant] must be called “New” in the proper sense of the word?

And besides, I do not concede that the words “the heaven shall be new” (Isaiah 65:17), were spoken concerning this. For why, when saying in

Deuteronomy “the heaven shall be of brass,” did he not set down this in the contrasted passage, “but if ye hearken, it shall be new.”

And further on this account He says that He will give “another Covenant, because they did not continue in the first.” This I show by what he says (“ For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh,” Romans 8:3; and again, “Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?” Acts 15:10) But “they did not continue therein,” he says.

Here he shows that [God] counts us worthy of greater and of spiritual [privileges]: for it is said “their sound went out into all the earth and their words unto the ends of the world.” (Psalm 19:5; Romans 10:18) That is [the meaning of] “they shall not say each man to his neighbor, Know the Lord.” And again, “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as much water to cover the seas.” (Isaiah 11:9)

[7.] “In calling it new” (he says), “He hath made the first old: but that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” See what was hidden, how he hath laid open the very mind of the prophet! He honored the law, and was not willing to call it “old” in express terms: but nevertheless, this he did call it. For if the former had been new, he would not have called this which came afterwards “new” also. So that by granting something more and different, he declares that “it was waxen old.” Therefore it is done away and is perishing, and no longer exists.

Having taken boldness from the prophet, he attacks it more suitably, showing that our [dispensation] is now flourishing. That is, he showed that [the other] was old: then taking up the word “old,” and adding of himself another [circumstance], the [characteristic] of old age, he took up what was omitted by the others, and says “ready to vanish away.”

The New then has not simply caused the old to cease, but because it had become aged, as it was not [any longer] useful. On this account he said, “for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof” (Hebrews 7:18), and, “the law made nothing perfect” (Hebrews 7:19); and that “if the first had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.” (Hebrews 8:7) And “faultless”; that is, useful; not as though it [the old Covenant] was obnoxious to any charges, but as not being sufficient. He

used a familiar form of speech. As if one should say, the house is not faultless, that is, it has some defect, it is decayed: the garment is not faultless, that is, it is coming to pieces. He does not therefore here speak of it as evil, but only as having some fault and deficiency.

[8.] So then we also are new, or rather we were made new, but now are become old; therefore we are "near to vanishing away," and to destruction. Let us scrape off this old age. It is indeed no longer possible to do it by Washing, but by repentance it is possible here [in this lifed. If there be in us anything old, let us east it off; if any "wrinkle," if any stain, if any "spot," let us wash it away and become fair (Ephesians 5:27): that "the King may desire our beauty." (Psalm 45:11)

It is possible even for him who has fallen into the extremist deformity to recover that beauty of which David says that the King shall desire thy beauty. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider; forget also thine own people and thy father's house: so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty." (Psalm 45:10, 11) And yet forgetting doth not produce beauty. Yea, beauty is of the soul. What sort of forgetting? That of sins. For he is speaking about the Church from among the Gentiles, exhorting her not to remember the things of her fathers, that is [of] those that sacrificed to idols; for from such was it gathered.

And he said not, "Go not after them," but what is more, Do not admit them into thy mind; which he says also in another place, "I will not mention their names through my lips." (Psalm 16:4) And again, "That my mouth may not talk of the deeds of men." (Psalm 17:3, 4) As yet is this no great virtue; nay, rather, it is indeed great, but not such as this [which is here spoken of]. For what does he say there? He says not; "Talk not of the things of men, neither speak of the things of thy fathers"; but, neither remember them, nor admit them into thy mind. Thou seest to how great a distance he would have us keep away from wickedness. For he that remembers not [a matter] will not think of it, and he that does not think, will not speak of it: and he that does not speak of it, will not do it. Seest thou from how many paths he hath walled us off? by what great intervals he hath removed us, even to a very great [distance]?

[9.] Let us then also "hearken and forget" our own evils. I do not say our sins, for (He says) "Remember thou first, and I will not remember."

(Isaiah 43:26, 25, LXX.) I mean for instance, Let us no longer remember rapacity, but even restore the former [plunder']. This is to forget wickedness, and to cast out the thought of rapacity, and never at any time to admit it, but to wipe away also the things already done amiss.

Whence may the forgetfulness of wickedness come to us? From the remembrance of good things, from the remembrance of God. If we continually remember God, we cannot remember those things also. For (he says) "When I remembered Thee upon my bed, I thought upon Thee in the morning dawn." (Psalm 63:6) We ought then to have GOD always in remembrance, but then especially, when thought is undisturbed, when by means of that remembrance [a man] is able to condemn himself, when he can retain [things] in memory. For in the daytime indeed, if we do remember, other cares and troubles entering in, drive the thought out again: but in the night it is possible to remember continually, when the soul is calm and at rest; when it is in the haven, and under a serene sky. "The things which you say in your hearts be ye grieved for on your beds," he says. (Psalm 4:4, LXX.) For it were indeed right to retain this remembrance through the day also. But inasmuch as you are always full of cares, and distracted amidst the things of this life, at least then remember God on your bed; at the morning dawn meditate upon Him.

If at the morning dawn we meditate on these things, we shall go forth to our business with much security. If we have first made God propitious by prayer and supplication, going forth thus we shall have no enemy. Or if thou shouldest, thou wilt laugh him to scorn, having God propitious. There is war in the market place; the affairs of every day are a fight, they are a tempest and a storm. We therefore need arms: and prayer is a great weapon. We need favorable winds; we need to learn everything, so as to go through the length of the day without shipwrecks and without wounds. For every single day the rocks are many, and oftentimes the boat strikes and is sunk. Therefore have we especially need of prayer early and by night.

[10.] Many of you have often beheld the Olympic games: and not only have beheld but have been zealous partisans and admirers of the combatants, one of this [combatant], one of that. You know then that both during the days of the contests, and during those nights, all night long the

herald thinks of nothing else, has no other anxiety, than that the combatant should not disgrace himself when he goes forth. For those who sit by the trumpeter admonish him not to speak to any one, that he may not spend his breath and get laughed at. If therefore he who is about to strive before men, uses such forethought, much more will it befit us to be continually thoughtful, and careful, since our whole life is a contest. Let every night then be a vigil, and let us be careful that when we go out in the day we do not make ourselves ridiculous. And would it were only making ourselves ridiculous. But now the Judge of the contest is seated on the right hand of the Father, hearkening diligently that we utter not any false note, anything out of tune. For He is not the Judge of actions only, but of words also. Let us keep our vigil, beloved; we also have those that are eager for our success, if we will. Near each one of us Angels are sitting; and yet we snore through the whole night. And would it were only this. But many do even many licentious things, some indeed going to the very brothels, and others making their own houses places of whoredom by taking courtesans thither. Yes most certainly. For is it not so? They care well for their contest. Others are drunken and speak amiss; others make an uproar. Others keep evil vigil through the night weaving, and worse than those who sleep, schemes of deceit; others by calculating usury; others by bruising themselves with cares, and doing anything rather than what is suited to the contest. Wherefore, I exhort you, let us lay aside all [other] things, and look to one only, how we may obtain the prize, [how we may] be crowned with the Chaplet; let us do all by which we shall be able to attain to the promised blessings. Which may we all attain in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father and also to the Holy Ghost be glory, might, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 15

HEBREWS 9:1-5

"Then verily the first [covenant] had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly Sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the Candlestick, and the Table, and the Shew-bread, which is called the Sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; which had the golden censer and the Ark of the Covenant overlaid round about with gold: wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant: and over it the Cherubim of glory, shadowing the Mercy-seat: of which we cannot now speak particularly."

[1.] HE has shown from the Priest, from the Priesthood, from the Covenant, that that [dispensation] was to have an end. From this point he shows it from the fashion of the tabernacle itself. How? This, he says, [was] the "Holy" and the "Holy of Holies." The holy place then is a symbol of the former period (for there all things are done by means of sacrifices); but the Holy of Holies of this that is now present.

And by the Holy of Holies he means Heaven; and by the veil, Heaven, and the Flesh "entereth into that within the veil": that is to say, "through the veil of His flesh." (*Supra*, 6:19; Hebrews 10:20)

And it were well to speak of this passage, taking it up from the beginning. What then does he say? "Then verily the first had also" (the first what? "The Covenant"). "Ordinances of Divine service." What are "ordinances "? symbols or rights. Then; as (he means) it has not now. He shows that it had already given place, for (he says) it *had* at that time; so that now, although it stood, it is not.

"And the worldly Sanctuary." He calls it "worldly," inasmuch as it was permitted to all to tread it, and in the same house the place was manifest where the priests stood, where the Jews, the Proselytes, the Grecians, the Nazarites. Since, therefore even gentiles were permitted to tread it, he calls it "worldly." For surely the Jews were not "the world."

“For” (he says) “there was a tabernacle made; the first, which is called holy, wherein was. the Candlestick, and the Table, and the Shew-bread.” These things are symbols of the world.

ÏAnd after the second veil” (There was then not one veil [only], but there was a veil without also) “the tabernacle, which is called holy of holies.” Observe how everywhere he calls it a tabernacle in regard of [God’s] encamping there.

“Which had” (he says) “a golden Censer, and the ark of the Covenant overlaid round about with gold: wherein was the golden pot that held the manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant.” All these things were venerable and conspicuous memorials of the Jewish obstinacy; “and the tables of the covenant” (for they brake them) “And the manna” (for they murmured; and therefore handing on the memory thereof to posterity, He commanded it to be laid up in a golden pot). “And Aaron’s rod that budded. And over it, the Cherubim of glory.” What is “the Cherubim of glory”? He either means “the glorious,” or those which are under God. “Shadowing the mercy-seat.”

But in another point of view also he extols these things in his discourse, in order to show that those which come after them are greater. “Of which” (he says) “we cannot now speak particularly.” In these words he hints that these were not merely what was seen, but were a sort of enigmas. “Of which” (he says) “we cannot now speak particularly,” perhaps because they needed a long discourse.

[2.] Verse 6. *“Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle accomplishing the service [of God].”* That is, these things indeed were [there], but the Jews did not enjoy them: they saw them not. So that they were no more theirs than [ours] for whom they prophesied.

Verse 7. *“But into the second the High Priest went alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.”* Thou seest that the types were already laid down beforehand? for, lest they should say, “how is there [but] one sacrifice?” he shows that this was so from the beginning, since at least the more holy and the awful [sacrifice] was [but] one. And how did the High Priest offer once for all?

Thus were they wont [to do] from the beginning, for then also (he says) "the High Priest" offered "once for all."

And well said he, " not without blood." (Not indeed without blood, yet not this blood, for the business was not so great.) He signifies that there shall be a sacrifice, not consumed by fire, but rather distinguished by blood. For inasmuch as he called the Cross a sacrifice, though it had neither fire, nor logs, nor was offered many times, but had been offered in blood once for all; he shows that the ancient sacrifice also was of this kind, was offered "once for all" in blood.

"Which he offers for himself;" again, "for himself; and for the errors of the people." He said not "sins"; but "errors," that, they might not be high-minded. For even if thou hast not sinned intentionally, yet unintentionally thou hast erred, and from this no man is pure.

And everywhere [he adds] the "for himself," showing that Christ is much greater. For if He be separated from our sins, how did He "offer for Himself"? Why then saidst thou these things (one says)? Because this is [a mark] of One that is superior.

[3.] Thus far there is no speculation. But from this point he philosophizes and says, (verse 8) "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the Holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." For this cause (he says) have these things been thus "ordained," that we might learn that "the Holy of Holies," that is, Heaven, is as yet inaccessible. Let us not then think (he says) that because we do not enter them, they have no existence: inasmuch as neither did we enter the Most Holy [place].

Verse 9. *"Which" (he says) "was established as a figure for the time then present."*

What does he mean by "the time present"? That before the coming of Christ: For after the coming of Christ, it is no longer a time present: For how [could it be], having arrived, and being ended?

There is too something else which he indicates, when he says this, "which [was] a figure for the time then present," that is, became the Type. "In which n were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him

that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience." Thou seest now what is [the meaning of] "The Law made nothing perfect," (Hebrews 7:19,) and "If that first [covenant] had been faultless." (Hebrews 8:7) How? "As pertaining to the conscience." For the sacrifices did not put away the defilement from the soul, but still were concerned with the body: "after the law of a carnal commandment." (Hebrews 7:16) For certainly they could not put away adultery, nor murder, nor sacrilege. Seest thou? Thou hast eaten this, Thou hast not eaten that, which are matters of indifference. ["Which stood] only in meats and drinks, and divers washings." "Thou hast drunk this," he says: and yet nothing has been ordained concerning drink, but he said this, treating them as trifles.

Verse 10. *"And [in] divers washings, and carnal ordinances imposed on them until the time of reformation."*

For this is the righteousness of the flesh. Here he depreciates the sacrifices, showing that they had no efficacy, and that they existed "till the time of reformation," that is, they waited for the time that reformeth all things.

[4.] Verse 11. *"But Christ being come an High Priest of good things that are come by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands."*

Here he means the flesh. And well did he say, "greater and more perfect," since God The Word and all the power of The Spirit dwells therein; "For God giveth not the Spirit by measure [unto Him]." (John 3:34) And "more perfect," as being both unblamable, and setting right greater things.

"That is, not of this creation." See how [it was] "greater." For it would not have been "of the Spirit" (Matthew 1:20), if man had constructed it. Nor yet is it "of this creation"; that is, not of these created things, but spiritual, of the Holy Ghost.

Seest thou how he calls the body tabernacle and veil and heaven. "By a greater and more perfect tabernacle. Through the veil, that is, His flesh." (Hebrews 10:20) And again, "into that within the veil." (Hebrews 6:19) And again, "entering into the Holy of Holies, to appear before the face of God." (Hebrews 9:24) Why then doth he this? According as one thing or a different one is signified. I mean for instance, the Heaven is a veil, for as a veil it walls off the Holy of Holies; the flesh [is a veil] hiding the Godhead;

and the tabernacle likewise holding the Godhead. Again, Heaven [is] a tabernacle: for the Priest is there within.

“But Christ” (he says) “being come an High Priest “: he did not say, “become,” but “being come,” that is, having come for this very purpose, not having been successor to another. He did not come first and then become [High Priest], but came and became at the same time. And he did not say “being come an High Priest” of things which are sacrificed, but “of good things that are come,”’ as if his discourse had not power to put the whole before us.

Verse 12. *“Neither by the blood,” he says, “of goats and calves” (All things are changed) “but by His own Blood” (he says) “He entered in once for all into the Holy Place.”*

See thus he called Heaven. “Once for all” (he says) “He entered into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption.” And this [expression] “having obtained,” was [expressive] of things very difficult, and that are beyond expectation, how by one entering in, He “obtained everlasting redemption.”

[5.] Next [comes] that which is calculated to persuade.

Verse 13, 14. *“For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the Blood of Christ, who through the Holy Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God.”*

For (he says) if “the blood of bulls” is able to purify the flesh, much rather shall the Blood of Christ wipe away the defilement of the soul. For that thou mayest not suppose when thou hearest [the word] “sanctifieth,” that it is some great thing, he marks out and shows the difference between each of these purifyings, and how the one of them is high and the other low. And says it is [so] with good reason, since that is “the blood of bulls,” and this “the Blood of Christ.”

Nor was he content with the name, but he sets forth also the manner of the offering. “Who” (he says) “through the Holy Spirit offered Himself without spot to God,” that is, the victim was without blemish, pure from

sins. For this is [the meaning of] “through the Holy Spirit,” not through fire, nor through any other things.

“Shall purge your conscience” (he says) “from dead works.” And well said he “from dead works”; if any man touched a dead body, he was polluted; and here, if any man touch a “dead work,” he is defiled through his conscience. “To serve” (he says) “the Living and true God.” Here he declares that it is not [possible] while one has “dead works to serve the Living and true God,” for they are both dead and false; and with good reason [he says this].

[6.] Let no man then enter in here with “dead works.” For if it was not fit that one should enter in who had touched a dead body, much more one that hath “dead works “: for this is the most grievous pollution. And “dead works” are, all which have not life, which breathe forth an ill odor. For as a dead body is useful to none of the senses, but is even annoying to those who come near it, so sin also at once strikes the reasoning faculty, and does not allow the understanding itself to be calm, but disturbs and troubles it.

And it is said too that a plague at its very commencement corrupts the living bodies; such also is sin. It differs in nothing from a plague, not [indeed] corrupting the air first, and then the bodies, but darting at once into the soul. Seest thou not how persons affected with the plague, are inflamed: how they writhe about, how they are full of an ill scent, how disfigured are their countenances: how wholly unclean they are? Such are they also that sin, though they see it not. For, tell me, is not he who is possessed by the desire of riches or carnal lust, worse than any one that is in a fever? Is he not more unclean than all these, when he does and submits to all shameless things?

[7.] For what is baser than a man who is in love with money? Whatever things women that are harlots or on the stage refuse not to do neither does he [refuse]. Rather it is likely that they would refuse [to do] a thing, rather than he. He even submits to do things fit for slaves, flattering those whom he ought not; again he is overbearing where he ought not to be, being inconsistent in every respect. He will sit by flattering wicked people, and oftentimes depraved old men, that are of much poorer and meaner condition than himself; and will he insolent and overbearing to others that

are good and in all respects virtuous. Thou seest in both respects the baseness, the shamelessness: he is both humble beyond measure, and boastful.

Harlots however stand in front of their house, and the charge against them is that they sell their body for money: yet, one may say, poverty and hunger compel them (although at the most this is no sufficient excuse: for they might gain a livelihood by work). But the covetous man stands, not before his house, but before the midst of the city, making over to the devil not his body but his soul; so that he [the devil] is in his company, and goes in unto him, as verily to a harlot: and having satisfied all his lusts departs; and all the city sees it, not two or three persons only.

And this again is the peculiarity of harlots, that the), are his who gives the gold. Even if he be a slave or a gladiator, or any person whatever, yet if he offers their hire, they receive him. But the free, even should they be more noble than all, they do not accept without the money. These men also do the same. They turn away right thoughts when they bring no money; but they associate with the abominable, and actually with those that fight with wild beasts, for the sake of the gold, and associate with them shamelessly and destroy the beauty of the soul. For as those women are naturally of odious appearance and black, and awkward and gross, and formless and ill-shaped, and in all respects disgusting, such do the souls of these men become, not able to conceal their deformity by their outward paintings. For when the ill look is extreme, whatever they may devise, they cannot succeed in their feigning.

For that shamelessness makes harlots, hear the prophet saying, “Thou wert shameless towards all; thou hadst a harlot’s countenance.” (Jeremiah 3:3) This may be said to the covetous also: “Thou wert shameless towards all,” not towards these or those, but “towards all.” How? Such an one respects neither father, nor son, nor wife, nor friend, nor brother, nor benefactor, nor absolutely any one. And why do I say friend, and brother, and father? He respects not God Himself, but all [we believe] seems to him a fable; and he laughs, intoxicated by his great lust, and not even admitting into his ears any of the things which might profit him.

But O! their absurdity! and then what things they say! “Woe to thee, O Mammon, and to him that has thee not.” At this I am torn to pieces with

indignation: for woe to those who say these things, though they say them in jest. For tell me, has not God uttered such a threat as this, saying, “Ye cannot serve two masters “? (Matthew 6:24) And dost thou set at naught the threat? Does not Paul say that it is Idolatry, and does he not call “the covetous man an Idolater “? (Ephesians 5:5)

[8.] And thou standest laughing, raising a laugh after the manner of women of the world who are on the stage. This has overthrown, this has cast down everything. Our affairs, both our business and our politeness, are turned into laughing; there is nothing steady, nothing grave. I say not these things to men of the world only; but I know those whom I am hinting at. For the Church has been filled with laughter. Whatever clever thing one may say, immediately there is laughter among those present: and the marvelous thing is that many do not leave off laughing even during the very time of the prayer.

Everywhere the devil leads the dance, he has entered into all, is master of all. Christ is dishonored, is thrust aside; the Church is made no account of. Do ye not hear Paul saying, Let “filthiness and foolish talking and jesting” (Ephesians 5:4) be put away from you? He places “jesting” along with “filthiness,” and dost thou laugh? What is “foolish talking “? that which has nothing profitable. And dost thou, a solitary, laugh at all and relax thy countenance? thou that art crucified? thou that art a mourner? tell me, dost thou laugh? Where dost thou hear of Christ doing this? Nowhere: but that He was sad indeed oftentimes. For even when He looked on Jerusalem, He wept; and when He thought on the Traitor He was troubled; and when He was about to raise Lazarus, He wept; and dost thou laugh? If he who grieves not over the sins of others deserves to be accused, of what consideration will he be worthy, who is without sorrow for his own sins, yea laughs at them? This is the season of grief and tribulation, of bruising and bringing matter [the body], of conflicts and sweatings, and dost thou laugh? Dost not thou see how Sarah was rebuked? dost thou not hear Christ saying, “Woe to them that laugh, for they shall weep “? (Luke 6:25) Thou chantest these things every day, for, tell me, what dost thou say? “I have laughed?” By no means; but what? “I labored in my groaning.” (Psalm 6:6)

But perchance there are some persons so dissolute and silly as even during this very rebuke to laugh, because forsooth we thus discourse about laughter. For indeed such is their derangement, such their madness, that it does not feel the rebuke.

The Priest of God is Standing, offering up the prayer of all: and art thou laughing, having no fears? And while he is offering up the prayers in trembling for thee, dost thou despise all? Hearest thou not the Scripture saying, “Woe, ye despisers!” (cf. Acts 13:41 from Habakkuk 1:5); dost thou not shudder? dost thou not humble thyself? Even when thou enterest a royal palace, thou orderest thyself in dress, and look, and gait, and all other respects: and here where there is the true Palace, and things like those of heaven, dost thou laugh? Thou indeed, I know, seest [them] not, but hear thou that there are angels present everywhere, and in the house of God especially they stand by the King, and all is filled by those incorporeal Powers.

This my discourse is addressed to women also, who in the presence of their husbands indeed do not dare readily to do this, and even if they do it, it is not at all times, but during a season of relaxation, but here they do it always. Tell me, O woman, dost thou cover thine head and laugh, sitting in the Church? Didst thou come in here to make confession of sins, to fall down before God, to entreat and to supplicate for the transgressions thou hast wretchedly committed, and dost thou do this with laughter? How then wilt thou be able to propitiate Him?

[9.] But (one says) what harm is there in laughter? There is no harm in laughter; the harm is when it is beyond measure, and out of season. Laughter has been implanted in us, that when we see our friends after a long time, we may laugh; that when we see any persons downcast and fearful, we may relieve them by our smile; not that we should burst out violently and be always laughing. Laughter has been implanted in our soul, that the soul may sometimes be refreshed, not that it may be quite relaxed. For carnal desire also is implanted in us, and yet it is not by any means necessary that because it is implanted in us, therefore we should use it, or use it immoderately: but we should hold it in subjection, and not say, Because it is implanted in us, let us use it.

Serve God with tears, that thou mayest be able to wash away your sins. I know that many mock us, saying, “Tears directly.” Therefore it is a time for tears. I know also that they are disgusted, who say, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” (1 Corinthians 15:32) “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” (Ecclesiastes 1:2) It is not I that say it, but he who had had the experience of all things saith thus: “I builded for me houses, I planted vineyards, I made me pools of water, [I had] men servants and women servants.” (Ecclesiastes 2:4, 6, 7) And what then after all these things? “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” (Ecclesiastes 12:8)

Let us mourn therefore, beloved, let us mourn in order that we may laugh indeed, that we may rejoice indeed in the time of unmixed joy. For with this joy [here] grief is altogether mingled: and never is it possible to find it pure. But that is simple and undeceiving joy: it has nothing treacherous, nor any admixture. In that joy let us delight ourselves; that let us pursue after. And it is not possible to obtain this in any other way, than by choosing here not what is pleasant, but what is profitable, and being willing to be afflicted a little, and bearing all things with thanksgiving. For thus we shall be able to attain even to the Kingdom of Heaven, of which may we all be counted worthy, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father be glory, together with the Holy Ghost, now and for ever and world without end, Amen.

HOMILY 16

HEBREWS 9:15-18

"And for this cause He is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead? otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first [testament] was dedicated without blood."

[1.] It was probable that many of those who were more weakly would especially distrust the promises of Christ because He had died. Paul accordingly out of a superabundance introduced this illustration, deriving it from common custom. Of what kind is it? He says, "indeed, on this very account we ought to be of good courage." On what account? Because testaments are established and obtain their force when those who have made them are not living, but dead. "And for this cause," he says, "He is the Mediator of the New Testament." A Testament is made towards the last day, [the day] of death.

And a testament is of this character: It makes some heirs, and some disinherited. So in this case also: "I will that where I am," Christ says, "they also may be." (John 17:24) And again of the disinherited, hear Him saying, "I pray not for" all, "but for them that believe on Me through their word." (John 17:20) Again, a testament has relation both to the testator, and to the legatees; so that they have some things to receive, and some to do, So also in this case. For after having made promises innumerable, He demands also something from them, saying, "a new commandment I give unto you." (John 13:34) Again, a testament ought to have witnesses. Hear Him again saying, "I am one that bear witness of Myself, and He that sent Me beareth witness of Me." (John 8:18) And again, "He shall testify of Me" (John 15:26), speaking of the Comforter. The twelve Apostles too He sent, saying, "Bear ye witness before God."

[2.] “And for this cause” (he says) “He is the Mediator of the New Testament.” What is a “Mediator “? A mediator is not Lord of the thing of which he is mediator, but the thing belongs to one person, and the mediator is another: as for instance, the mediator of a marriage is not the bridegroom, but one who aids him who is about to be married. So then also here: The Son became Mediator between the Father and us. The Father willed not to leave us this inheritance, but was wroth against us, and was displeased [with us] as being estranged [from Him]; He accordingly became Mediator between us and Him, and prevailed with Him.

And what then? How did He become Mediator? He brought words from [Him] and brought [them to us], conveying over what came from the Father to us, and adding His own death thereto. We had offended: we ought to have died: He died for us and made us worthy of the Testament. By this is the Testament secure, in that henceforward it is not made for the unworthy. At the beginning indeed, He made His dispositions as a father for sons; but after we had become unworthy, there was no longer need of a testament, but of punishment.

Why then (he would say) dost thou think upon the law? For it placed us in a condition of so great sin, that we could never have been saved, if our Lord had not died for us; the law would not have had power, for it is weak.

[3.] And he established this no longer from common custom only, but also from what happened under the old [Testament]: which especially influenced them. There was no one who died there: how then could that [Testament] be firm? In the same way (he says). How? For blood was there also, as there is blood here. And if it was not the blood of the Christ, do not be surprised; for it was a type. “Whereupon,” he says, “neither was the first [Testament] dedicated without blood.”

What is “was dedicated “? was confirmed, was ratified. The word “whereupon” means “for this cause.” It was needful that the symbol of the Testament should be also that of death.

For why (tell me) is the book of the testament sprinkled? (Verse 19, 20) “For” (he says) “when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves, with water, and scarlet

wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament, which God hath enjoined unto you:" Tell me then why is the book of the testament sprinkled, and also the people, except on account of the precious blood, figured from the first? Why "with hyssop"? It is close and retentive? And why the "water"? It shows forth also the cleansing by water. And why the "wool"? this also [was used], that the blood might be retained. In this place blood and water show forth the same thing, for baptism is His passion.

[4.] Verse 21, 22. *"Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission."* Why the "almost "? why did he qualify it? Because those [ordinances] were not a perfect purification, nor a perfect remission, but half-complete and in a very small degree. But in this case He says, "This is the blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you, for the remission of sins." (Matthew 26:28)

Where then is "the book"? He purified their minds. They themselves then were the books of the New Testament. But where are "the vessels of the ministry "? They are themselves. And where is" the tabernacle "? Again, they are; for "I will dwell in them," He says, "and walk in them." (2 Corinthians 6:16)

[5.] But they were not sprinkled with "scarlet wool," nor yet "with hyssop." Why was this? Because the cleansing was not bodily but spiritual, and the blood was spiritual. How? It flowed not from the body of irrational animals, but from the Body prepared by the Spirit. With this blood not Moses but Christ sprinkled us, through the word which was spoken; "This is the blood of the New Testament, for the remission of sins." This word, instead of hyssop, having been dipped in the blood, sprinkles all. And there indeed the body was cleansed outwardly, for the purifying was bodily; but here, since the purifying is spiritual, it entereth into the soul,-and cleanseth it, not being simply sprinkled over, but gushing forth in our souls. The initiated understand what is said. And in their case indeed one sprinkled just the surface; but he who was sprinkled washed it off again; for surely he did not go about continually stained with blood. But in the case of the soul it is not so, but the blood is mixed with

its very substance, making it vigorous and pure, and leading it to the very unapproachable beauty.

[6.] Henceforward then he shows that His death is the cause not only of confirmation, but also of purification. For inasmuch as death was thought to be an odious thing, and especially that of the cross, he says that it purified, even a precious purification, and in regard to greater things. Therefore the sacrifices preceded, because of this blood. Therefore the lambs; everything was for this cause.

Verse 23. *"It was therefore necessary that the Patterns" (he says) "of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these."*

And how are they "patterns of things in the heavens "? And what does he mean now by "the things in the heavens "? Is it Heaven? Or is it the Angels? None of these, but what is ours. It follows then that our things are in Heaven, and heavenly things are ours, even though they be accomplished on earth; since although angels are on earth, yet they are called Heavenly. And the Cherubim appeared on earth, but yet are heavenly. And why do I say "appeared "? nay rather they dwell on earth, as indeed in Paradise: but this is nothing; for they are heavenly. And, "Our conversation is in Heaven" (Philippians 3:20), and yet we live here.

"But these are the heavenly things," that is, the philosophy which exists amongst us; those who have been called thereto.

With better sacrifices than these." What is "better" is better than something [else] that is good. Therefore "the patterns also of things in the heavens" have become good; for not even the patterns were evil: else the things whereof they are patterns would also have been evil.

[7.] If then we are heavenly, and have obtained such a sacrifice, let us fear. Let us no longer continue on the earth; for even now it is possible for him that wishes it, not to be on the earth. For to be and not to be on the earth is the effect of moral disposition and choice. For instance; God is said to be in Heaven. Wherefore? not because He is confined by space, far from it, nor as having left the earth destitute of His presence, but by His relation to and intimacy with the Angels. If then we also are near to God, we are in Heaven. For what care I about Heaven when I see the Lord of Heaven,

when I myself am become a Heaven? “For,” He says, “We will come,” I and the Father, “and will make our abode with him.” (John 14:23)

Let us then make our soul a Heaven. The heaven is naturally bright; for not even in a storm does it become black, for it does not itself change its appearance, but the clouds run together and cover it. Heaven has the Sun; we also have the Sun of Righteousness. I said it is possible to become a Heaven; and I see that it is possible to become even better than Heaven. How? when we have the Lord of the Sun. Heaven is throughout pure and without spot; it changes not either in a storm or in the night. Neither let us then be so influenced either by tribulations or by “the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11), but let us continue spotless and pure. Heaven is high and far from the earth. Let us also effect this [as regards ourselves]; let us withdraw ourselves from the earth, and exalt ourselves to that height, and remove ourselves far from the earth. Heaven is higher than the rains and the storms, and is reached by none of them. This we also can do, if we will.

It does appear to be, but is not really so affected. Neither then let us be affected, even if we appear to be so. For as in a storm, most men know not the beauty of [heaven,] but think that it is changed, while philosophers know that it is not affected at all, so with regard to ourselves also in afflictions; most men think that we are changed with them, and that affliction has touched our very heart, but philosophers know that it has not touched us.

[8.] Let us then become heaven, let us mount up to that height, and so we shall see men differing nothing from ants. I do not speak of the poor only, nor the many, but even if there be a general there, even if the emperor be there, we shall not distinguish the emperor, nor the private person. We shall not know what is gold, or what is silver, or what is silken or purple raiment: we shall see all things as if they were flies, if we be seated in that height. There is no tumult there, no disturbance, nor clamor.

And how is it possible (one says) for him who walks on the earth, to be raised up to that height? I do not tell it thee in words, but I show thee in fact those who have attained to that height. Who then are they?

I mean such as Paul, who being on earth, spent their lives in heaven. But why do I say "in heaven "? They were higher than the Heaven, yea than the other heaven, and mounted up to God Himself. For, "who" (he says) "shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Romans 8:35) And again, "while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." (2 Corinthians 4:18) Seest thou that he did not even see the things here? But to show thee that he was higher than the heavens, hear him saying himself, "For I am persuaded that neither death, or life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of Christ." (Romans 8:38, 39)

Seest thou how thought, hurrying past all things, made him higher not than this creation only, not than these heavens, but even [than any other also] if any other there were? Hast thou seen the elevation of his mind? Hast thou seen what the tent-maker became, because he had the will, he who had spent his whole life in the market-place?

[9.] For there is no hindrance, no not any, but that we may rise above all men, if we have the will. For if we are so successful in arts that are beyond the reach of the generality, much more in that which does not require so great labor.

For, tell me, what is more difficult than to walk along a tight rope, as if on level ground, and when walking on high to dress and undress, as if sitting on a couch? Does not the performance seem to us to be so frightful, that we are not even willing to look at it, but are terrified and tremble at the very sight? And tell me, what is more difficult than to hold a pole upon your face, and when you have put up a child upon it, to perform innumerable feats and delight the spectators? And what is more difficult than to play at ball with swords? And tell me what is harder than thoroughly to search out the bottom of the sea? And one might mention innumerable other arts.

But easier than all these, if we have the will, is virtue, and the going up into Heaven. For here it is only necessary to have the will, and all [the rest] follows. For we may not say, I am unable, neither accuse the Creator.

For if He made us unable, and then commands, it is an accusation against Himself.

[10.] How is it then (some one says) that many are not able? How is it then that many are not willing? For, if they be willing, all will be able. Therefore also Paul says, “I would that all men were even as I myself” (1 Corinthians 7:7), since he knew that all were able to be as himself. For he would not have said this, if it had been impossible. Dost thou wish to become [such]? only lay hold on the beginning.

Tell me now, in the case of any arts, when we wish to attain them, are we content with wishing, or do we also engage with the things themselves? As for instance, one wishes to become a pilot; he does not say, I wish, and content himself with that, but he also puts his hand to the work. He wishes to become a merchant; he does not merely say, I wish, but he also puts his hand to the work. Again he wishes to travel abroad, and he does not say, I wish, but he puts his hand to the work. In everything then, wishing alone is not sufficient, but work must also be added; and when thou wishest to mount up to heaven, dost thou merely say, “I wish “?

How then (he says) saidst thou that willing is sufficient? [I meant] willing joined with deeds, the laying hold on the thing itself, the laboring. For we have God working with us, and acting with us. Only let us make our choice, only let us apply ourselves to the matter as to work, only let us think earnestly about it, only let us lay it to heart, and all follows. But if we sleep on, and as we snore expect to enter into heaven, how shall we be able to obtain the heavenly inheritance?

Let us therefore be willing, I exhort you, let us be willing. Why do we carry on all our traffic with reference to the present life, which to-morrow we shall leave? Let us choose then that Virtue which will suffice us through all eternity: wherein we shall be continually, and shall enjoy the everlasting good things; which may we all attain, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost be glory, power, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 17

HEBREWS 9:24-26

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the High Priest entereth into the Holy Place every year with blood of others, for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world. But now, once, in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

[1.] THE Jews greatly prided themselves on the temple and the tabernacle. Wherefore they said, "The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord." (Jeremiah 6:4) For nowhere else in the earth was such a temple constructed as this, either for costliness, or beauty, or anything else. For God who ordained it, commanded that it should be made with great magnificence, because they also were more attracted and urged on by material things. For it had bricks of gold in the walls; and any one who wishes may learn this in the second [book] of Kings, and in Ezekiel, and how many talents of gold were then expended.

But the second [temple] was a more glorious building, both on account of its beauty, and in all other respects. Nor was it reverenced for this reason only, but also from its being One. For they were wont to resort thither from the uttermost parts of the earth, whether from Babylon or from Ethiopia. And Luke shows this when he says in the Acts: "There were dwelling" there "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene." (Acts 2:5, 9, 10) They then who lived in all parts of the world assembled there, and the fame of the temple was great.

What then does Paul do? What [he did] in regard to the sacrifices, that also he does here. For as there he set against [them] the death of Christ, so here also he sets the whole heaven against the temple.

[2.] And not by this alone did he point out the difference, but also by adding that The Priest is nearer to God: for he says, “to appear in the presence of God.” So that he made the matter august, not only by the [consideration of] heaven, but also by [that of Christ’s] entering in [there]. For not merely through symbols as here, but He sees God Himself there.

Seest thou that condescension through the lowly things have been said throughout? Why dost thou then any longer wonder that He intercedes there, where He places Himself as a High Priest? “Nor yet, that He should offer Himself often, as the High Priest.”

“For Christ is not entered into the Holy Places made with hands” (he says) “which are the figures of the True.” (These then are true; and those are figures, for the temple too has been so arranged, as the Heaven of Heavens.)

What sayest thou? He who is everywhere present, and who filleth all things, doth not He “appear” unless He enter into Heaven? Thou seest that all these things pertain to the flesh.

“To appear,” he says, “in the presence of God for us.” What is “for us “? He went up (he means) with a sacrifice which had power to propitiate the Father. Wherefore (tell me)? Was He an enemy? The angels were enemies, He was not an enemy. For that the Angels were enemies, hear what he says, “He made peace as to things on earth and things in Heaven.” (Colossians 1:20) So that He also “entered into Heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” He “now appeareth,” but “for us.”

[3.] “Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the High Priest entereth into the Holy place every year with blood of others.” Seest Thou how many are the differences? The “often” for the “once”; “the blood of others,” for “His own.” Great is the distance. He is Himself then both victim and Priest and sacrifice. For if it had not been so, and it had been necessary to offer many sacrifices, He must have been many times crucified. “For then,” he says,” He must often have suffered since the foundation of the world.”

In this place he has also veiled over something. “But now once more in the end of the world.”’ Why “at the end of the world “? After the many sins. If therefore, it had taken place at the beginning, then no one would have

believed; and He must not die a second time, all would have been useless. But since later, there were many transgressions, with reason He then appeared: which he expresses in another place also, “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. But now once in the end of the world, hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” (Romans 5:20)

[4.] (Verse 27) “And as it is appointed” unto men once to die, but after this, the Judgment.” He next says also why He died once [only]: because He became a ransom by one death. “It had been appointed” (he says) “unto men once to die.” This then is [the meaning of] “He died once,” for all. (What then? Do we no longer die that death? We do indeed die, but we do not continue in it: which is not to die at all. For the tyranny of death, and death indeed, is when he who dies is never more allowed to return to life. But when after dying is living, and that a better life, this is not death, but sleep.) Since then death was to have possession of all, therefore He died that He might deliver us.

Verse 28. *“So Christ was once offered.”*

By whom offered? evidently by Himself. Here he says that He is not Priest only, but Victim also, and what is sacrificed. On this account are [the words] “was offered.” “Was once offered” (he says) “to bear the sins of many.” Why “of many,” and not “of all”? Because not all believed, For He died indeed for all, that is His part: for that death was a counterbalance against the destruction of all men. But He did not bear the sins of all men, because they were not willing.

And what is [the meaning of] “He bare the sins “? Just as in the Oblation we bear up our sins and say, “Whether we have sinned voluntarily or involuntarily, do Thou forgive,” that is, we make mention of them first, and then ask for their forgiveness. So also was it done here. Where has Christ done this? Hear Himself saying, “And for their sakes I sanctify Myself.” (John 17:19) Lo! He bore the sins. He took them from men, and bore them to the Father; not that He might determine anything against them [mankind], but that He might forgive them.

“Unto them that look for Him shall He appear” (he says) “the second time without sin unto salvation.” What is “without sin”? it is as much as to say, He sinneth not. For neither did He die as owing the debt of death, nor

yet because of sin. But how “shall He appear “? To punish, you say. He did not however say this, but what was cheering; “shall He appear unto them that look for Him, without sin unto salvation.” So that for the time to come they no longer need sacrifices to save themselves, but to do this by deeds.

[5.] (Chapter 10:1) “For” (he says) “the Law having a shadow of the good things to come not the very image of the things”; i.e. not the very reality. For as in painting, so long as one [only] draws the outlines, it is a sort of “shadow” but when one has added the bright paints and laid in the colors, then it becomes “an image.” Something of this kind also was the Law. “For” (he says) “the Law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things,” i.e. of the sacrifice, of the remission: “can never by those sacrifices with which they offered continually make the comers thereunto perfect.” (Verse 2-9) “For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshipers once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins? But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me. In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo! I come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me, to do Thy will, O God. Above when He said, Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt-offerings, and [offering] for sin Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein, which are offered by the Law, then He said, Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God! He taketh away the first that He may establish the second.”

Thou seest again the superabundance [of his proofs]? This sacrifice (he says) is one; whereas the others were many: therefore they had no strength, because they were many. For, tell me, what need of many, if one had been sufficient? so that their being many, and offered “continually,” proves that they [the worshipers] were never made clean. For as a medicine, when it is powerful and productive of health, and able to remove the disease entirely, effects all after one application; as, therefore, if being once applied it accomplishes the whole, it proves its own strength in being no more applied, and this is its business, to be no more applied; whereas if it is applied continually, this is a plain proof of its not having strength.

For it is the excellence of a medicine to be applied once, and not often. So is it in this case also. Why forsooth are they continually cured with the "same sacrifices "? For if they were set free from all their sins, the sacrifices would not have gone on being offered every day. For they had been appointed to be continually offered in behalf of the whole people, both in the evening and in the day. So that there was an arraignment of sins, and not a release from sins; an arraignment of weakness, not an exhibition of strength. For because the first had no strength, another also was offered: and since this effected nothing, again another; so that it was an evidence of sins. The "offering" indeed then, was an evidence of sins, the "continually," an evidence of weakness. But with regard to Christ, it was the contrary: He was "once offered." The types therefore contain the figure only, not the power; just as in images, the image has the figure of the man, not the power. So that the reality and the type have [somewhat] in common with one another. For the figure exists equally in both, but not the power. So too also is it in respect of Heaven and of the tabernacle, for the figure was equal: for there was the Holy of Holies, but the power and the other things were not the same.

What is, "He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"? What is this "putting away"? it is making contemptible. For sin has no longer any boldness; for it is made of no effect in that when it ought to have demanded punishment, it did not demand it: that is, it suffered violence: when it expected to destroy all men, then it was itself destroyed.

"He hath appeared by the sacrifice of Himself" (he says), that is, "He hath appeared," unto God, and drawn near [unto Him]. For do not [think] because the High Priest was wont to do this oftentimes in the year.... So that henceforward this is done in vain, although it is done; for what need is there of medicines where there are no wounds? On this account He ordained offerings "continually," because of their want of power, and that a remembrance of sins might be made.

[6.] What then? do not we offer every day? We offer indeed, but making a remembrance of His death, and this [remembrance] is one and not many. How is it one, and not many? Inasmuch as that [Sacrifice] was once for all offered, [and] carried into the Holy of Holies. This is a figure of that [sacrifice] and this remembrance of that. For we always offer the same, not

one sheep now and tomorrow another, but always the same thing: so that the sacrifice is one. And yet by this reasoning, since the offering is made in many places, are there many Christs? but Christ is one everywhere, being complete here and complete there also, one Body. As then while offered in many places, He is one body and not many bodies; so also [He is] one sacrifice. He is our High Priest, who offered the sacrifice that cleanses us. That we offer now also, which was then offered, which cannot be exhausted. This is done in remembrance of what was then done. For (saith He) "do this in remembrance of Me." (Luke 22:19) It is not another sacrifice, as the High Priest, but we offer always the same, or rather we perform a remembrance of a Sacrifice.

[7.] But since I have mentioned this sacrifice, I wish to say a little in reference to you who have been initiated; little in quantity, but possessing great force and profit, for it is not our own, but the words of Divine SPIRIT. What then is it? Many partake of this sacrifice once in the whole year, others twice; others many times. Our word then is to all; not to those only who are here, but to those also who are settled in the desert. For they partake once in the year, and often indeed at intervals of two years.

What then? which shall we approve? those [who receive] once [in the year]? those who [receive] many times? those who [receive] few times? Neither those [who receive] once, nor those [who receive] often, nor those [who receive] seldom, but those [who come] with a pure conscience, from a pure heart, with an irreproachable life. Let such draw near continually; but those who are not such, not even once. Why, you will ask? Because they receive to themselves judgment, yea and condemnation, and punishment, and vengeance. And do not wonder. For as food, nourishing by nature, if received by a person without appetite, ruins and corrupts all [the system], and becomes an occasion of disease, so surely is it also with respect to the awful mysteries. Dost thou feast at a spiritual table, a royal table, and again pollute thy mouth with mire? Dost thou anoint thyself with sweet ointment, and again fill thyself with ill savors?

Tell me, I beseech thee, when after a year thou partakest of the Communion, dost thou think that the Forty Days are sufficient for thee for the purifying of the sins of all that time? And again, when a week has

passed, dost thou give thyself up to the former things? Tell me now, if when thou hast been well for forty days after a long illness, thou shouldest again give thyself up to the food which caused the sickness, hast thou not lost thy former labor too? For if natural things are changed, much more those which depend on choice. As for instance, by nature we see, and naturally we have healthy eyes; but oftentimes from a bad habit [of body] our power of vision is injured. If then natural things are changed, much more those of choice. Thou assignest forty days for the health of the soul, or perhaps not even forty, and dost thou expect to propitiate God? Tell me, art thou in sport?

These things I say, not as forbidding you the one and annual coming, but as wishing you to draw near continually.

[8.] These things have been given to the holy. This the Deacon also proclaims when he calls on the holy; even by this call searching the faults of all. For as in a flock, where many sheep indeed are in good health, but many are full of the scab, it is needful that these should be separated from the healthy; so also in the Church: since some sheep are healthy, and some diseased, by this voice he separates the one from the other, the priest [I mean] going round on all sides by this most awful cry, and calling and drawing on the holy. For it is not possible that a man should know the things of his neighbor, (for "what man," he says, "knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?"-1 Corinthians 2:11): he utters this voice after the whole sacrifice has been completed, that no person should come to the spiritual fountain carelessly and in a chance way. For in the case of the flock also (for nothing prevents us from again using the same example), the sickly ones we shut up within, and keep them in the dark, and give them different food, not permitting them to partake either of pure air, or of simple grass, or of the fountain without [the fold]. In this case then also this voice is instead of fetters.

Thou canst not say, 'I did not know, I was not aware that danger attends the matter.' Nay surely Paul too especially testified this. But wilt thou say, 'I never read it'? This is not an apology, but even an accusation. Dost thou come into the Church every day and yet art ignorant of this?

However, that thou mayest not have even this excuse to offer, for this cause, with a loud voice, with an awful cry, like some herald lifting up his

hand on high, standing aloft, conspicuous to all, and after that awful silence crying out aloud, he invites some, and some he forbids, not doing this with his hand, but with his tongue more distinctly than with his hand. For that voice, falling on our ears, just like a hand, thrusts away and casts out some, and introduces and presents others.

Tell me then, I beseech [you], in the Olympic games does not the herald stand, calling out with loud and uplifted voice, saying, "Does any one accuse this man? Is he a slave? Is he a thief? Is he one of wicked manners?" And yet, those contests for prizes are not of the soul nor yet of good morals, but of strength and the body. If then where there is exercise of bodies, much examination is made about character, how much rather here, where the soul is alone the combatant. Our herald then even now stands, not holding each person by the head, and drawing him forward, but holding all together by the head within; he does not set against them other accusers, but themselves against themselves. For he says not, "Does any one accuse this man?" but what? "If any man accuse himself." For when he says, The Holy things for the holy, he means this: "If any is not holy, let him not draw near."

He does not simply say, "free from sins,' but, "holy." For it is not merely freedom from sins which makes a man holy, but also the presence of the Spirit, and the wealth of good works. I do not merely wish (he says) that you should be delivered from the mire, but also that you should be bright and beautiful. For if the Babylonian King, when he made choice of the youths from the captives, chose out those who were beautiful in form, and of fair countenance: much more is it needful that we, when we stand by the royal table, should be beautiful in form, [I mean] that of the soul, having adornment of gold, our robe pure, our shoes royal, the face of our soul well-formed, the golden ornament put around it, even the girdle of truth. Let such an one as this draw near, and touch the royal cups.

But if any man clothed in rags, filthy, squalid, wish to enter in to the royal table, consider how much he will suffer, the forty days not being sufficient to wash away the offenses which have been committed in all the time. For if hell is not sufficient, although it be eternal (for therefore also it is eternal), much more this short time. For we have not shown a strong repentance, but a weak.

[9.] Eunuchs especially ought to stand by the King: by eunuchs, I mean those who are clear in their mind, having no wrinkle nor spot, lofty in mind, having the eye of the soul gentle and quick-sighted, active and sharp, not sleepy nor supine; full of much freedom, and yet far from impudence and overboldness, wakeful, healthful, neither very gloomy and downcast, nor yet dissolute and soft.

This eye we have it in our own power to create, and to make it quick-sighted and beautiful. For when we direct it, not to the smoke nor to the dust (for such are all human things), but to the delicate breeze, to the light air, to things heavenly and high, and full of much calmness and purity, and of much delight, we shall speedily restore it, and shall invigorate it, as it luxuriates in such contemplation. Hast thou seen covetousness and great wealth? do not thou lift up thine eye thereto. The thing is mire, it is smoke, an evil vapor, darkness, and great distress and suffocating cares. Hast thou seen a man cultivating righteousness, content with his own, and having abundant space for recreation, having anxieties, not fixing his thoughts on things here? Set [thine eye] there, and lift [it] up on high; and thou wilt make it far the most beautiful, and more splendid, feasting it not with the flowers of the earth, but with those of virtue, with temperance, moderation, and all the rest. For nothing so troubles the eye as an evil conscience ("Mine eye," it is said, "was troubled by reason of anger" — Psalm 6:7); nothing so darkens it. Set it free from this injury, and thou wilt make it vigorous and strong, ever nourished with good hopes.

And may we all make both it and also the other energies of the soul, such as Christ desires, that being made worthy of the Head who is set over us, we may depart thither where He wishes. For He saith, "I will that where I am, they also may be with Me, that they may behold My glory." (John 17:24) Which may we all enjoy in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost be glory, might, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 18

HEBREWS 10:8-13

"Above when He said, Sacrifice and offering, and burnt-offerings, and [offering] for sin, Thou wouldest not neither hadst pleasure [therein], which are offered by the Law, they. said He, Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified, by the offering of the body of JESUS Christ, once for all. And every Priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this [man] after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool."

[1.] IN what has gone before he had shown that the sacrifices were unavailing for perfect purification, and were a type, and greatly defective. Since then there was this objection to his argument, If they are types, how is it that, after the truth is come, they have not ceased, nor given place, but are still performed? he here accordingly labors at this very point, showing that they are no longer performed, even as a figure, for God does not accept them. And this again he shows not from the New [Testament], but from the prophets, bringing forward from times of old the strongest testimony, that it [the old system] comes to an end, and ceases, and that they do all in vain, "alway resisting the Holy Ghost." (Acts 7:51)

And he shows over and above that they cease not now [only], but at the very coming of the Messiah, nay rather, even before His coming: and how it was that Christ did not abolish them at the last, but they were abolished first, and then He came; first they were made to cease, and then He appeared. That they might not say, Even without this sacrifice, and by means of those, we could have been well pleasing unto God, He waited for these sacrifices to be convicted [of weakness], and then He appeared; for (He says) "sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not." Hereby He took all away; and having spoken generally, He says also particularly, "In burnt-offerings and [sacrifice] for sin Thou hadst no pleasure." But "the offering" was everything except the sacrifice. "Then said I, Lo! I come." Of whom was this spoken? of none other than the Christ.

Here he does not blame those who offer, showing that it is not because of their wickednesses that He does not accept them, as He says elsewhere, but because the thing itself has been convicted for the future and shown to have no strength, nor any suitableness to the times. What then has this to do with the "sacrifices" being offered "oftentimes"? Not only from their being "oftentimes" [offered] (he means) is it manifest that they are weak, and that they effected nothing; but also from God's not accepting them, as being unprofitable and useless. And in another place it is said, "If Thou hadst desired sacrifice I would have given it." (Psalm 51:16) Therefore by this also he makes it plain that He does not desire it. Therefore sacrifices are not God's will, but the abolition of sacrifices. Wherefore they sacrifice contrary to His will.

What is "To do Thy will"? To give up, Myself, He means: This is the will of God. "By which Will we are sanctified." Or he even means something still further, that the sacrifices do not make men clean, but the Will of God. Therefore to offer sacrifice is not the will of God.

[2.] And why dost thou wonder that it is not the will of God now, when it was not His will even from the beginning? For "who," saith He, "hath required this at your hands?" (Isaiah 1:12)

How then did He Himself enjoin it? In condescension. For as Paul says, "I would that all men were even as I myself" (1 Corinthians 7:7), in respect of continence, and again says, "I will that the younger women marry, bear children" (1 Timothy 5:14); and lays down two wills, yet the two are not his own, although he commands; but the one indeed is his own, and therefore he lays it down without reasons; while the other is not his own, though he wishes it, and therefore it is added with a reason. For having previously accused them, because "they had waxed wanton against Christ" (1 Timothy 5:11), he then says, "I will that the younger women marry, bear children." (1 Timothy 5:14) So in this place also it was not His leading will that the sacrifices should be offered. For, as He says, "I wish not the death of the sinner, as that he should turn unto [Me] and live" (Ezekiel 33:11): and in another place He says that He not only wished, but even desired this: and yet these are contrary to each other: for intense wishing is desire. How then dost Thou "not wish"? how dost Thou in

another place “desire,” which is a sign of vehement wishing? So is it in this case also.

“By the which will we are sanctified,” he says. How sanctified? “by the offering of the Body of JESUS Christ once for all.”

[3.] “And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifice.” (To stand therefore is a sign of ministering; accordingly to sit, is a sign of being ministered unto.) “But this [man] after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool.” (Verse 14, 15) “For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us.” He had said that those [sacrifices] are not offered; he reasoned from what is written, [and] from what is not written; moreover also he put forward the prophetic word which says, “sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not.” He had said that He had forgiven their sins. Again this also He proves from the testimony of what is written, for” the Holy Ghost” (he says) “is a witness to us: for after that He had said,” (verse 16-18) “This is the covenant, that I will make with them, after those days, saith the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is there is no more offering for sin.” So then He forgave their sins, when He gave the Covenant, and He gave the Covenant by sacrifice. If therefore He forgave the sins through the one sacrifice, there is no longer need of a second.

“He sat down on the right band of God, from henceforth expecting.” Why the delay? “that His enemies be put under His feet. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” But perhaps some one might say; Wherefore did He not put them under at once? For the sake of the faithful who should afterwards be brought forth and born. Whence then [does it appear] that they shall be put under? By the saying “He sat down.” He called to mind again that testimony which saith, “until I put the enemies under His feet.” (See above, 1:13) But His enemies are the Jews. Then since he had said, “Till His enemies be put under His feet,” and they [these enemies were vehemently urgent, therefore he introduces all his discourse concerning faith after this. But who are the enemies? All

unbelievers: the daemons. And intimating the greatness of their subjection, he said not "are subjected," but "are put under His feet."

[4.] Let us not therefore be of [the number of] His enemies. For not they alone are enemies, the unbelievers and Jews, but those also who are full of unclean living. "For the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, for neither can it be." (Romans 8:7) What then (you say)? this is not a ground of blame. Nay rather, it is very much a ground of blame. For the wicked man as long as he is wicked, cannot be subject [to God's law]; he can however change and become good.

Let us then cast out carnal minds. But what are carnal? Whatever makes the body flourish and do well, but injures the soul: as for instance, wealth, luxury, glory (all these things are of the flesh), carnal love. Let us not then love gain, but ever follow after poverty: for this is a great good.

But (you say) it makes one humble and of little account. [True:] for we have need of this, for it benefits us much. "Poverty" (it is said) "humbles a man." (Proverbs 10:4, LXX.) And again Christ [says], "Blessed are the poor in spirit." (Matthew 5:3) Dost thou then grieve because thou art upon a path leading to virtue? Dost thou not know that this gives us great confidence?

But, one says, "the wisdom of the poor man is despised." (Ecclesiastes 9:16) And again another says, "Give me neither riches nor poverty" (Proverbs 30:8), and, "Deliver me from the furnace of poverty." (See Isaiah 48:10) And again, if riches and poverty are from the Lord, how can either poverty or riches be an evil? Why then were these things said? They were said under the Old [Covenant], where there was much account made of wealth, where there was great contempt of poverty, where the one was a curse and the other a blessing. But now it is no longer so.

But wilt thou hear the praises of poverty? Christ sought after it, and saith, "But the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." (Matthew 8:20) And again He said to His disciples, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor two coats." (Matthew 10:9, 10) And Paul in writing said, "As having nothing and yet possessing all things." (2 Corinthians 6:10) And Peter said to him who was lame from his birth, "Silver and gold have I none." (Acts 3:6) Yea and under the Old [Covenant] itself, where wealth was held in

admiration, who were the admired? Was not Elijah, who had nothing save the sheepskin? Was not Elisha? Was not John?

Let no man then be humiliated on account of his poverty: It is not poverty which humiliates, but wealth, which compels us to have need of many, and forces us to be under obligations to many?

And what could be poorer than Jacob (tell me), who said, “If the Lord give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on”? (Genesis 28:20) Were Elijah and John then wanting in boldness? Did not the one reprove Ahab, and the other Herod? The latter said, “It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother Philip’s wife.” (Mark 6:18) And Elias said to Ahab with boldness “It is not I that trouble Israel, but thou and thy father’s house.” (1 Kings 18:18) Thou seest that this especially produces boldness; poverty [I mean]? For while the rich man is a slave, being subject to loss, and in the power of every one wishing to do him hurt, he who has nothing, fears not confiscation, nor fine. So, if poverty had made men wanting in boldness Christ would not have sent His disciples with poverty to a work requiring great boldness. For the poor man is very strong, and has nothing where from he may be wronged or evil entreated. But the rich man is assailable on every side: just in the same way as one would easily catch a man who was dragging many long ropes after him, whereas one could not readily lay hold on a naked man. So here also it fails out in the case of the rich man: slaves, gold, lands, affairs innumerable, innumerable cares, difficult circumstances, necessities, make him an easy prey to all.

[5.] Let no man then henceforth esteem poverty a cause of disgrace. For if virtue be there, all the wealth of the world is neither clay, nor even a mote in comparison of it. This then let us follow after, if we would enter into the kingdom of heaven. For, He saith, “Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven.” (Matthew 19:21) And again, “It is hard for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.” (Matthew 19:23) Dost thou see that even if we have it not, we ought to draw it to us? So great a good is Poverty; For it guides us by the hand, as it were, on the path which leads to Heaven, it is an anointing for the combat, an exercise great and admirable, a tranquil haven.

But (you say) I have need of many [things], and am unwilling to receive a favor from any. Nevertheless, even in this respect the rich man is inferior

to thee; for thou perhaps askest the favor for thy support, but he shamelessly [asks] for ten thousand things for covetousness' sake. So that it is the rich that are in need of many [persons], yea oftentimes those who are unworthy of them. For instance, they often stand in need of those who are in the rank of soldiers, or of slaves: but the poor man has no need even of the Emperor himself, and if he should need him, he is admired because he has brought himself down to this, when he might have been rich.

Let no man then accuse poverty as being the cause of innumerable evils, nor let him contradict Christ, who declared it to be the perfection of virtue, saying, "If thou wilt be perfect." (Matthew 19:21) For this He both uttered in His words, and showed by His acts, and taught by His disciples. Let us therefore follow after poverty, it is the greatest good to the sober-minded.

Perhaps some of those who hear me, avoid it as a thing of ill omen. I do not doubt it. For this disease is great among most men, and such is the tyranny of wealth, that they cannot even as far as words endure the renunciation of it, lint avoid it as of ill omen. Far be this from the Christian's soul: for nothing is richer than he who chooses poverty of his own accord, and with a ready mind.

[6.] How? I will tell you, and if you please, I will prove that he who chooses poverty of his own accord is richer even than the king himself. For he indeed needs many [things], and is in anxiety, and fears lest the supplies for the army should fail him; but the other has enough of everything, and fears about nothing, and if he fears, it is not about so great matters. Who then, tell me, is the rich man? he who is daily asking, and earnestly laboring to gather much together, and fears lest at any time he should fall short, or he who gathers nothing together, and is in great abundance and hath need of no one? For it is virtue and the fear of God, and not possessions which give confidence. For these even enslave. For it is said, "Gifts and presents blind the eyes of the wise, and like a muzzle on the mouth turn away reproofs." (Ecclus. 20:29)

Consider how the poor man Peter chastised the rich Ananias. Was not the one rich and the other poor? But behold the one speaking with authority and saying, "Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much" (Acts 5:8), and the other saying with submission, "Yea, for so much." And who (you

say) will grant to me to be as Peter? It is open to thee to be as Peter if thou wilt; cast away what thou hast. “Disperse, give to the poor” (Psalm 112:9), follow Christ, and thou shalt be such as he. How? he (you say) wrought miracles. Is it this then, tell me, which made Peter an object of admiration, or the boldness which arose from his manner of life? Dost thou not hear Christ saying, “Rejoice not because the devils are subject unto you; If thou wilt be perfect [etc].” (Luke 10:20) Hear what Peter says: “Silver and gold have I none, but what I have I give thee.” (Acts 3:6) If any man have silver and gold, he hath not those other gifts.

Why is it then, you say, that many have neither the one nor the other? Because they are not voluntarily poor: since they who are voluntarily poor have all good things. For although they do not raise up the dead nor the lame, yet, what is greater than all; they have confidence towards God. They will hear in that day that blessed voice,” Come, ye blessed of My Father,” (what can be better than this?) “inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger and ye took Me in: I was naked and ye clothed Me: I was sick and in prison and ye visited Me. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Matthew 25:34-36) Let us then flee from covetousness, that we may attain to the kingdom [of Heaven]. Let us feed the poor, that we may feed Christ: that we may become fellow-heirs with Him in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 19

HEBREWS 10:19-23

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of JESUS, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us, through the Veil, that is to say, His flesh, and having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our 'hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our hope without wavering."

[1.] "HAVING therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us." Having shown the difference of the High Priest, and of the sacrifices, and of the tabernacle, and of the Covenant, and of the promise, and that the difference is great, since those are temporal, but these eternal, those "near to vanishing away," these permanent, those powerless, these perfect, those figures, these reality. for (he says) "not according to the law of a carnal commandment, but according to the power of an endless life." (c. 7:16) And "Thou art a Priest for ever." (c. 5:6) Behold the continuance of the Priest. And concerning the Covenant, That (he says) is old (for "that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away " — c. 8:13), but this is new; and has remission of sins, while that [has] nothing of the kind: for (he says) "the Law made nothing perfect." (c. 7:19) And again, "sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not." (c. 10:5) That is made with hands, while this is "not made with hands" (c. 9:11): that "has the blood of goats (c. 9:12), this of the LORD; that has the Priest "standing," this "sitting." Since therefore all those are inferior and these greater, therefore he says, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness."

[2.] "Boldness": from whence? As sins (he means) produce shame, so the having all things forgiven us, and being made fellow-heirs, and enjoying so great Love, [produces] boldness.

"For the entrance into the holiest." What does he mean here by "entrance"? Heaven, and the access to spiritual things.

“Which he hath inaugurated,” that is, which He prepared, and which He began; for the beginning of using is thenceforth called the inaugurating; which He prepared (he means) and by which He Himself passed.

“A new and living way.” Here He expresses “the full assurance of hope.” “New,” he says. He is anxious to show that we have all things greater; since now the gates of Heaven have been opened, which was not done even for Abraham. “A new and living way,” he says, for the first was a way of death, leading to Hades, but this of life. And yet he did not say, “of life,” but called it “living,” (the ordinances, that is,) that which abideth.

“Through the veil” (he says) “of His flesh.” For this flesh first cut that way, by this He inaugurated it [the way] by which He walked. And with good reason did he call [the flesh] “a veil.” For when it was lifted up on high, then the things in heaven appeared.

“Let us draw near” (he says) “with a true heart.” To what should we” draw near”? To the holy things, the faith, the spiritual service. “With a true heart, in full assurance of faith,” since nothing is seen; neither the priest hence-forward, nor the sacrifice, nor the altar. And yet neither was that priest visible, but stood within, and they all without, the whole people. But here not only has this taken place, that the priest has entered into the holy of holies, but that we also enter in. Therefore he says,” in full assurance of faith.” For it is possible for the doubter to believe in one way, as there are even now many who say, that of some there is a resurrection and of others not. But this is not faith. “In full assurance of faith” (he says); for we ought to believe as concerning things that we see, nay, even much more; for “here” it is possible to be deceived in the things that are seen, but there not: “here” we trust to the senses, but there to the Spirit.

“Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.” He shows that not faith only, but a virtuous life also is required, and the consciousness to ourselves of nothing evil. Since the holy of holies does not receive “with full assurance” those who are not thus disposed. For they are holy, and the holy of holies; but here no profane person enters. They were sprinkled as to the body, we as to the conscience, so that we may even now be sprinkled over with virtue itself. “And having our body washed with pure water.”’ Here he speaks of the Washing, which no longer cleanses the bodies, but the soul.

"For He is faithful that promised." "That promised" what? That we are to depart thither and enter into the kingdom. Be then in nothing over-curious, nor demand reasonings. Our [religion] needs faith.

[3.] Verse 24, 25 *"And" (he says) "let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."* And again in other places, "The Lord is at hand; be careful for nothing." (Philippians 4:5, 6) "For now is our salvation nearer: Henceforth the time is short." (Romans 13:11)

What is, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together"? (1 Corinthians 7:29) He knew that much strength arises from being together and assembling together. "For where two or three" (it is said) "are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20); and again, "That they may be One, as we" also are (John 17:11); and, "They had all one heart and [one] soul." (Acts 4:32) And not this only, but also because love is increased by the gathering [of ourselves] together; and love being increased, of necessity the things of God must follow also. "And earnest prayer" (it is said) was" made by" the people. (Acts 12:5) "As the manner of some is." Here he not only exhorted, but also blamed [them].

"And let us consider one another," he says, "to provoke unto love and to good works." He knew that this also arises from "gathering together." For as "iron sharpeneth iron" (Proverbs 17:17), so also association increases love. For if a stone rubbed against a stone sends forth fire, how much more soul mingled with soul! But not unto emulation (he says) but "unto the sharpening of love." What is "unto the sharpening of love"? Unto the loving and being loved more. "And of good works"; that so they might acquire zeal. For if doing has greater force for instruction than speaking, ye also have in your number many teachers, who effect this by their deeds.

What is "let us draw near with a true heart"? That is, without hypocrisy; for "woe be to a fearful heart, and faint hands" (Ecclus. 2:12): let there be (he means) no falsehood among us; let us not say one thing and think another; for this is falsehood; neither let us be fainthearted, for this is not [a mark] of a "true heart." Faintheartedness comes from not believing. But how shall this be? If we fully assure ourselves through faith.

“Having our hearts sprinkled”: why did he not say “having been purified”? [Because] he wished to point out the difference of the sprinklings: the one he says is of God, the other our own. For the washing and sprinkling the conscience is of God; but “the drawing near with” truth and “in full assurance of faith” is our own. Then he also gives strength to their faith from the truth of Him that promised.

What is “and having our bodies washed with pure water”? With water which makes pure; or which has no blood.

Then he adds the perfect thing, love. “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,” which some (he says) do, and divide the assemblies. For “a brother helped by a brother is as a strong city.” (Proverbs 18:19, LXX.)

“But let us consider one another to provoke unto love.” What is, “let us consider one another”? For instance if any be virtuous, let us imitate him, let us look on him so as to love and to be loved. For from Love good works proceed. For the assembling is a great good: since it makes love more warm; and out of love all good things arise. For nothing is good which is not done through love.

[4.] This then let us “confirm” towards each other. “For love is the fulfilling of the law.” (Romans 13:10) We have no need of labors or of sweatings if we love one another. It is a pathway leading of itself towards virtue. For as on the highway, if any man find the beginning, he is guided by it, and has no need of one to take him by the hand; so is it also in regard to Love: only lay hold on the beginning, and at once thou art guided and directed by it. “Love worketh no ill to his neighbor” (Romans 13:10); “thinketh no evil.” (1 Corinthians 13:5) Let each man consider with himself, how he is disposed toward himself. He does not envy himself; he wishes all good things for himself; he prefers himself before all; he is willing to do all things for himself. If then we were so disposed towards others also, all grievous things are brought to an end; there is no enmity; there is no covetousness: for who would choose to overreach himself? No man; but on the contrary we shall possess all things in common, and shall not cease assembling ourselves together. And if we do this, the remembrance of injuries would have no place: for who would choose to remember injuries against himself? Who would choose to be angry with

himself? Do we not make allowances for ourselves most of all? If we were tires disposed towards our neighbors also, there will never be any remembrance of injuries.

And how is it possible (you say) that one should so love his neighbor as himself? If others had not done this, you might well think it impossible: but if they have done it, it is plain that from indolence it is not done by ourselves.

And besides, Christ enjoins nothing impossible, seeing that many have even gone beyond His commands. Who has done this? Paul, Peter, all the company of the Saints. Nay, indeed if I say that they loved their neighbors, I say no great matter: they so loved their enemies as no man would love those who were like-minded with himself. For who would choose for the sake of those like-minded, to go away into Hell. when he was about to depart unto a kingdom? No man. But Paul chose this for the sake of his enemies, for those who stoned him, those who scourged him. What pardon then will there be for us, what excuse, if we shall not show towards our friends even the very smallest portion of that love which Paul showed towards his enemies?

And before him too, the blessed Moses was willing to be blotted out of God's book for the sake of his enemies who had stoned him. David also when he saw those who had stood up against him slain, saith, "I, the shepherd, have sinned, but these, what have they done?" (See 2 Samuel 24:17) And when he had Saul in his hands, he would not slay him, but saved him; and this when he himself would be in danger. But if these things were done under the Old [Covenant] what excuse shall we have who live under the New, and do not attain even to the same measure with them? For if, "unless our righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 5:20), how shall we enter in when we have even less than they?

[5.] "Love your enemies," He says. (Matthew 5:44) Love thou therefore thy enemy: for thou art doing good not to him, but to thyself. How? Thou art becoming like God. He, if he be beloved of thee, hath no great gain, for he is beloved by a fellow-slave; but thou, if thou love thy fellow-slave, hast gained much, for thou art becoming like God. Seest thou that thou art

doing a kindness not to him but to thyself? For He appoints the prize not for him, but for thee.

What then if he be evil (you say)? So much the greater is the reward. Even for his wickedness thou aughtest to feel grateful to him: even should he be evil after receiving ten thousand kindnesses. For if he were not exceedingly evil, thy reward would not have been exceedingly increased; so that the reason [thou assignest] for not loving him. the saying that he is evil, is the very reason for loving him. Take away the contestant and thou takest away the opportunity for the crowns. Seest thou not the athletes, how they exercise when they have filled the bags with sand? But there is no need for thee to practice this. Life is full of things that exercise thee, and make thee strong. Seest thou not the trees too, the more they are shaken by the winds, so much the more do they become stronger and firmer? We then. if we be long-suffering, shall also become strong. For it is said, “a man who is long-suffering abounds in wisdom, but he that is of a little soul is strongly foolish.” (Proverbs 14:29) Seest thou how great is his commendation of the one, seest thou how great his censure of the other? “Strongly foolish,” i.e. very [foolish]. Let us not then be faint-hearted one towards another: for this does not rise from enmity, but from having a small soul. As if the soul be strong, it will endure all things easily, and nothing will be able to sink it, but will lead it into tranquil havens. To which may we all attain, by the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 20

HEBREWS 10:26, 27

"For if we sin willfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries."

[1.] TREES which have been planted, and have had the advantage of all other care, and the hands and the labors of the cultivator, and yet yield no return for the labors, are pulled up by the roots, and handed over to the fire. So somewhat of this kind takes place also in the case of our Illumination. For when Christ has planted us, and we have enjoyed the watering of the Spirit, and then show no fruit; fire, even that of Hell, awaits us, and flame unquenchable.

Paul therefore having exhorted them to love and to bringing forth the fruit of good works, and having urged them from the kindlier [considerations.] (What are these? That we have an entrance into the holy of holies, "the new way which He hath inaugurated for us." — c. 10:20), does the same again from the more gloomy ones, speaking thus. For having said, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (c. 10:25), this being sufficient for consolation, he added, "For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth." There is need, he means, of good works, yea, very great need, "For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Thou wast cleansed; thou wast set free from the charges against thee, thou hast become a son. If then thou return to thy former vomit, there awaits thee on the other hand excommunication and fire and whatever such things there are. For there is no second sacrifice.

[2.] At this place we are again assailed by those who take away repentance, and by those who delay to come to baptism. The one saying, that it is not safe for them to come to baptism, since there is no second

remission: And the other asserting that it is not safe to impart the mysteries to those who have sinned, if there is no second remission.

What shall we say then to them both? That he does not take away repentance, nor the propitiation through repentance, nor does he thrust away and cast down with despair the fallen. He is not thus an enemy of our salvation; but what? He takes away the second Washing. For he did not say, no more is there repentance, or no more is there remission, but "no more" is there a "sacrifice," that is, there is no more a second Cross. For this is what he means by sacrifice. "For by one sacrifice," he says, "He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (c: 10:14); not like the Jewish [rites.]. For this reason he has treated-so much throughout concerning the Sacrifice, that it is one, even one; not wishing to show this only, that herein it differed from the Jewish [rites], but also to make [men] more steadfast, so that they might no longer expect another sacrifice according to the Jewish law.

"For," saith he, "if we sin willfully." See how he is disposed to pardon. He says, "if we sin willfully," so that there is pardon for those [who sin.] not willfully. "After the knowledge of the truth": He either means, of Christ, or of all doctrines. "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins," but what? "A certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries." By" Adversaries" he means not the unbelievers, but those also who do what is against virtue; or [else he means] that the same fire shall receive them of the household also, which [receives] "the adversaries." Then expressing its devouring nature, he says, as if giving it life, "fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries." For as a wild beast when irritated and very fierce and savage, would not rest till it could lay hold on some one and eat him up; so also that fire, like one goaded by indignation, whatever it can lay hold of does not let go, but devours and tears it to pieces.

[3.] Next he adds also the reason of the threat, that it is on good grounds, that it is just; for this contributes to confidence, when we show that it is just.

For, he says, (verse 28) "He that hath despised Moses' law dies without mercy, under two or three witnesses." "Without mercy," he says; so that

there is no pardon, no pity there although the law is of Moses; for he ordained the most of it.

What is “under two or three”? If two or three bore witness, he means, they immediately suffered punishment.

If then under the Old [Covenant], when the law of Moses is set at naught, there is so great punishment, (verse 29) “Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God and hath counted the blood of the covenant an unholy [a common] thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?”

And how does a man “tread under foot the Son of God”? When partaking of Him in the mysteries (he would say) he has wrought sin, has he not trodden Him under foot? Has he not despised Him? For just as we make no account of those who are trodden under foot so also, they who sin have made no account of Christ; and so they have sinned. Thou art become the Body of Christ, and givest thou thyself to the devil, so that he treads thee under foot.

“And accounted the blood a common thing,” he says. What is “common”? It is “unclean,” or the having nothing beyond other things.

“And done despite unto the Spirit of grace.” For he that accepts not a benefit, does despite to the benefactor. He made thee a son: and thou wishest to become a slave. He came to dwell with thee, and thou bringest in wicked imaginations to Him. Christ wished to stay with thee: and thou treadest Him down by surfeiting, by drunkenness.

Let us listen, whoever partake of the mysteries unworthily: let us listen, whoever approach that Table unworthily. “Give not” (He says) “that which is holy unto the dogs, lest in time they trample them under their feet” (Matthew 7:6), that is, lest they despise, lest they repudiate [them]. Yet he did not say this, but what was more fearful than this. For he constrains their souls by what is fearful. For this also is adapted to convert, no less than consolation. And at the same time he shows both the difference, and the chastisement, and sets forth the judgment upon them, as though it were an evident matter. “Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy?” Here also he appears to me to hint at the mysteries.

[4.] Next he adds testimony, saying, (verse 31, 30) “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands I of the Living God.” “For” it is written: “Vengeance [belongeth] unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people.” “Let us fall,” it is said, “into the hands of the Lord, and not into the hands of men.” (Ecclus. 2:18.) But if ye repent not, ye shall “fill into the hands of” God: that is fearful: it is nothing, to “fall into the hands of men.” When, he means, we see any man punished here, let us not be terrified at the things present, but shudder at the things to come. “For according to His mercy, so is His wrath.” And, “His indignation will rest upon sinners.” (Ecclus. 5:6)

At the same time too he hints at something else. For “Vengeance [belongeth] unto Me,” he says, “I will recompense.” This is said in regard to their enemies, who are doing evil, not to those who are suffering evil. Here he is consoling them too, all but saying, God abideth for ever and liveth, so that even if they ‘receive not [their reward] now, they will receive it hereafter. They ought to groan, not we: for we indeed shall fall into their hands, but they into the hands of God. For neither is it the sufferer who suffers the ill, but he that does it; nor is it he who receives a benefit that is benefited, but the benefactor.

[5.] Knowing then these things, let us be patient as to suffering evil, forward as to kindnesses. And this will be, if we think lightly of wealth and honor. He that hath stripped himself of those affections, is of all men most generous, and more wealthy even than he who wears the purple. Seest thou not how many evils come through money? I do not say how many through covetousness, but merely by our attachment to these things. For instance, if a man has lost his money, he leads a life more wretched than any death. Why grievest thou, O man? why weepest thou? Because God has delivered Thee from excessive watching? Because thou dost not sit trembling and fearful? Again, if any one chain thee to a treasure, commanding thee to sit there perpetually, and to keep watch for other people’s goods, thou art grieved, thou art disgusted; and dost thou, after thou hast bound thyself with most grievous chains, grieve when thou art delivered from the slavery? Truly sorrows and joys are [matters] of fancy. For we guard them as if we had another’s.

Now my discourse is for the women. A woman often has a garment woven with gold, and this she shakes, wraps up in linen, keeps with care, trembles for it, and has no enjoyment of it. For either she dies, or she becomes a widow. Or, even if none of these things happen, yet from fear lest wearing it out by continual use, she should deprive herself of it, she deprives herself of it in another way, by sparing it. But she passes it on [you say] to another. But neither is this clear: and even if she should pass it on, the other again will also use it in the same way. And if any one will search their houses, he will find that the most costly garments and other choice things, are tended with special honor, as if they were living masters. For she does not use them habitually, but fears and trembles, driving away moths and the other things that are wont to eat them, and laying most of them in perfumes and spices, nor permitting all persons to be counted worthy of the sight of them, but oftentimes carefully putting them in order herself with her husband.

Tell me: did not Paul with reason call covetousness “idolatry”? (Colossians 3:5) For these show as great honor to their garments, their gold, as they to their idols.

[6.] How long shall we stir up the mire? How long shall we be fixed to the clay and the brickmaking? For as they toiled for the King of the Egyptians, so do we also toil for the devil, and are scourged with far more grievous stripes. For by how much the soul surpasses the body, by so much does anxiety the weals of scourging. We are scourged every day, we are full of fear, in anxiety, in trembling. But if we will groan, if we will look up to God, He sendeth to us, not Moses, nor Aaron, but His own Word, and compunction. When this [word] has come, and taken hold of our souls, He will free from the bitter slavery, He will bring us forth out of Egypt, from unprofitable and vain zeal, from slavery which brings no gain. For they indeed went forth after having at least received golden [ornaments], the wages for building, but we [receive] nothing: and would it were nothing. For indeed we also receive, not golden ornaments, but the evils of Egypt, sins and chastisements and punishments.

Let us then learn to be made use of, let us learn to be spitefully treated; this is the part of a Christian. Let us think lightly of golden raiment, let us think lightly of money, that we may not think lightly of our salvation. Let

us think lightly of money and not think lightly of the soul. For this is chastised, this is punished: those things remain here, but the soul departeth yonder. Why, tell me, dost thou cut thyself to pieces, without perceiving it?

[7.] These things I say to the overreaching. And it is well to say also to those who are overreached. Bear their over-reaching generously; they are ruining themselves, not you. You indeed they defraud of your money, but they strip themselves of the good will and help of God. And he that is stripped of that, though he clothe himself with the whole wealth of the world, is of all men most poor: and so he who is the poorest of all, if he have this, is the wealthiest of all. For "the Lord" (it is said) "is my shepherd, and I shall lack nothing." (Psalm 23:1)

Tell me now, if thou hadst had a husband, a great and admirable man, who thoroughly loved thee and cared for thee, and then knewest that he would live always, and not die before thee, and would give thee all things to enjoy in security, as thine own: wouldst thou then have wished to possess anything? Even if thou hadst been stripped of all, wouldst thou not have thought thyself the richer for this?

Why then dost thou grieve? Because thou hast no property? But consider that thou hast had the occasion of sin taken away. But is it because thou hadst [property] and hast been deprived of it? But thou hast acquired the good will of God. And how have I acquired it (you say)? He has said, "Wherefore do ye not rather suffer wrong?" (1 Corinthians 6:7) He hath said, "Blessed are they who bear all things with thankfulness." Consider therefore how great good will thou wilt enjoy, if thou showest forth those things by [thy] works. For one thing only is required from us, "in all things to give thanks" to God, and [then] we have all things in abundance. I mean, for instance: hast thou lost ten thousand pounds of gold? Forthwith give thanks unto God, and thou hast acquired ten times ten thousand, by that word and thanksgiving.

[8.] For tell me when dost thou account Job blessed? When he had so many camels, and flocks, and herds, or when he uttered that saying: "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away"? (Job 1:21) Therefore also the devil causes us losses, not that he may take away our goods only, for he knows that is nothing, but that through them he may compel us to utter some

blasphemy. So in the case of the blessed Job too, he did not strive after this only, to make him poor, but also to make him a blasphemer. At any rate, when he had stripped him of everything, observe what he says to him through his wife, "Say some word against the Lord, and die." (Job 2:9) And yet, O accursed one, thou hadst stripped him of everything. 'But' (he says) 'this is not what I was striving for; for I have not yet accomplished that for which I did all. I was striving to deprive him of God's help: for this cause I deprived him of his goods too. This is what I wish, that other is nothing. If this be not gained, he not only has not been injured at all, but has even been benefited.' Thou seest that even that wicked demon knows how great is the loss in this matter?

And see him plotting the treachery through the wife. Hear this, ye husbands, as many as have wives that are fond of money, and compel you to blaspheme God. Call Job to mind. But let us see, if it please you, his great moderation, how he silenced her. "Wherefore" (he says) "hast thou spoken as one of the foolish women [speaketh]?" (Job 2:10) Of a truth "evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Corinthians 15:33), at all times indeed, but particularly in calamities: then they who give evil advice have strength. For if the soul is even of itself prone to impatience, how much more, when there is also an adviser. Is it not thrust into a pit? A wife is a great good, as also a great evil. For because a wife is a great [good], observe from what point he [Satan] wishes to break through the strong wall. 'The depriving him of his property' (he says) 'did not take him; the loss has produced no great effect.' Therefore he says, 'If indeed he will curse thee to thy face.' (Job 2:5) You see whither he was aspiring.

If then we bear [losses] thankfully, we shall recover even these things; and if we should not recover them, our reward will be greater. For when he had wrestled nobly, then God restored to him these things also. When He had shown the devil, that it is not for these things that he serves Him, then He restored them also to him.

[9.] For such is He. When God sees that we are not riveted to things of this life, then He gives them to us. When He sees that we set a higher value on things spiritual, then He also bestows on us things carnal. But not first, lest we should break away from things spiritual: and to spare us He does not give carnal things, to keep us away from them, even against our will.

Not so (you say) but if I receive [them], I am satisfied, and am the more thankful. It is false, O man, for then especially wilt thou be thoughtless.

Why then (you say) does He give [them] to many? Whence is it clear, that He gives [them]? But who else, you say, gives? Their overreaching, their plundering. How then does He allow these things? As He also [allows] murders, thefts, and violence.

What then (you will say) as to those who receive by succession an inheritance from their fathers, being themselves full of evils innumerable? And what of this? How does God suffer them (you say) to enjoy these things? Surely just as He allows thieves, and murderers, and other evil doers. For it is not now the time of judgment, but of the best course of life.

And what I just now said, that I repeat, that they shall suffer greater punishment, who, when they have enjoyed all good things, do not even so become better. For all shall not be punished alike; but they who, even after His benefits, have continued evil, shall suffer a greater punishment, while they who after poverty [have done this] not so. And that this is true, hear what He says to David, “Did I not give thee all thy master’s goods?” (2 Samuel 12:8) Whenever then thou seest a young man that has received a paternal inheritance without labor and continues wicked, be assured that his punishment is increased and the vengeance is made more intense. Let us not then emulate these; but if any man has succeeded to virtue, if any man has obtained spiritual wealth, [him let us emulate]. For (it is said) “Woe to them that trust in their riches” (cf. Psalm 49:6): “Blessed are they that fear the Lord.” (Psalm 128:1) To which of these, tell me, wouldst thou belong? Doubtless to those who are pronounced blessed. Therefore emulate these, not the other, that thou also mayest obtain the good things which are laid up for them. Which may we all obtain, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father be glory together with the Holy Ghost, now and for ever, and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 21

HEBREWS 10:32-34

"But call to remembrance the former days, in which after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly, whilst ye were made a gazing stock both by reproaches and afflictions, and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion on those who were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing that ye have for yourselves in heaven a better and an enduring substance."

[1.] THE best Physicians after they have made a deep incision, and have increased the pains by the wound, soothing the afflicted part, and giving rest and refreshment to the disturbed soul, proceed not to make a second incision, but rather soothe that which has been made with gentle remedies, and such as are suited to remove the violence of the pain. This Paul also did after he had shaken their souls, and pierced them with the recollection of Hell, and convinced then, that he must certainly perish, who does despite to the grace of God, and after he had shown from the laws of Moses, that they also shall perish, and the more [fearfully], and confirm it by other testimonies, and had said, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God" (c. 10:31): then, lest the soul desponding through excessive fear, should be swallowed up with grief, he soothes them by commendations and exhortation, and gives them zeal derived from their own conduct. For, he says, "call to remembrance the former days, in which after ye had been enlightened, ye endured a great fight of afflictions." Powerful is the exhortation from deeds [already done]: for he who begins a work ought to go forward and add to it. As if he had said, when ye were brought in [to the Church], when ye were in the rank of learners, ye displayed so great readiness, so great nobleness; but now it is no longer so. And he who encourages, does thus especially encourage them from their own example.

And he did not simply say, "ye endured a fight" but a "great" [fight]. Moreover he did not say "temptations" but "fight," which is an expression of commendation and of very great praise.

Then he also enumerates them particularly, amplifying his discourse, and multiplying his praise. How? “Partly” (he says) “whilst ye were made a gazing-stock by reproaches and afflictions”; for reproach is a great thing, and calculated to pervert the soul, and to darken the judgment. For hear what the prophet says: “ While they daily say unto me, Where is thy God?” (Psalm 42:10) And again, “If the enemy had reproached me, I would have born it.” (Psalm 55:12) For since the human race is exceedingly vainglorious, therefore it is easily overcome by this.

And he did not simply say “by reproaches,” but that even with great intensity, being “made a gazing-stock.” For when a person is reproached alone, it is indeed painful, but far more so when in presence of all. For tell me how great the evil was when men who had left the meanness of Judaism, and gone over, as it were, to the best course of life, and despised the customs of their fathers, were ill treated by their own people, and had no help.

[2.] I cannot say (he says) that ye suffered these things indeed and were grieved, but ye even rejoiced exceedingly. And this he expressed by saying, “Whilst ye became companions of them that were so used,” and he brings forward the Apostles themselves. Not only (he means) were ye not ashamed of your own sufferings, but ye even shared with others who were suffering the same things. This too is the language of one who is encouraging them. He said not, ‘Bear my afflictions, share with me,’ but respect your own.

“Ye had compassion on them that were in bonds.” Thou seest that he is speaking concerning himself and the rest who were in prison. Thus ye did not account “bonds” to be bonds: but as noble wrestlers so stood ye: for not only ye needed no consolation in your own [distresses], but even became a consolation to others.

And “ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods.” O! what “full assurance of faith”! (c. 10:22) Then he also sets forth the motive, not only consoling them for their struggles, but also that they might not be shaken from the Faith. When ye saw your property plundered (he means) ye endured; for already ye saw Him who is invisible, as visible: which was the effect of genuine faith, and ye showed it forth by your deeds themselves.

Well then, the plundering was perhaps from the force of the plunderers, and no man could prevent it; so that as yet it is not clear, that ye endured the plundering for the faith's sake. (Although this too is clear. For it was in your power if you chose, not to be plundered, by not believing.) But ye did what is far greater than this; the enduring such things even "with joy"; which was altogether apostolical, and worthy of those noble souls, who rejoiced when scourged. For, it says, "they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name." (Acts 5:41) But he that endures "with joy," shows that he has some reward, and that the affair is no loss but a gain.

Moreover the expression "ye took"' shows their willing endurance, because, he means, ye chose and accepted.

"Knowing" (he says) "that ye have for yourselves in heaven a better and an enduring substance"; instead of saying, firm, not perishing like this.

[3.] In the next place, having praised them, he says, (verse 35) "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." What meanest thou? He did not say, 'ye have cast it away, and recover it': but, which tended more to strengthen them, "ye have it," he says. For to recover again that which has been cast away, requires more labor: but not to lose that which is held fast does not. But to the Galatians he says the very opposite: "My children of whom I travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in you" (Galatians 4:19); and with reason; for they were more supine, whence they needed a sharper word; but these were more faint-hearted, so that they rather needed what was more soothing.

"Cast not away therefore" (he says) "your confidence," so that they were in great confidence towards God. "Which hath" (he says) "great recompense of reward." "And when shall we receive them (some one might say)? Behold! All things on our part have been done." Therefore he anticipated them on their own supposition, saying in effect, If ye know that ye have in heaven a better substance, seek nothing here.

"For ye have need of patience," not of any addition [to your labors], that ye may continue in the same state, that ye may not cast away what has been put into your hands. Ye need nothing else, but so to stand as ye have stood, that when ye come to the end, ye may receive the promise.

(Verse 36) “For” (he says) “ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.” Ye have need of one thing only, to bear with the delay; not that ye should fight again. Ye are at the very crown (he means); ye have born all the combats of bonds, of afflictions; your goods have been spoiled. What then? Henceforward ye are standing to be crowned: endure this only, the delay of the crown. O the greatness of the consolation! It is as if one should speak to an athlete who had overthrown all, and had no antagonist, and then was to be crowned, and yet endured not that time, during which the president of the games comes, and places the crown [upon him]; and he impatient, should wish to go out, and escape as though he could not bear the thirst and the heat.

He then also hinting this, what does he say? (Verse 37) “Yet a little while and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” For lest they should say, And when will He come? He comforts them from the Scriptures. For thus also when he says in another place, “Now is our salvation nearer” (Romans 13:11), he comforts them because the remaining time is short. And this he says not of himself but from the Scriptures. But if from that time it was said, “Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry,” it is plain that now He is nearer. Wherefore also waiting is no small reward.

(Verse 38) “Now the just” (he says) “shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him.” This is a great encouragement when one shows that they have succeeded in the whole matter and are losing it through a little indolence. (Verse 39) “But we are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

[4.] (c. 11:1, 2) “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report.” O what an expression has he used, in saying, “an evidence of things not seen.” For [we say] there is “evidence,” in the case of things that are very plain. Faith then is the seeing things not plain (he means), and brings what are not seen to the same full assurance with what are seen. So then neither is it possible to disbelieve in things which are seen, nor, on the other hand can there be faith unless a man be more fully assured with respect to things invisible, than he is with respect to things that are most clearly

seen. For since the objects of hope seem to be unsubstantial, Faith gives them substantiality, or rather, does not give it, but is itself their substance. For instance, the Resurrection has not come, nor does it exist substantially, but hope makes it substantial in our soul. This is [the meaning of] "the substance of things."

If therefore it is an "evidence of things not seen," why forsooth do you wish to see them, so as to fall away from faith, and from being just? Since "the just shall live by faith," whereas ye, if ye wish to see these things, are no longer faithful. Ye have labored (he says), ye have struggled: I too allow this, nevertheless, wait for this is Faith: do not seek the whole "here."

[5.] These things were indeed said to the Hebrews, but they are a general exhortation also to many of those who are here assembled. How and in what way? To the faint-hearted; to the mean-spirited. For when they see the wicked prospering, and themselves faring ill, they are troubled, they bear it impatiently: while they long for the chastisement, and the inflicting vengeance on others; while they wait for the rewards of their own sufferings. "For yet a little time, and He that shall come will come."

Let us then say this to the slothful: Doubtless there will be punishment; doubtless He will come, henceforth the events of the Resurrection are even at the doors.

Whence [does] that [appear] (you say)? I do not say, from the prophets; for neither do I now speak to Christians only; but even if a heathen be here, I am perfectly confident, and bring forward my proofs, and will instruct him. How (you say)?

Christ foretold many things. If those former things did not come to pass, then do not believe them; but if they all came to pass, why doubt concerning those that remain? And indeed, it were very unreasonable, nothing having come to pass, to believe the one, or when all has come to pass, to disbelieve the others.

But I will make the matter more plain by an example. Christ said, that Jerusalem should be taken, and should be so taken as no city ever was before, and that it should never be raised up: and in fact this prediction came to pass. He said, that there should be "great tribulation" (Matthew 24:21), and it came to pass. He said that a grain of mustard seed is sown,

so should the preaching [of the Gospel] be extended: and every day we see this running over the world. He said, that they who left father or mother, or brethren, or sisters, should have both fathers and mothers; And this we see fulfilled by facts. He said, "in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33), that is, no man shall get the better of you. And this we see by the events has come to pass. He said that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church" (Matthew 16:18), even though persecuted, and that no one shall quench the preaching [of the Gospel]: and the experience of events bears witness to this prediction also: and yet when He said these things, it was very hard to believe Him. Why? Because all these were words, and He had not as yet given proof of the things spoken. So that they have now become far more credible. He said that "when the Gospel should have been preached among all the nations, then the end shall come" (Matthew 24:14); lo! now ye have arrived at the end: for the greater part of the world hath been preached to, therefore the end is now at hand. Let us tremble, beloved.

[6.] But what, tell me? Art thou anxious about the end? It indeed is itself near, but each man's life and death is nearer. For it is said, "the days of our years are seventy years; but if [one be] in strength, fourscore years." (Psalm 90:10; [LXX. 89:10].) The day of judgment is near. Let us fear. "A brother doth not redeem; shall man redeem?" (Psalm 49:7; [LXX. 48:8].) There we shall repent much, "but in death no man shall praise Him." (Psalm 6:5; [LXX. 6].) Wherefore he saith, "Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving" (Psalm 95:2; [LXX. xciv.]), that is, his coming. For here [in this life] indeed, whatever we do has efficacy; but there, no longer. Tell me, if a man placed us for a little while in a flaming furnace, should we not submit to anything in order to escape, even were it necessary to part with our money, nay to undergo slavery? How many have fallen into grievous diseases, and would gladly give up all, to be delivered from them, if the choice were offered them? If in this world then, a disease of short duration so afflicts us, what shall we do yonder, when repentance will be of no avail?

[7.] Of how many evils are we now full, without being conscious of them? We bite one another, we devour one another, in wronging, accusing, calumniating, being vexed by the credit of our neighbors. (Cf. Galatians 5:15)

And see the difficulty? When a man wishes to undermine the reputation of a neighbor, he says, 'Such an one said this of him; O God, forgive me, do not examine me strictly, I must give account of what I have heard.' Why then dost thou speak of it at all, if thou dost not believe it? Why dost thou speak of it? Why dost thou make it credible by much reporting? Why dost thou pass on the story which is not true? Thou dost not believe it, and thou entreatest God not to call thee to strict account? Do not say it then, but keep silence, and free thyself from all fear.

But I know not from whence this disease has fallen upon men. We have become tattlers, nothing remains in our mind. Hear the exhortation of a wise man who says, "Hast thou heard a word? Let it die in thee, be bold; it will not burst thee." (Ecclus. 19:10) And again, "A fool heareth a word, and travaileth, as a women in labor of a child." (Ecclus. 19:11) We are ready to make accusations, prepared for condemning. Even if no other evil thing had been done by us, this were sufficient to ruin us, and to carry us away to Hell, this involves us in ten thousand evils. And that thou mayest know this certainly, hear what the prophet says, "Thou satest and spakest against thy brother." (Psalm 1:20)

But it is not I, you say, but the other [who told me]. Nay rather, it is thyself; for if *thou* hadst not spoken, another would not have heard: or even if he should hear it, yet *thou* wouldest not have been to blame for the sin. We ought to shade over and conceal the failings of neighbors, but thou paradest them under a cloak of zeal for goodness. Thou becomest, not an accuser, but a gossip, a trifler, a fool. O what cleverness! Without being aware of it, thou bringest disgrace upon thyself as well as on him.

And see what great evils which arise from this. Thou provokest the wrath of God. Dost thou not hear Paul saying about widows, "they not only" (these are his words) "learn to be idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, wandering about from house to house, and speaking things which they ought not." (1 Timothy 5:13) So that even when thou believest the things which are said against thy brother, thou aughtest not even in that case to speak of them; much less, when thou dost not believe them.

But thou [forsooth] lookest to thine own interest? Thou fearest to be called to account by God? Fear then, lest even for thy tattling thou be called to account. For here, thou canst not say, 'O God, call me not to

account for light talking': for the whole matter is light talking. Why didst thou publish it? Why didst thou increase the evil? This is sufficient to destroy us. On this account Christ said," Judge not, that ye be not judged." (Matthew 7:1)

But we pay no regard to this, neither are we brought to our senses by what happened to the Pharisee. He said what was true, "I am not as this Publican" (Luke 18:11), he said it too in no man's hearing; yet was he condemned. If he were condemned when he said what was true, and uttered it in no man's hearing, what fearful [punishment] shall not they suffer, who like gossiping women, carry about everywhere lies which they do not even themselves believe? What shall they not endure?

[8.] Henceforward let us set "a door and a bolt before the mouth." (Ecclus. 28:25) For innumerable evils have arisen from tattling; families have been ruined, friendships torn asunder, innumerable other miseries have happened. Busy not thyself, O man, about the affairs of thy neighbor.

But thou art talkative and hast a weakness. Talk of thine own [faults] to God: thus the weakness will be no longer a weakness, but an advantage. Talk of thy own [faults] to thy friends, those who are thorough friends and righteous men, and in whom thou hast confidence, that so they may pray for thy sins. If thou speak of the [sins] of others, thou art nowise profited, neither hast thou gained anything, but hast ruined thyself. If thou confessest thy own [sins] to the Lord, thou hast great reward: for one says, "I said, I will confess against myself mine iniquity to the Lord, and Thou forgavest the impiety of my heart." (Psalm 32:5)

Dost thou wish to judge? Judge thine own [sins]. No one will accuse thee, if thou condemn thyself: but he will accuse if thou do not condemn; he will accuse thee, unless thou convict thyself; will accuse thee of insensibility. Thou hast seen such an one angry, irritated, doing something else out of place? Think at once, even thou on thy own [faults]: and thus thou wilt not greatly condemn him, and wilt free thyself from the load of thy past transgressions. If we thus regulate our own conduct, if we thus manage our own life, if we condemn ourselves, we shall probably not commit many sins, and we shall do many good things, being fair and moderate; and shall enjoy all the promises to them that love God: to which may all attain, by the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the

Father together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor, now and for ever and world with end. Amen.

HOMILY 22

HEBREWS 11:3, 4

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."

[1.] FAITH needs a generous and vigorous soul, and one rising above all things of sense, and passing beyond the weakness of human reasonings. For it is not possible to become a believer, otherwise than by raising one's self above the common customs [of the world].

Inasmuch then as the souls of the Hebrews were thoroughly weakened, and though they had begun from faith, yet from circumstances, I mean sufferings, afflictions, they had afterwards become faint-hearted, and of little spirit, and were shaken from [their position], he encouraged them first indeed from these very things, saying, "Call to remembrance the former days" (c. 10:32); next from the Scripture saying, "But the just shall live by faith" (c. 10:38); afterwards from arguments, saying, "But Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (c. 11:1) And now again from their forefathers, those great and admirable men, as much as saying; If where the good things were close at hand, all were saved by faith, much more are we.

For when a soul finds one that shares the same sufferings with itself, it is refreshed and recovers breath. This we may see both in the case of Faith, and in the case of affliction: "that there may be comfort for you it is said through our mutual faith." (Romans 1:12) For mankind are very distrustful, and cannot place confidence in themselves, are fearful about whatever things they think they possess, and have great regard for the opinion of the many.

[2.] What then does Paul do? He encourages them by the fathers; and before that by the common notions [of mankind]. For tell me, he says,

since Faith is calumniated as being a thing without demonstration and rather a matter of deceit, therefore he shows that the greatest things are attained through faith and not through reasonings. And how does he show this, tell me? It is manifest, he saith, that God made the things which are, out of things which are not, things which appear, out of things which appear not, things which subsist, out of things which subsist not. But whence [is it shown] that He did this even "by a Word"? For reason suggests nothing of this kind; but on the contrary, that the things which appear are [formed] out of things which appear.

Therefore the philosophers expressly say that 'nothing comes out of things that are not' being "sensual" (Jude 19), and trusting nothing to Faith And yet these same men, when they happen to say anything great and noble, are caught entrusting it to Faith. For instance, that "God is without beginning, and unborn"; for reason does not suggest this, but the contrary. And consider, I beseech you, their great folly. They say that God is without beginning; and yet this is far more wonderful than the [creation] out of things that are not. For to say, that He is without beginning, that He is unborn, neither begotten by Himself nor by another is more full of difficulties, than to say that God made the things which are, out of things which are not. For here there are many things uncertain: as, that some one made it, that what was made had a beginning, that, in a word, it was made. But in the other case, what? He is self-existing, unborn, He neither had beginning nor time; tell me, do not these things require faith? But he did not assert this, which was far greater, but the lesser.

Whence [does it appear], he would say, that God made these things? Reason does not suggest it; no one was present when it was done. Whence is it shown? It is plainly the result of faith. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were made." Why "through faith"? Because "the things that are seen were not made of things which do appear." For this is Faith.

[3.] Having thus stated the general [principle], he afterwards tests it by individuals. For a man of note is equivalent to the world. This at all events he afterwards hinted. For when he had matched it against one or two hundred persons, and then saw the smallness of the number, he afterwards says, "by whom the world was outweighed in worth." (c. 11:38)

And observe whom he puts first, him who was ill-treated, and that by a brother. It was their own affliction, “For you also” (he says) “have suffered like things of your own countrymen.” (1 Thessalonians 2:14) And by a brother who had been nothing wronged, but who envied him on God’s account; showing that they also are looked on with an evil eye and envied. He honored God, and died because he honored Him: and has not yet attained to a resurrection. But his readiness is manifest, and his part has been done, but God’s part has not yet been carried out towards him.

And by a “more excellent sacrifice” in this place, he means that which is more honorable, more splendid, more necessary.

And we cannot say (he says) that it was not accepted. He did accept it, and said unto Cain, [“Hast thou] not [sinned], if thou rightly offer, but dost not rightly divide?” (Genesis 4:7, LXX.) So then Abel both rightly offered, and rightly divided. Nevertheless for this, what recompense did he receive? He was slain by his brother’s hand: and that sentence which his father endured on account of sin, this he first received who was upright. And he suffered so much the more grievously because it was from a brother, and he was the first [to suffer].

And he did these things rightly looking to no man. For to whom could he look, when he so honored God? To his father and his mother? But they had outraged Him in return for His benefits. To his brother then? But he also had dishonored [God]. So that by himself he sought out what was good.

And he that is worthy of so great honor, what does he suffer? He is put to death. And how too was he otherwise “testified of that he was righteous”? It is said, that fire came down and consumed the sacrifices. For instead of [“And the Lord] had respect to Abel and to his sacrifices” (Genesis 4:4), the Syriac said, “And He set them on fire.” He therefore who both by word and deed bare witness to the righteous man and sees him slain for His sake, did not avenge him, but left him to suffer.

But your case is not such: for how could it be? You who have both prophets and examples, and encouragements innumerable, and signs and miracles accomplished? Hence that was faith indeed. For what miracles did

he see, that he might believe he should have any recompense of good things? Did he not choose virtue from Faith alone?

What is, “and by it he being dead yet speaketh”? That he might not cast them into great despondency, he shows that he has in part obtained a recompense. How? ‘The influence coming from him is great, he means, “and he yet speaketh”; that is, [Cain] slew him, but he did not with him slay his glory and memory. He is not dead; therefore neither shall ye die. For by how much the more grievous a man’s sufferings are, so much the greater is his glory.’

How does he “yet speak”? This is a sign both of his being alive, and of his being by all celebrated, admired, counted blessed. For he who encourages others to be righteous, speaks. For no speech avails so much, as that man’s suffering. As then heaven by its mere appearance speaks, so also does he by being had in remembrance. Not if he had made proclamation of himself, not if he had ten thousand tongues, and were alive, would he have been so admired as now. That is, these things do not take place with impunity, nor lightly, neither do they pass away.

[4.] (Verse 5) “By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him.” This man displayed greater faith than Abel. How (you ask)? Because, although be came after him, yet what befell [Abel] was sufficient to guide him back. How? God foreknew that [Abel] would be killed. For He said to Cain: “Thou hast sinned: do not add thereto.” Honored by him, He did not protect him. And yet neither did this throw him [Enoch] into indifference. He said not to himself, ‘What need of toils and dangers? Abel honored God, yet He did not protect him. For what advantage had he that was departed, from the punishment of his brother? And what benefit could he reap therefrom? Let us allow that he suffers severe punishment: what is that to him who has been slain?’ He neither said nor thought anything of this kind, but passing beyond all these things, he knew that if there is a God, certainly there is a Rewarder also: although as yet they knew nothing of a resurrection. But if they who as yet know nothing of a resurrection, and see contradictory things here, thus pleased [God], how much more should we? For they neither knew of a resurrection, nor had they any examples to look to. This same thing then made [Enoch] well-pleasing [to

God], namely, that he received nothing. For he knew that [God] "is a rewarder." Whence [knew he this]? "For He recompensed Abel," do you say? So that reason suggested other things, but faith the opposite of what was seen. Even then (he would say) if you see that you receive nothing here, be not troubled.

How was it "by faith" that "Enoch was translated"? Because his pleasing [God] was the cause of his translation, and faith [the cause] of his pleasing [Him]. For if he had not known that he should receive a reward, how could he have pleased [Him]? "But without faith it is impossible to please" Him. How? If a man believe that there is a God and a retribution, he will have the reward. Whence then is the well-pleasing?

[5.] It is necessary to "believe that He is," not 'what He is.' If "that He is" needs Faith, and not reasonings; it is impossible to comprehend by reasoning 'what He is.' If that "He is a rewarder" needs Faith and not reasonings, how is it possible by Reasoning to compass His essence? For what Reasoning can reach this? For some persons say that the things that exist are self-caused. Seest thou that unless we have Faith in regard to all things, not only in regard to retribution, but also in regard to the very being of God, all is lost to us?

But many ask whither Enoch was translated, and why he was translated, and why he did not die, neither he nor Elijah, and, if they are still alive, how they live, and in what form. But to ask these things is superfluous. For that the one was translated, and that the other was taken up, the Scriptures have said; but where they are, and how they are, they have not added: For they say nothing more than is necessary. For this indeed took place, I mean his translation, immediately at the beginning, the human soul [thereby] receiving a hope of the destruction of death, and of the overthrow of the devil's tyranny, and that death will be done away; for he was translated, not dead, but "that he should not see death."

Therefore he added, he was translated alive, because he was well-pleasing [unto God]. For just as a Father when he has threatened his son, wishes indeed immediately after he has threatened, to relax his threat, but endures and continues resolute, that for a time he may chasten and correct him, allowing the threat to remain firm; so also God, to speak as it were after the manner of men, did not continue resolute, but immediately showed

that death is done away. And first He allows death to happen, wishing to terrify the father through the son: For wishing to show that the sentence is verily fixed, He subjected to this punishment not wicked men at once, but him even who was well-pleasing, I mean, the blessed Abel; and almost immediately after him, He translated Enoch. Moreover, He did not raise the former, lest they should immediately grow bold; but He translated the other being yet alive: having excited fear by Abel, but by this latter giving zeal to be well-pleasing unto Him. Wherefore they who say that all things are ruled and governed of themselves, and do not expect a reward, are not well-pleasing; as neither are the heathen. For "He becomes a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" by works and by knowledge.

[6.] Since then we have "a rewarder," let us do all things that we may not be deprived of the rewards of virtue. For indeed the neglecting such a recompense, the scorning such a reward, is worthy of many tears. For as to "those who diligently seek Him," He is a rewarder, so to those who seek Him not, the contrary.

"Seek" (He says) "and ye shall find" (Matthew 7:7): but how can we find the Lord? Consider how gold is found; with much labor. [" I sought the Lord] with my hands" (it is said) "by night before Him, and I was not deceived" (Psalm 77:2. See LXX [Psalm 76:3]), that is, just as we seek what is lost, so let us seek God. Do we not concentrate our mind thereon? Do we not inquire of every one? Do we not travel from home? Do we not promise money?

For instance, suppose that any among us has lost his son, what do we not do? What land, what sea do we not make the circuit of? Do we not reckon money, and houses, and everything else as secondary to the finding him? And should we find him, we cling to him, we hold him fast, we do not let him go. And when we are going to seek anything whatever, we busy ourselves in all ways to find what is sought. How much more ought we to do this in regard to God, as seeking what is indispensable; nay rather, not in the same way, but much more! But since we are weak, at least seek God as thou seekest thy money or thy son. Wilt thou not leave thy home for Him? Hast thou never left thy home for money? Dost thou not busy thyself in all ways? When thou hast found [it], art thou not full of confidence?

[7.] “Seek” (He says) “and ye shall find.” For things sought after need much care, especially in regard of God. For many are the hindrances, many the things that darken, many that impede our perception. For as the sun is manifest, and set forth publicly before all, and we have no need to seek it; but if on the other hand we bury ourselves and turn everything upside down, we need much labor to look at the sun; so truly here also, if we bury ourselves in the depth of evil desires, in the darkness of passions and of the affairs of this life, with difficulty do we look up, with difficulty do we raise our heads with difficulty do we see clearly. He that is buried underground, in whatever degree he sees upwards, in that degree does he come towards the sun. Let us therefore shake off the earth let us break through the mist which lies upon us. It is thick, and close, and does not allow us to see clearly.

And how, you say, is this cloud broken through? If we draw to ourselves the beams of “the sun of righteousness.” “The lifting up of my hands” (it is said) “is an evening sacrifice.” (Psalm 141:2) With our hands let us also lift up our mind: ye who have been initiated know what I mean, perhaps too ye recognize the expression, and see at a glance what I have hinted at. Let us raise up our thoughts on high.

I myself know many men almost suspended apart from the earth, and beyond measure stretching up their hands, and out of heart because it is not possible to be lifted into the air, and thus praying with earnestness. Thus I would have you always, and if not always, at least very often; and if not very often, at least now and then, at least in the morning, at least in the evening prayers. For, tell me, canst thou not stretch forth the hands? Stretch forth the will, stretch forth as far as thou wilt, yea even to heaven itself. Even shouldst thou wish to touch the very summit, even if thou wouldst ascend higher and walk thereon, it is open to thee. For our mind is lighter, and higher than any winged creature. And when it receives grace from the Spirit, O! how swift is it! How quick is it! How does it compass all things! How does it never sink down or fall to the ground! These wings let us provide for ourselves: by means of them shall we be able to fly even across the tempestuous sea of this present life. The swiftest birds fly unhurt over mountains, and woods, and seas, and rocks, in a brief moment of time. Such also is the mind; when it is winged, when it is separated from

the things of this life, nothing can lay hold of it, it is higher than all things, even than the fiery darts of the devil.

The devil is not so good a marksman, as to be able to reach this height; he sends forth his darts indeed, for he is void of all shame, yet he does not hit the mark; the dart returns to him without effect, and not without effect only, but it [falls] upon his own head. For what is sent forth by him must of necessity strike [something]. As then, that which has been shot out by men, either strikes the person against whom it is directed, or pierces bird, or fence, or garment, or wood, or the mere air, so does the dart of the devil also. It must of necessity strike; and if it strike not him that is shot at, it necessarily strikes him that shoots it. And we may learn from many instances, that when we are not hit, without doubt he is hit himself. For instance, he plotted against Job: he did not hit him, but was struck himself. He plotted against Paul, he did not hit him, but was struck himself. If we watch, we may see this happening everywhere. For even when he strikes, he is hit; much more then [when he does not hit].

[8.] Let us turn his weapons then against himself, and having armed and fortified ourselves with the shield of faith, let us keep guard with steadfastness, so as to be impregnable. Now the dart of the devil is evil concupiscence. Anger especially is a fire, a flame; it catches, destroys, consumes; let us quench it, by long-suffering, by forbearance. For as red-hot iron dipped into water, loses its fire, so an angry man filling in with a patient one does no harm to the patient man, but rather benefits him, and is himself more thoroughly subdued.

For nothing is equal to long-suffering. Such a man is never insulted; but as bodies of adamant are not wounded, so neither are such souls. For they are above the reach of the darts. The long-suffering man is high, and so high as not to receive a wound from the shot. When one is furious, laugh; but do not laugh openly, lest thou irritate him: but laugh mentally on his account. For in the case of children, when they strike us passionately, as though forsooth they were avenging themselves, we laugh. If then thou laugh, there will be as great difference between thee and him, as between a child and a man: but if thou art furious thou hast made thyself a child. For the angry are more senseless than children. If one look at a furious child, does he not laugh at him? “The poor-spirited” (it is said) “is mightily simple.”

(Proverbs 14:29) The simple then is a child: and “he who is long-suffering” (it is said) “is abundant in wisdom.” This “abundant wisdom” then let us follow after, that we may attain to the good things promised us in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 23

HEBREWS 11:7

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by Faith."

[1.] "By faith" (he says) "Noah being warned of God." As the Son of God, speaking of His own coming, said, "In the days of Noah they married and were given in marriage" (Luke 17:26, 27), therefore the Apostle also recalled to their mind an appropriate image. For the example of Enoch, was an example only of Faith; that of Noah, on the other hand, of unbelief also. And this is a complete consolation and exhortation, when not only believers are found approved, but also unbelievers suffer the opposite.

For what does he say? "By faith being warned of God." What is "being warned of God"? It is, "It having been foretold to him." But why is the expression "divine communication" (Luke 2:26) used? for in another place also it is said, "and it wag communicated to him by the Spirit," and again, "and what saith the divine communication?" (Romans 11:4) Seest thou the equal dignity of the Spirit? For as God reveals, so also does the Holy Spirit. But why did he speak thus? The prophecy is called "a divine communication."

"Of things not seen as yet," he says, that is of the rain.

"Moved with fear, prepared an ark." Reason indeed suggested nothing of this sort; For "they were marrying and being given in marriage"; the air was clear, there were no signs [of change]: but nevertheless he feared: "By faith" (he says) "Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house."

How is it, "By the which he condemned the world"? He showed them to be worthy of punishment, since they were not brought to their senses even by the preparation.

"And he became" (he says) "heir of the righteousness which is by Faith": that is, by his believing God he was shown to be righteous. For this is the [part] of a soul sincerely disposed towards Him and judging nothing more reliable than His words, just as Unbelief is the very contrary. Faith, it is manifest, works righteousness. For as we have been warned of God respecting Hell, so was he also: and yet at that time he was laughed at; he was reviled and ridiculed; but he regarded none of these things.

[2.] Verse 8, 9 *"By faith Abraham when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise."* ["By faith"]: for (tell me) whom did he see to emulate? He had for father a Gentile, and an idolater; he had heard no prophets; he knew not whither he was going. For as they of the Hebrews who believed, looked to these [patriarchs] as having enjoyed blessings innumerable, he shows that none of them obtained anything as yet; all are unrewarded; no one as yet received his reward. "He "escaped from his country and his home, and "went out not knowing whither he went."

And what marvel, if he himself [were so], when his seed also dwelt in this same way? For seeing the promise disproved (since He had said, "To thee will I give this land, and to thy seed" — Genesis 12:7; 13:15), he saw his son dwelling there; and again his grandson saw himself dwelling in a land not his own; yet was he nowise troubled. For the affairs of Abraham happened as we might have expected, since the promise was to be accomplished afterwards in his family (although it is said even to himself, "To thee, and to thy seed," not, "to thee through thy seed," but "to thee and to thy seed"): still neither he, nor Isaac, nor Jacob, enjoyed the promise. For one of them served for hire, and the other was driven out: and he himself even was failing through fear: and while he took some things indeed in war, others, unless he had had the aid of God, would have been destroyed. On this account [the Apostle] says, "with the heirs of the same promise"; not himself alone, he means; but the heirs also.

[3.] (Verse 13) "These all died in faith," he says, "not having obtained the promises." At this place it is worth while to make two inquiries; how,

after saying that [God] "translated Enoch, and he was not found, so that he did not see death," does he say, "These all *died* in Faith." And again, after saying, "they not having obtained the promises," he declares that Noah had received a reward, "to the saving of his house," and that Enoch had been "translated," and that Abel "yet speaks," and that Abraham had gained a hold on the land, and yet he says, "These all died in Faith, not having obtained the promises." What then is [meant]?

It is necessary to solve the first [difficulty], and then the second. "These all" (he says) "*died* in faith." The word "all" is used here not because all had died, but because with that one exception "all these had died," whom we know to be dead.

And the [statement] "not having obtained the promises," is true: for surely the promise to Noah was not to be this [which is here spoken of]. But further, of what kind of "promises" is he speaking? For Isaac and Jacob received the promises of the land; but as to Noah and Abel and Enoch, what kind of promises did they receive? Either then he is speaking concerning these three; or if concerning those others also, the promise was not this, that Abel should be admired, nor that Enoch should be translated, nor that Noah should be preserved; but these things came to them for their virtue's sake, and were a sort of foretaste of things to come. For God from the beginning, knowing that the human race needs much condescension, bestows on us not only the things in the world to come, but also those here; as for instance, Christ said even to the disciples, "Whosoever hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, shall receive an hundredfold and shall inherit everlasting life." (Matthew 19:29) And again, "Seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33) Seest thou that these things are given by Him in the way of addition, that we might not faint? For as the athletes have the benefit of careful attention, even when engaged in the combat, but do not then enjoy entire ease, living under rules, yet afterwards they enjoy it entire: so God also does not grant us here to partake of "entire" ease. For even here He does give [some].

[4.] "But having seen them afar off," he says, "and embraced them." Here he hints at something mystical: that they received beforehand all the things which have been spoken concerning things to come; concerning the

resurrection, concerning the Kingdom of Heaven, concerning the other things, which Christ proclaimed when He came, for these are "the promises" of which he speaks. Either then he means this, or, that they did not indeed receive them, but died in confidence respecting them, and they were [thus] confident through Faith only.

"Having seen them afar off": four generations before; for after so many [generations], they went up out of Egypt.

"And embraced them," saith he, and were glad. They were so persuaded of them as even to "embrace [or "salute"] them," from the metaphor of persons on ship-board seeing from afar the longed-for cities: which, before they enter them, they take and occupy by words of greeting.

(Verse 10) "For they looked" (he says) "for the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Seest thou that they received them in this sense, in their already accepting them and being confident respecting them. If then to be confident is to receive, it is in your power also to receive. For these, although they enjoyed not those [blessings], yet still saw them by their longing desire. Why now do these things happen? That we might be put to shame, in that they indeed, when things on earth were promised them, regarded them not, but sought the future "city": whereas God again and again speaks to us of the city which is above, and yet we seek that which is here. He said to them, I will give you the things of the present [world]. But when He saw, or rather, when they showed themselves worthy of greater things, then He no longer suffers them to receive these, but those greater ones; wishing to show us that they are worthy of greater things, being unwilling to be bound to these. As if one should promise playthings to an intelligent child, not that he might receive them, but by way of exhibiting his philosophy, when he asks for things more important. For this is to show, that they held off from the land with so great earnestness, that they did not even accept what was given. Wherefore their posterity receive it on this account, for themselves were worthy of the land.

What is, "the city which hath foundations"? For are not these [which are visible] "foundations"? In comparison of the other, they are not.

"Whose Builder and Maker is God." O What an encomium on that city!

[5.] (Verse 11) “By faith also Sarah herself,” he says. Here he began [speaking] in a way to put them to shame, in case, that is, they should show themselves more faint-hearted than a woman. But possibly some one might say, How “by faith,” when she laughed? Nay, while her laughter indeed was from unbelief, her fear [was] from Faith, for to say, “I laughed not” (Genesis 18:15), arose from Faith. From this then it appears that when unbelief had been cleared out, Faith came in its place.

“By faith also Sarah received strength to conceive seed even when she was past age.” What is, “to conceive seed “? She who was become dead, who was barren, received power for the retaining of seed, for conception. For her imperfection was two-fold; first from her time of life for she was really old; secondly from nature, for she was barren.

(Verse 12) “Wherefore even from one they” all “sprang, as the stars of the sky, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore.” “Wherefore” (he says) “even from one they” all “sprang.” Here he not only says that she bare [a child], but that she also became mother of so many as not even fruitful wombs [are mothers of]. “As the stars,” He says. How then is it that He often numbers them, although He said, “As the stars of the heaven shall not be numbered, so neither shall your seed”? (Genesis 15:5) He either means the excess, or else [speaks of] those who are continually being born. For is it possible, tell me, to number their forefathers of one family as, such an one son of such an one, and such an one son of such an one? But here such are the promises of God, so skillfully arranged are His undertakings.

[6.] But if the things which He promised as additional, are so admirable, so beyond expectation, so magnificent, what will those be, to which these are an addition, to which these are somewhat over and above? What then can be more blessed than they who attain them? What more wretched than those who miss them? For if a man when driven out from his native country, is pitied by all; and when he has lost an inheritance is considered by all as an object of compassion, with what tears ought he to be bewailed, who fails of Heaven, and of the good things there stored up? Or rather, he is not even to be wept for: for one is wept for, when he suffers something of which he is not himself the cause; but when of his own choice he has entangled himself in evil, he is not worthy of tears, but of wailings; or

rather then of mourning; since even our Lord JESUS Christ mourned and wept for Jerusalem, impious as it was. Truly we are worthy of weepings innumerable, of wailings innumerable. If the whole world should receive a voice, both stones, and wood, and trees, and wild beasts, and birds, and fishes, and in a word, the whole world, if receiving a voice it should bewail us who have failed of those good things, it would not bewail and lament enough. For what language, what intellect, can represent that blessedness and virtue, that pleasure, that glory, that happiness, that splendor? "What eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, and what hath not entered into the heart of man" (1 Corinthians 2:9), (he did not say, that they simply surpass [what we imagine]; but none hath ever conceived) "the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." For of what kind are those good things likely to be, of which God is the Preparer and Establisher? For if immediately after He had made us, when we had not yet done anything, He freely bestowed so great [favors], Paradise, familiar intercourse with Himself, promised us immortality, a life happy and freed from cares; what will He not bestow on those who have labored and struggled so greatly, and endured on His behalf? For us He spared not His Only Begotten, for us when we were enemies He gave up His own SON to death; of what will He not count us worthy, having become His friends? what will He not impart to us, having reconciled us to Himself?

[7.] He both is abundantly and infinitely rich; and He desires and earnestly endeavors to obtain our friendship; we do not thus earnestly endeavor. What am I saying, 'do not earnestly endeavor'? We do not wish to obtain the good things as He wishes it. And what He has done shows that He wishes it more [than we]. For while, for our own sake, we with difficulty think lightly of a little gold: He, for our sake, gave even the Son who was His own. Let us make use of the love of God as we ought; let us reap the fruits of His friendship. For "ye are My friends" (he says) "if ye do what I say to you." (John 15:14) How wonderful! His enemies, who were at an infinite distance from Him, whom in all respects He excels by an incomparable superiority, these He has made His friends and calls them friends. What then should not one choose to suffer for the sake of this friendship? For the friendship of men we often incur danger, but for that of God, we do not even give up money. Our [condition] does indeed call for mourning, for mourning and tears and wailings, and loud lamentation

and beating of the breast. We have fallen from our hope, we are humbled from our high estate, we have shown ourselves unworthy of the honor of God even after His benefits we are become unfeeling, and ungrateful. The devil has stripped us of all our good things. We who were counted worthy to be sons; we His brethren and fellow-heirs are come to differ nothing from His enemies that insult Him.

Henceforward, what consolation shall there be for us? He called us to Heaven, and we have thrust ourselves down to hell. “Swearing and lying and stealing and adultery, are poured out upon the earth.” (Hosea 4:2) Some “mingle blood upon blood”; and others do deeds worse than blood-shedding. Many of those that are wronged, many of those that are defrauded prefer ten thousand deaths to the suffering such things: and except they had feared God, would even have killed themselves, being so murderously disposed against themselves. Are not these things then worse than blood-shedding?

[8.] “Woe is me, my soul! For the godly man is perished from the earth, and there is none upright among men” (Micah 7:1, 2, LXX.); let us also now cry out, first about our own selves but aid me in my lamentation.

Perhaps some are even disgusted and laugh. For this very cause ought we to make our lamentations the more intense, because we are so mad and beside ourselves, that we do not know that we are mad, but laugh at things for which we ought to groan. O man! “There is wrath revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” (Romans 1:18); “God will come manifestly: a fire will burn before Him, and round about Him will be a mighty tempest.” (Psalm 1:3) “A fire will burn before Him, and consume His enemies on every side.” (Psalm 97:3) “The day of the Lord is as a burning oven.” (Malachi 4:1) And no man lays up these things in his mind, but these tremendous and fearful doctrines are more despised than fables, and are trodden under foot. He that heareth, — there is no one: while they who laugh and make sport are — all. What resource will there be for us? Whence shall we find safety? “We are undone, we are utterly consumed” (Numbers 17:12), we are become the laughingstock of our enemies, and a mockery for the heathen and the Demons. Now is the devil greatly elated; he glories and is glad. The angels to whom we had been

entrusted are all ashamed and in sadness: there is no man to convert [you]: all means have been used by us in vain, and we seem to you as idle talkers. It is seasonable even now to call on the heaven, because there is no man that heareth; to take to witness the elements: “Hear, O heaven! and give ear, O earth! for the Lord hath spoken.” (Isaiah 1:2)

Give a hand, stretch it forth, O ye who have not yet been overwhelmed, to them who are undone through their drunkenness: ye that are whole to them that are sick, ye that are sober-minded to them that are mad, that are giddily whirling round.

Let no man, I beseech you, prefer the favor of his friend to his salvation; and let violence and rebuke look to one thing only, — his benefit. When one has been seized by a fever, even slaves lay hold of their Masters. For when that is pressing on him, throwing his mind into confusion, and a swarm of slaves are standing by, they recognize not the law of Master and Servant, in the calamity of the Master.

Let us collect ourselves, I exhort you: there are daily wars, submersions [of towns], destructions innumerable all around us, and on every side the wrath of God is enclosing us as in a net. And we, as though we were well-pleasing to Him, are in security. We all make our hands ready for unjust gains, none for helping others: all for plundering, none for protecting: each one is in earnest as to how he shall increase his possessions; no one as to how he shall aid the needy: each one has much anxiety how he may add to his wealth; no one how he may save his own soul. One fear possesses all, lest (you say) we should become poor; no man is in anguish and trembling lest we should fall into hell. These things call for lamentations, these call for accusation, these call for reprobation.

[9.] But I do not wish to speak of these things, but I am constrained by my grief. Forgive me: I am forced by sorrow to utter many things, even those which I do not wish. I see that our wound is grievous, that our calamity is beyond comfort, that woes have overtaken us greater than the consolation. We are undone. “O that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears” (Jeremiah 9:1), that I might lament. Let us weep, beloved, let us weep, let us groan.

Possibly there may be some here who say, He talks to us of nothing but lamentation, nothing but tears. It was not my wish, believe me, it was not my wish, but rather to go through a course of commendations and praises: but now it is not the season for these. Beloved, it is not lamenting which is grievous, but the doing things which call for lamentations. Sorrow is not the: thing to shrink from, but the committing things that call for sorrow. Do not thou be punished, and I will not mourn. Do not die, and I will not weep. If the body indeed lies dead, thou callest on all to grieve with thee, and thinkest those without sympathy who do not mourn: And when the soul is perishing, dost thou tell us *not* to mourn?

But I cannot be a father, if I do not weep. I am a father full of affection. Hear how Paul exclaims, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again" (Galatians 4:19): what mother in child-birth utters cries so bitter as he! Would that it were possible for thee to see the very fire that is in my heart, and thou wouldest know, that I burn [with grief] more intense than any woman, or gift that suffers untimely widowhood. She does not so mourn over her husband, nor any father over his son, as I do over this multitude that is here with us.

I see no progress. Everything turns to calumnies and accusations. No man makes it his business to please God; but (he says) 'let us speak evil of such an one or such an one.' 'Such an one is unfit to be among the Clergy.' 'Such an one does not lead a respectable life.' When we ought to be grieving for our own evils, we judge others, whereas we ought not to do this, even when we are pure from sins. "For who maketh thee to differ" (he says) "and what hast thou which thou didst not receive? But if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory, as though thou hadst not received it?" (1 Corinthians 4:7) "And thou, why dost thou judge thy brother" (Romans 14:10), being thyself full of innumerable evils? When thou sayest, Such an one is a bad man, and a spendthrift, and vicious, think of thyself, and examine strictly thy own [condition], and thou wilt repent of what thou hast said. For there is no, no not any, such powerful stimulus to virtue, as the recollecting of our sins.

If we turn over these two things in our minds, we shall be enabled to attain the promised blessings, we shall be enabled to cleanse ourselves and wipe away [what is amiss]. Only let us take serious thought sometime; let us be

anxious about the matter, beloved. Let us grieve here in reflection, that we may not grieve yonder in punishment, but may enjoy the everlasting blessings, where “pain and sorrow and sighing are fled away” (Isaiah 35:10), that we may attain to the good things which surpass man’s understanding, in Christ Jesus our Lord, for to Him is glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY 24

HEBREWS 11:13-16

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, hut having seen them afar off, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a county. And Italy if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a city."

[1.] THE first virtue, yea the whole of virtue, is to be a stranger to this world, and a sojourner, and to have nothing in common with things here, but to hang loose from them, as from firings strange to us; As those blessed disciples did, of whom he says, "They wandered about in sheepskins, and in goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented: of whom the world was not worthy." (c. 11:37, 38)

They called themselves therefore "strangers"; but Paul said somewhat much beyond this: for not merely did he call himself a stranger, but said that he was dead to the world, and that the world was dead to him. "For the world" (he says) "has been crucified to me and I to the world." (Galatians 6:14) But we, both citizens and quite alive, busy ourselves about everything here as citizens. And what righteous men were to the world, "strangers" and "dead," that we are to Heaven. And what they were to Heaven, alive and acting as citizens, that we are to the world. Wherefore we are dead, because we have refused that which is truly life, and have chosen this which is but for a time. Wherefore we have provoked God to wrath, because when the enjoyments of Heaven have been set before us, we are not willing to be separated from things on earth, but, like worms, we turn about from the earth to the earth, and again from this to that; and in short are not willing to look up even for a little while, nor to withdraw ourselves from human affairs, but as if drowned in torpor and sleep and drunkenness, we are stupefied with imaginations.

[2.] And as those who are under the power of sweet sleep lie on their bed not only during the night, but even when the morning has over-taken them, and bright day has come, and are not ashamed to indulge in pleasure, and to make the season of business and activity a time of slumber and indolence, so truly we also, when the day is drawing near, when the night is far spent, or rather the day; for "work" (it is said) "while it is day" (John 9:4); when it is day we practice all that belongs to the night, sleeping, dreaming, indulging in luxurious fancies; and the eyes of our understanding are closed as well as those of our body; we speak amiss, we talk absurdly; even if a person inflict a deep wound upon us, if he carry off all our substance, if he set the very house on fire, we are not so much as conscious of it.

Or rather, we do not even wait for others to do this, but we do it ourselves, piercing and wounding ourselves every day, lying in unseemly fashion, and stripped bare of all credit, all honor, neither ourselves concealing our shameful deeds, nor permitting others to do so, but lying exposed to public shame, to the ridicule, the numberless jests of spectators and passers-by.

[3.] Do ye not suppose that the wicked themselves laugh at those who are of like characters to themselves, and condemn them? For since God has placed within us a tribunal which cannot be bribed nor ever utterly destroyed, even though we come to the very lowest depth of vice; therefore even the wicked themselves give sentence against themselves, and if one call them that which they are, they are ashamed, they are angry, they say that it is an insult. Thus they condemn what they do, even if not by their deeds, yet by their words, by their conscience, nay rather even by their deeds. For when they carry on their practices out of sight and secretly, they give the strongest proof of the opinion they hold concerning the thing itself. For wickedness is so manifest, that all men are its accusers, even those who follow after it, while such is the quality of virtue, that it is admired even by those who do not emulate it. For even the fornicator will praise chastity, and the covetous will condemn injustice, and the passionate will admire patience, and blame quarrelsomeness, and the wanton [will blame] wantonness.

How then (you say) does he pursue these things? From excessive indolence, not because he judges it good; otherwise he would not have been ashamed of the thing itself, nor would he have denied it when another accused him. Nay many when caught, not enduring the shame, have even hanged themselves. So strong is the witness within us in behalf of what is good and becoming. Thus what is good is brighter than the sun, and the contrary more unsightly than anything.

[4.] The saints were "strangers and sojourners." How and in what way? And where does Abraham confess himself "a stranger and a sojourner"? Probably indeed he even himself confessed it: but David both confessed "I am a stranger" and what? "As all my fathers were." (Psalm 39:12) For they who dwell in tents, they who purchase even burial places for money, evidently were in some sense strangers, as they had not even where to bury their dead.

What then? Did they mean that they were "strangers" from the land that is in Palestine? By no means: but in respect of the whole world: and with reason; for they saw therein none of the things which they wished for, but everything foreign and strange. They indeed wished to practice virtue: but here there was much wickedness, and things were quite foreign to them. They had no friend, no familiar acquaintance, save only some few.

But how were they "strangers"? They had no care for things here. And this they showed not by words, but by their deeds. In what way?

He said to Abraham, "Leave that which seems thy country and come to one that is foreign": And he did not cleave to his kindred, but gave it up as unconcernedly as if he were about to leave a foreign land. He said to him, "Offer up thy son," and he offered him up as if he had no son; as if he had divested himself of his nature, so he offered him up. The wealth which he had acquired was common to all passers-by, and this he accounted as nothing. He yielded the first places to others: he threw himself into dangers; he suffered troubles innumerable. He built no splendid houses, he enjoyed no luxuries, he had no care about dress, which all are things of this world; but lived in all respects as belonging to the City yonder; he showed hospitality, brotherly love, mercifulness, forbearance, contempt for wealth and for present glory, and for all else.

And his son too was such as himself: when he was driven away, when war was made on him, he yielded and gave way, as being in a foreign land. For foreigners, whatever they suffer, endure it, as not being in their own country. Even when his wife was taken from him, he endured this also as being in a strange land: and lived in all respects as one whose home was above, showing sober-mindedness and a well-ordered life. For after he had begotten a son, he had no more commerce with his wife, and it was when the flower of his youth had passed that he married her, showing that he did it not from passion, but in subservience to the promise of God.

And what did Jacob? Did he not seek bread only and raiment, which are asked for by those who are truly strangers; by those that have come to great poverty? When he was driven out, did he not as a stranger give place? Did he not serve for hire? Did he not suffer afflictions innumerable, everywhere, as a stranger?

[5.] And these things (he says) they said, "seeking" their "own country." Ah! how great is the difference! They indeed were in travail-pains each day, wishing to be released from this world, and to return to their country. But we, on the contrary, if a fever attack us neglecting everything, weeping like little children, are frightened at death.

Not without reason we are thus affected. For since we do not live here like strangers, nor as if hastening to our country, but are like persons that are going away to punishment, therefore we grieve, because we have not used circumstances as we ought, but have turned order upside down. Hence we grieve when we ought to rejoice: hence we shudder, like murderers or robber chiefs, when they are going to be brought before the judgment-seat, and are thinking over all the things they have done, and therefore are fearful and trembling.

They, however, were not such, but pressed on. And Paul even groaned; "And we" (he says) "that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened." (2 Corinthians 5:4) Such were they who were with Abraham; "strangers," he says, they were in respect of the whole world, and "they sought a country."

What sort of "country" was this? Was it that which they had left? By no means. For what hindered them if they wished, from returning again, and

becoming citizens? but they sought that which is in Heaven? Thus they desired their departure hence, and so they pleased God; for "God was not ashamed to be called their God."

[6.] Ah! how great a dignity! He vouchsafed "to be called their God." What dost thou say? He is called the God of the earth, and the God of Heaven, and hast thou set it down as a great thing that "He is not ashamed to be called their God"? Great and truly great this is, and a proof of exceeding blessedness. How? Because He is called God of earth and of heaven as also of the Gentiles: in that He created and formed them: but [God] of those holy men, not in this sense, but as some true friend.

And I will make it plain to you by an example; as in the case of [slaves] in large households, when any of those placed over the household are very highly esteemed, and manage everything themselves, and can use great freedom towards their masters, the Master is called after them, and one may find many so called. But what do I say? As we might say the God, not of the Gentiles but of the world, so we might say "the God of Abraham." But you do not know how great a dignity this is, because we do not attain to it. For as now He is called the Lord of all Christians, and yet the name goes beyond our deserts: consider the greatness if He were called the God of one [person]! He who is called the God of the whole world is "not ashamed to be called" the God of three men: and with good reason: for the saints would turn the scale, I do not say against the world but against ten thousand such. "For one man who doeth the will of the Lord, is better than ten thousand transgressors." (Ecclus. 16:3)

Now that they called themselves "strangers" in this sense is manifest. But supposing that they said they were "strangers" on account of the strange land, why did David also [call himself a stranger]? Was not he a king? Was not he a prophet? Did he not spend his life in his own country? Why then does he say, "I am a stranger and a sojourner"? (Psalm 39:12) How art thou a stranger? "As" (he says) "all my fathers were." Seest thou that they too were strangers? We have a country, he means, but not really our country. But how art thou thyself a stranger? As to the earth. Therefore they also [were strangers] in respect of the earth: For "as they were," he says, so also am I; and as he, so they too.

[7.] Let us even now become strangers; that God may "not be ashamed of us to be called. our God." For it is a shame to Him, when He is called the God of the wicked, and He also is ashamed of them; as He is glorified when He is [called the God] of the good and the kind, and of them that cultivate virtue. For if "we" decline to be called the masters of our wicked slaves, and give them up; and should any one come to us and say, 'such a one does innumerable bad things, he is your slave, is he not?' We immediately say," by no means," to get rid of the disgrace: for a slave has a close relation to his master, and the discredit passes from the One to the other. — But they were so illustrious, so full of confidence, that not only was He "not ashamed to be called" from them, but He even Himself says, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. (Exodus 3:6)

Let us also, my beloved, become "strangers"; that God may "not be ashamed of us" that He may not be ashamed, and deliver us up to Hell. Such were they who said, "Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and in Thy Name have done many wonderful works!" (Matthew 7:22) But see what Christ says to them: "I know you not:" the very thing which masters would do, when wicked slaves run to them, wishing to be rid of the disgrace. "I know you not," He says. How then dost Thou punish those whom Thou knowest not? I said, "I know not," in a different sense: that is, "I deny you, and renounce you." But God forbid that we should hear this fatal and terrible utterance. For if they who east out demons and prophesied, were denied, because their life was not suitable thereto; how much more we!

[8.] And how (you ask) is it possible that they should be denied, who have shown prophetic powers, and wrought miracles, and cast out demons? Is it probable they were afterwards changed, and became wicked; and therefore were nothing benefited, even by their former virtue. For not only ought we to have our beginnings splendid, but the end also more splendid still.

For tell me, does not the Orator take pains to make the end of his speech splendid, that he may retire with applause? Does not the public officer make the most splendid display at the close of his administration? The wrestler, if he do not make a more splendid display and conquer unto the

end, and if after vanquishing all he be vanquished by the last, is not all unprofitable to him? Should the pilot have crossed the whole ocean, yet if he wreck his vessel at the port, has he not lost all his former labor? And what [of] the Physician? If, after he has freed the sick man from his disease, when he is on the point of discharging him cured, he should then destroy him, has he not destroyed everything? So too in respect of Virtue, as many as have not added an end suitable to the beginning, and in unison and harmony with it, are ruined, and undone. Such are they who have sprung forth from the starting place bright and exulting, and afterwards have become faint and feeble. Therefore they are both deprived of the prize, and are not acknowledged by their master.

Let us listen to these things, those of us who are in love of wealth: for this is the greatest iniquity. “For the love of money is the root of all evil.” (1 Timothy 6:10) Let us listen, those of us who wish to make our present possessions greater, let us listen and sometime cease from our covetousness, that we may not hear the same things as they [will hear]. Let us listen to them now, and be on our guard, that we may not hear them then. Let us listen now with fear, that we may not then listen with vengeance: “Depart from Me” (He says); “I never knew you” (Matthew 7:23), no not even then (He means) when ye made a display of prophesyings, and were casting out demons.

It is probable that He also here hints at something else, that even then they were wicked; and from the beginning, grace wrought even by the unworthy. For if it wrought through Balaam, much more through the unworthy, for the sake of those who shall profit [by it].

But if even signs and wonders did not avail to deliver from punishment; much more, if a man happen to be in the priestly dignity: even if he reach the highest honor, even if grace Work in him to ordination, even if unto all the other things, for the sake of those who need his leadership, he also shall hear, “I never knew thee,” no, not even then when grace wrought in thee.

[9.] O! how strict shall the search be there as to purity of life! How does that, of itself, suffice to introduce us into the kingdom? While the absence of it gives up the man [to destruction], though he have ten thousand miracles and signs to show. For nothing is so pleasing to God as an

excellent course of life. “If ye love Me” (John 14:15), He declares; He did not say, “work miracles,” but what? “Keep My commandments.” And again, “I call you friends” (John 15:14), not when ye cast out demons, but “if ye keep My words.” For those things come of the gift of God: but these after the gift of God, of our own diligence also. Let us strive to become friends of God, and not remain enemies to Him.

These things we are ever saying, these exhortations we are ever giving, both to ourselves and to you: but nothing more is gained. Wherefore also I am afraid. And I would have wished indeed to be silent, so as not to increase your danger. For when a person often hears, and even so does not act, this is to provoke the Lord to anger. But I fear also myself that other danger, that of silence, if when I am appointed to the ministering of the word, I should hold my peace.

What shall we then do that we may be saved? Let us begin [the practice of] virtue, as we have opportunity: let us portion out the virtues to ourselves, as laborers do their husbandry; in this month let us master evil-speaking, injuriousness, unjust anger; and let us lay down a law for ourselves, and say, Today let us set this right. Again, in this month let us school ourselves in forbearance, and in another, in some other virtue: And when we have got into the habit of this virtue let us go to another, just as in the things we learn at school, guarding what is already gained, and acquiring others.

After this let us proceed to contempt for riches. First let us restrain our hands from grasping, and then let us give alms. Let us not simply confound everything, with the same hands both slaying and showing mercy forsooth. After this, let us go to some other virtue, and from that, to another. “Filthiness and foolish talking and jesting, let it not be even named among you.” (Ephesians 5:4, 3) Let us be thus far in the right way.

There is no need of spending money, there is no need of labor, none of sweat, it is enough to have only the will, and all is done. There is no need to travel a long way, nor to cross a boundless ocean, but to be in earnest and of ready mind, and to put a bridle on the tongue. Unseasonable reproaches, anger, disorderly lusts, luxuriousness, expensiveness, let us cast off; and the desire of wealth also from our soul, perjury and habitual oaths.

If we thus cultivate ourselves, plucking out the former thorns, and casting in the heavenly seed, we shall be able to attain the good things promised. For the Husbandman will come and will lay us up in His Garner, and we shall attain to all good things, which may we all attain, by the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor, now and for ever, and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 25

HEBREWS 11:17-19

" By faith [Abraham], when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure,"

[1.] GREAT indeed was the faith of Abraham. For while in the case of Abel, and of Noah, and of Enoch, there was an opposition of reasonings only, and it was necessary to go beyond human reasonings; in this case it was necessary not only to go beyond human reasonings, but to manifest also something more. For what was of God seemed to be opposed to what was of God; and faith opposed faith, and command promise.

I mean this: He had said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and I will give thee this land." (Genesis 12:1, 7) "He gave him none inheritance in it, no not so much as to set his foot on." (Acts 7:5) Seest thou how what was done was opposed to the promise? Again He said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Genesis 21:12), and he believed: and again He says, Sacrifice to Me this one, who was to fill all the world from his seed. Thou seest the opposition between the commands and the promise? He enjoined things that were in contradiction to the promises, and yet not even so did the righteous man stagger, nor say he had been deceived.

For you indeed, he means, could not say this, that He promised ease and gave tribulation. For in our case, the things which He promised, these also He performs. How so? "In the world" (He says), "ye shall have tribulation." (John 16:33) " He that taketh not his cross and followeth Me, is not worthy of Me." (Matthew 10:38) "He that hateth not his life shall not find it." (John 12:25) And, "He that forsaketh not all that he hath, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me." (Luke 14:27, 33) And again, "Ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for My sake." (Matthew

10:18) And again, “A man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” (Matthew 10:36) But the things which pertain to rest are yonder.

But with regard to Abraham, it was different. He was enjoined to do what was opposed to the promises; and yet not even so was he troubled, nor did he stagger, nor think he had been deceived. But you endure nothing except what was promised, yet you are troubled.

[2.] He heard the opposite of the promises from Him who had made them; and yet he was not disturbed, but did them as if they had been in harmony [therewith]. For they were in harmony; being opposed indeed according to human calculations, but in harmony [when viewed] by Faith. And how this was, the Apostle himself has taught us, by saying, “accounting that God was able to raise Him up, even from the dead.” By the same faith (he means) by which he believed that God gave what was not, and raised up the dead, by the same was he persuaded that He would also raise him up after he had been slain in sacrifice. For it was alike impossible (to human calculation, I mean) from a womb which was dead and grown old and already become useless for child-bearing to give a child, and to raise again one who had been slain. But his previous faith prepared the way for things to come.

And see; the good things came first, and the hard things afterwards, in his old age. But for you, on the contrary, (he says) the sad things are first, and the good things last. This for those who dare to say, ‘He has promised us the good things after death; perhaps He has deceived us.’ He shows that “God is able to raise up even from the dead,” and if God be able to raise from the dead, without all doubt He will pay all [that He has promised].

But if Abraham so many years before, believed “that God is able to raise from the dead,” much more ought we to believe it. Thou seest (what I at first said) that death had not yet entered in and yet He drew them at once to the hope of the resurrection, and led them to such full assurance, that when bidden, they even slay their own sons, and readily offer up those from whom they expected to people the world.

And he shows another thing too, by saying, that “God tempted Abraham.” (Genesis 22:1) What then? Did not God know that the man was noble and approved? Why then did He tempt him? Not that He might

Himself learn, but that He might show to others, and make his fortitude manifest to all. And here also he shows the cause of trials, that they may not suppose they suffer these things as being forsaken [of God]. For in their case indeed, it was necessary that they should he tried, because there were many who persecuted or plotted against them: but in Abraham's case, what need was there to devise trials for him which did not exist? Now this trial, it is evident, was by His command. The others indeed happened by His allowance, but this even by His command. If then temptations make men approved in such wise that, even where there is no occasion, God exercises His own athletes; much more ought we to bear all things nobly.

And here he said emphatically, "By faith, when he was tried, he offered up Isaac," for there was no other cause for his bringing the offering but that.

[3.] After this he pursues the same thought. No one (he says) could allege, that he had another son, and expected the promise to be fulfilled from him, and therefore confidently offered up this one. "And" (his words are) "he offered up his only-begotten, who had received the promises." Why sayest thou "only-begotten"? What then? Of whom was Ishmael sprung? I mean "only-begotten" (he would say) so far as relates to the word of the promise. Therefore after saying, "Only-begotten," showing that he says it for this reason, he added, "of whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called," that is, "from" him. Seest thou how he admires what was done by the Patriarch? "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," and that son he brought to be sacrificed.

Afterwards, that no one may suppose he does this in despair, and in consequence of this command had cast away that Faith, but may understand that this also was truly of faith, he says that he retained that faith also, although it seem to be at variance with this. But it was not at variance. For he did not measure the power of God by human reasonings, but committed all to faith. And hence he was not afraid to say, that God was "able to raise him up, even from the dead."

"From whence also he received him in a figure," that is in idea, by the ram, he means. How? The ram having been slain, he was saved: so that by

means of the ram he received him again, having slain it in his stead. But these things were types: for here it is the Son of God who is slain.

And observe, I beseech you, how great is His loving-kindness. For inasmuch as a great favor was to be given to men, He, wishing to do this, not by favor, but as a debtor, arranges that a man should first give up his own son on account of God's command, in order that He Himself might seem to be doing nothing great in giving up His own Son, since a man had done this before Him; that He might be supposed to do it not of grace, but of debt. For we wish to do this kindness also to those whom we love, others, to appear first to have received some little thing from them, and so give them all: and we boast more of the receiving than of the giving; and we do not say, We gave him this, but, We received this from him.

"From whence also" (are his words) "he received him in a figure," i.e. as in a riddle (for the ram was as it were a figure of Isaac) or, as in a type. For since the sacrifice had been completed, and Isaac slain in purpose, therefore He gave him to the Patriarch.

[4.] Thou seest, that what I am constantly saying, is shown in this case also? When we have proved that our mind is made perfect, and have shown that we disregard earthly things, then earthly things also are given to us; but not before; lest being bound to them already, receiving them we should be bound still. Loose thyself from thy slavery first (He says), and then receive, that thou mayest receive no longer as a slave, but as a master. Despise riches, and thou shalt be rich. Despise glory, and thou shalt be glorious. Despise the avenging thyself on thine enemies, and then shalt thou attain it. Despise repose, and then thou shalt receive it that in receiving thou mayest receive not as a prisoner, nor as a slave, but as a freeman.

For as in the case of little children, when the child eagerly desires childish playthings, we hide them from him with much care, as a ball, for instance, and such like things, that he may not be hindered from necessary things; but when he thinks little of them, and no longer longs for them, we give them fearlessly, knowing that henceforth no harm can come to him from them, the desire no longer having strength enough to draw him away from things necessary; so God also, when He sees that we no longer eagerly

desire the things of this world, thenceforward permits us to use them. For we possess them as freemen and men, not as children.

For [in proof] that if thou despise the avenging thyself on thine enemies, thou wilt then attain it, hear what he says, “If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink,” and he added, “for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.” (Romans 12:20) And again, that if thou despise riches, thou shalt then obtain them, hear Christ saying, “There is no man which hath left father, or mother, or house, or brethren, who shall not receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.” (Matthew 19:29) And that if thou despise glory, thou shall then attain it, again hear Christ Himself saying, “He that will be first among you, let him be your minister.” (Matthew 20:26) And again, “For whosoever shall humble himself, he shall be exalted.” (Matthew 23:12)

What sayest thou? If I give drink to mine enemy, do I then punish him? If I give up my goods, do I then possess them? If I humble myself, shall I then be exalted? Yea, He says, for such is My power, to give contraries by means of contraries. I abound in resources and in contrivances: be not afraid. The ‘Nature of things’ follows My will: not I attend upon Nature. I do all things: I am not controlled by them: wherefore also I am able to change their form and order.

[5.] And why dost thou wonder if [it is so] in these instances? For thou wilt find the same also in all others. If thou injure, thou art injured; if thou art injured, then thou art uninjured; if thou punish, then thou hast not punished another, but hast punished thyself. For “he that loveth iniquity,” it is said, “hateth his own soul.” (Psalm 11:5, LXX.) Seest thou that thou dost not injure, but art injured? Therefore also Paul says, “Why do ye not rather take wrong?” (1 Corinthians 6:7)Dost thou see that this is not to be wronged?

When thou insultest, then art thou insulted. And most persons partly know this: as when they say one to another, “Let us go away, do not disgrace yourself.” Why? Because the difference is great between thee and him: for however much thou insultest him, he accounts it a credit. Let us consider this in all cases, and be above insults. I will tell you how.

Should we have a contest with him who wears the purple, let us consider that in insulting him, we insult ourselves, for we become worthy to be disgraced. Tell me, what dost thou mean? When thou art a citizen of Heaven, and hast the Philosophy that is above, dost thou disgrace thyself with him "that mindeth earthly things"? (Philippians 3:19) For though he be in possession of countless riches, though he be in power, he does not as yet know the good that is therein. Do not in insulting him, insult thyself. Spare thyself, not him. Honor thyself, not him. Is there not some Proverb such as this, He that honoreth; honoreth himself? With good reason: for he honors not the other, but himself. Hear what a certain wise man says, "Do honor to thy soul according to the dignity thereof." (Ecclus. 10:28) "According to the dignity thereof," what is this? if he have defrauded (it means), do not thou defraud; if he has insulted, do not thou insult.

[6.] Tell me, I pray thee, if some poor man has taken away clay thrown out of thy yard, wouldst thou for this have summoned a court of justice? Surely not. Why? Lest thou shouldst disgrace thyself; lest all men should condemn thee. The same also happens in this case. For the rich man is poor, and the more rich he is, the poorer is he in that which is indeed poverty. Gold is clay, cast out in the yard, not lying in thy house, for thy house is Heaven. For this, then, wilt thou summon a Court of Justice, and will not the citizens on high condemn thee? Will they not cast thee out from their country, who art so mean, who art so shabby, as to choose to fight for a little clay? For if the world were thine, and then some one had taken it, aughtest thou to pay any attention to it?

Knowest thou not, that if thou wert to take the world ten times or an hundred times, or ten thousand times, and twice that, it is not to be compared with the least of the good things in Heaven? He then who admires the things here slights those yonder, since he judges these worthy of exertion, though so far inferior to the other. Nay, rather indeed he will not be able to admire those other. For how [can he], whilst he is passionately excited towards these earthly things? Let us cut through the cords and entanglements: for this is what earthly things are.

How long shall we be stooping down? How long shall we plot one against another, like wild beasts; like fishes? Nay rather, the wild beasts do not plot against each other, but [against] animals of a different tribe. A bear for

instance does not readily kill a bear, nor a serpent kill a serpent, having respect for the sameness of race. But thou, with one of the same race, and having innumerable claims, as common origin, rational faculties, the knowledge of God, ten thousand other things, the force of nature, him who is thy kinsman, and partaker of the same nature — him thou killest, and involvest in evils innumerable. For what, if thou dost not thrust thy sword, nor plunge thy right hand into his neck, other things more grievous than this thou doest, when thou involvest him in innumerable evils. For if thou hadst done the other, thou wouldst have freed him from anxiety, but now thou encompassest him with hunger, with slavery, with feelings of discouragement, with many sins. These things I say, and shall not cease to say, not [as] preparing you to commit murder: nor as urging you to some crime short of that; but that you may not be confident, as if you were not to give account. “For” (it says) “he that taketh away a livelihood” (Ecclus. 34:22) and asketh bread, it says.

[7.] Let us at length keep our hands to ourselves, or rather, let us not keep them, but stretch them out honorably, not for grasping, but for alms-giving. Let us not have our hand unfruitful nor withered; for the hand which doeth not alms is withered; and that which is also grasping, is polluted and unclean.

Let no one eat with such hands; for this is an insult to those invited. For, tell me, if a man when he had made us lie down on tapestry and a soft couch and linen interwoven with gold, in a great and splendid house, and had set by us a great multitude of attendants, and had prepared a tray of silver and gold, and filled it with many dainties of great cost and of all sorts, then urged us to eat, provided we would only endure his besmearing his hands with mire or with human ordure, and so sitting down to meat with us — would any man endure this infliction? Would he not rather have considered it an insult? Indeed I think he would, and would have gone straightway off. But now in fact, thou seest not hands filled with what is indeed filth, but even the very food, and yet thou dost not go off, nor flee, nor find fault. Nay, if he be a person in authority, thou even accountest it a grand affair, and destroyest thine own soul, in eating such things. For covetousness is worse than any mire; for it pollutes, not the body but the soul, and makes it hard to be washed. Thou therefore, though thou seest him that sitteth at meat defiled with this filth both on his hands and his

face, and his house filled with it, nay and his table also full of it (for dung, or if there be anything more unclean than that, it is not so unclean and polluted as those viands), dost thou feel as if forsooth thou wert highly honored, and as if thou wert going to enjoy thyself?

And dost thou not fear Paul who allows us to go without restraint to the Tables of the heathen if we wish, but not even if we wish to those of the covetous? For, "if any man who is called a Brother" (1 Corinthians 5:11), he says, meaning here by Brother every one who is a believer simply, not him who leads a solitary life. For what is it which makes brotherhood? The Washing of regeneration; the being enabled to call God our Father. So that he that is a Monk, if he be a Catechumen, is not a Brother,' but the believer though he be in the world, is a Brother. "If any man," saith he, "that is called a Brother." (1 Corinthians 5:11) For at that time there was not even a trace of any one leading a Monastic life, but this blessed [Apostle] addressed all his discourse to persons in the world. "If any man," he says, "that is called a Brother, be a fornicator, or covetous or a drunkard, with such an one, no not to eat." But not so with respect to the heathen: but "If any of them that believe not," meaning the heathen, "bid you and ye be disposed to go, whatsoever is set before you eat." (1 Corinthians 10:27)

[8.] "If any man that is called Brother be" (he says) "a drunkard." Oh! what strictness Yet we not only do not avoid drunkards, but even go to their houses, partaking of what they set before us.

Therefore all things are upside down, all things are in confusion, and overthrown, and ruined. For tell me, if any such person should invite thee to a banquet, thee who art accounted poor and mean, and then should hear thee say, "Inasmuch as the things set before me are [the fruit] of overreaching, I will not endure to defile my own soul," would he not be mortified? Would he not be confounded? Would he not be ashamed? This alone were sufficient to correct him, and to make him call himself wretched for his wealth, and admire thee for thy poverty, if he saw himself with so great earnestness despised by thee.

But we "are become" (I know not why) "servants of men" (1 Corinthians 7:23), though Paul cries aloud throughout, "Be not ye the servants of men." Whence then have we become "servants of men"? Because we first

became servants of the belly, and of money, and of glory, and of all the rest; we gave up the liberty which Christ bestowed on us.

What then awaiteth him who is become a servant (tell me)? Hear Christ saying, “The servant abideth not in the house for ever.” (John 8:35) Thou hast a declaration complete in itself, that he never entereth into the Kingdom; for this is what “the House” means. For, He says, “in My Father’s House are many mansions.” (John 14:2) “The servant” then “abideth not in the House for ever.” By a servant He means him who is “the servant of sin.” But he that “abideth not in the House for ever,” abideth in Hell for ever, having no consolation from any quarter.

Nay, to this point of wickedness are matters come, that they even give alms out of these [ill-gotten gains], and many receive [them]. Therefore our boldness has broken down, and we are not able to rebuke any one. But however, henceforward at least, let us flee the mischief arising from this; and ye who have rolled yourselves in this mire, cease from such defilement, and restrain your rage for such banquets, if even now we may by any means be able to have God propitious to us, and to attain to the good things which have been promised: which may we all obtain in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor, now and for ever, and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 26

HEBREWS 11:20-22

"By faith, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith, Jacob when he was a dying blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped leaning on the top of his staff. By faith, Joseph when he died made mention of the departing of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones."

[1.] "MANY prophets and righteous men" (it is said) "have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear and have not heard them." (Matthew 13:17) Did then those righteous men know all the things to come? Yea, most certainly. For if because of the weakness of those who were not able to receive Him, the Son was not revealed, — He was with good reason revealed to those conspicuous in virtue. This Paul also says, that they knew "the things to come," that is the resurrection of Christ.

Or he does not mean this: but that "By faith, concerning things to come" [means] not [concerning] the world to come, but "concerning things to come" in this world. For how [except by faith] could a man sojourning in a strange land, give such blessings?

But on the other hand he obtained the blessing, and yet did not receive it. Thou seest that what I said with regard to Abraham, may be said also of Jacob, that they did not enjoy the blessing, but the blessings went to his posterity, while he himself obtained the "things to come." For we find that his brother rather enjoyed the blessing. For [Jacob] spent all his time in servitude and working as a hireling, and [amid] dangers, and plots, and deceits, and fears; and when he was asked by Pharaoh, he says, "Few and evil have my days been" (Genesis 47:9); while the other lived in independence and great security, and afterwards was an object of terror to [Jacob]. Where then did the blessings come to their accomplishment, save in the [world] to come?

Seest thou that from the beginning the wicked have enjoyed things here, but the righteous the contrary? Not however all. For behold, Abraham was

a righteous man, and he enjoyed things here as well, though with affliction and trials. For indeed wealth was all he had, seeing all else relating to him was full of affliction. For it is impossible that the righteous man should not be afflicted, though he be rich: for when he is willing to be overreached, to be wronged, to suffer all other things, he must be afflicted. So that although he enjoy wealth, [yet is it] not without grief. Why? you ask. Because he is in affliction and distress. But if at that time the righteous were in affliction, much more now and

"By Faith," he says," Isaac blessed Jacob Esau concerning things to come" (and yet Esau was the elder; but he puts Jacob first for his excellence). Seest thou how great was his Faith? Whence did he promise to his sons so great blessings? Entirely from his having faith in God.

[2.] "By Faith, Jacob when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph."' Here we ought to set down the blessings entire, in order that both his faith and his prophesying may be made manifest. "And worshipped leaning," he says, "upon the top of his staff." Here, he means, he not only spoke, but was even so confident about the future things, as to show it also by his act. For inasmuch as another King was about to arise from Ephraim, therefore it is said, "And he bowed himself upon the top of his staff." That is, even though he was now an old man, "he bowed himself" to Joseph, showing the obeisance of the whole people which was to be [directed] to him. And this indeed had already taken place, when his brethren "bowed down" to him: but it was afterwards to come to pass through the ten tribes. Seest thou how he foretold the things which were to be afterwards? Seest thou how great faith they had? How they believed "concerning the things to come"?

For some of the things here, the things present, are examples of patience only, and of enduring ill-treatment, add of receiving nothing good; for instance, what is mentioned in the case of Abraham, in the case of Abel. But others are [examples] of Faith, as in the case of Noah, that there is a God, that there is a recompense. (For Faith in this place is manifold, both of there being a recompense, and of awaiting it, not under the same conditions, and of wrestling before the prizes.) And the things also which concern Joseph are of Faith only. Joseph heard that [God] had made a promise to Abraham, that He had engaged His word "to thee and to thy

seed will I give this land;" and though in a strange land, and not yet seeing the engagement fulfilled, but never faltered even so, but so believed as even to "speak of the Exodus, and to give commandment concerning his bones." He then not only believed himself, but led on the rest also to Faith: that having the Exodus always in mind (for he would not have "given commandment concerning his bones," unless he had been fully assured [of this]), they might look for their return [to Canaan].

Wherefore, when some men say, 'See! Even righteous men had care about their sepulchers,' let us reply to them, that it was for his reason: for he knew that "the earth is the Lord's and all that therein is." (Psalm 24:1) He could not indeed have been ignorant of this, who lived in so great philosophy, who spent his whole life in Egypt. And yet if he had wished, it was possible for him to return, and not to mourn or vex himself. But when he had taken up his father thither, why, did he enjoin them to carry up thence his own bones also? Evidently for this reason.

But what? Tell me, are not the bones of Moses himself laid in a strange land? And those of Aaron, of Daniel, of Jeremiah? And as to those of the Apostles we do not know where those of most of them are laid. For of Peter indeed, and Paul, and John, and Thomas, the sepulchers are well known; but those of the rest, being so many, have nowhere become known. Let us not therefore lament at all about this, nor be so little-minded. For where-ever we may be buried, "the earth is the Lord's and all that therein is." (Psalm 24:1) Certainly what must take place, does take place: to mourn however, and lament, and bewail the departed, arises from littleness of mind.

[3.] (Verse 23) "By faith, Moses when he was born, was hid three months of his parents." Dost thou see that in this case they hoped for things on the earth after their death? And many things were fulfilled after their death. This is for some who say, 'After death those things were done for them, which they did not obtain while alive; nor did they believe [would be] after their death.'

Moreover Joseph did not say, He gave not the land to me in my life-time, nor to my father, nor to my grandfather, whose excellence too ought to have been reverenced; and will He vouchsafe to these wretched people

what He did not vouchsafe to them? He said nothing of all this, but by Faith he both conquered and went beyond all these things.

He has named Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, all illustrious and admirable men. Again he makes the encouragement greater, by bringing down the matter to ordinary persons. For that the admirable should feel thus, is nothing wonderful, and to appear inferior to them, is not so dreadful: but to show oneself inferior even to people without names, this is the dreadful thing. And he begins with the parents of Moses, obscure persons, who had nothing so great as their son [had]. Therefore also he goes on to increase the strangeness of what he says by enumerating even women that were harlots, and widows. For "by Faith" (he says) "the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." And he mentions the rewards not only of belief but also of unbelief; as in [the case of] Noah.

But at present we must speak of the parents of Moses. Pharaoh gave orders that all the male children should be destroyed, and none had escaped the danger. Whence did these expect to save their child? From faith. What sort of Faith? "They saw" (he says) "that he was a proper child." The very sight drew them on to Faith: thus from the beginning, yea from the very swaddling-clothes, great was the Grace that was poured out on that righteous man, this being not the work of nature. For observe, the child immediately on its birth appears fair and not disagreeable to the sight. Whose [work] was this? Not that of nature, but of the Grace of God, which also stirred up and strengthened that barbarian woman, the Egyptian, and took and drew her on.

And yet in truth Faith had not a sufficient foundation in their case. For what was it to believe from sight? But you (he would say) believe from facts and have many pledges of Faith. For "the receiving with joyfulness the spoiling of their goods" (c. 10:34), and other such [things], were [evidences] of Faith and of Patience. But inasmuch as these [Hebrews] also had believed, and yet afterwards had become faint-hearted, he shows that the Faith of those [saints of old] also was long continued, as, for instance, that of Abraham, although the circumstances seemed to contend against it.

“And” (he says) “they were not afraid of the king’s commandment,” although that was in operation, but this [their hope respecting their child] was simply a kind of bare expectation. And this indeed was [the act] of his parents; but Moses himself what did he contribute?

[4.] Next again an example appropriate to them, or rather greater than that. For, saith he, (verse 24-26) “by faith Moses when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.” As though he had said to them, ‘ No one of you has left a palace, yea a splendid palace, nor such treasures; nor, when he might have been a king’s son, has he despised this, as Moses did.’ And that he did not simply leave [these things], he expressed by saying, “he refused,” that is, he hated, he turned away. For when Heaven was set before him, it was superfluous to admire an Egyptian Palace.

And see how admirably Paul has put it. He did not say, ‘Esteeming heaven, and the things in heaven,’ ‘greater riches than the treasures of Egypt,’ but what? “The reproach of Christ.” For the being reproached for the sake of Christ he accounted better than being thus at ease; and this itself by itself was reward.

“Choosing rather” (he says) “to suffer affliction with the people of God.” For ye indeed suffer on your own account, but he “chose” [to suffer] for others; and voluntarily threw himself into so many dangers, when it was in his power both to live religiously, and to enjoy good things.

“Than” (he says) “to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” He called unwillingness “to suffer affliction with the” rest “sin “: this, he says, [Moses] accounted to be “sin.” If then he accounted it “sin” not to be ready to “suffer affliction with” the rest, it follows that the suffering affliction must be a great good since he threw himself into it from the royal palace.

But this he did, seeing some great things before him. “Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.” What is, “the reproach of Christ”? It is being reproached in such ways as ye are,

the reproach which Christ endured; Or that he endured for Christ's sake: for "that rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4); the being reproached as you are.

But what is "the reproach of Christ"? That [because] we repudiate the [ways] of our fathers we are reproached; that we are evil-entreated when we have run to God. It was likely that he also was reproached, when it was said to him, "Wilt thou kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian yesterday?" (Exodus 2:14) This is "the reproach of Christ," to be ill-treated to the end, and to the last breath: as He Himself was reproached and heard, "If Thou be the Son of God" (Matthew 27:40), from those for whom He was crucified, from those who were of the same race. This is "the reproach of Christ" when a man is reproached by those of his own family, or by those whom he is benefiting. For [Moses] also suffered these things from the man who had been benefited [by him].

In these words he encouraged them, by showing that even Christ suffered these things, and Moses also, two illustrious persons. So that this is rather "the reproach of Christ" than of Moses inasmuch as He suffered these things from "His own." (John 1:11) But neither did the one send forth lightnings, nor the Other feel any [anger], but He was reviled and endured all things, whilst they "wagged their heads." (Matthew 27:39) Since therefore it was probable that they [the readers] also would hear such things, and would long for the Recompense, he says that even Christ and Moses had suffered the like. So then ease is [the portion] of sin; but to be reproached, of Christ. For what then dost thou wish? "The reproach of Christ," or ease?

[5.] Verse 27 *"By faith he forsook Egypt not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is Invisible."* What dost thou say? That he did not fear? And yet the Scripture says, that when he heard, he "was afraid " (Exodus 2:14), and for this cause provided for safety by flight, and stole away, and secretly withdrew himself; and afterwards he was exceedingly afraid. Observe the expressions with care: he said, "not fearing the wrath of the king," with reference to his even presenting himself again. For it would have been [the part] of one who was afraid, not to undertake again his championship, nor to have any hand in the matter. That he did however again undertake it, was [the part] of one who committed all to

God: for he did not say, ‘He is seeking me, and is busy [in the search], and I cannot bear again to engage in this matter.’

So that even flight was [an act of] faith. Why then did he not remain (you say)? That he might not cast himself into a foreseen danger. For this finally would have been tempting [God]: to leap into the midst of dangers, and say, ‘Let us see whether God will save me.’ And this the devil said to Christ, “Cast Thyself down.” (Matthew 4:6) Seest thou that it is a diabolical thing, to throw ourselves into danger without cause and for no purpose, and to try whether God will save us? For he [Moses] could no longer be their champion when they who were receiving benefits were so ungrateful. It would therefore have been a foolish and senseless thing to remain there. But all these things were done, because, “he endured as seeing Him who is Invisible.”

[6.] If then we too always see God with our mind, if we always think in remembrance of Him, all things will appear endurable to us, all things tolerable; we shall bear them all easily, we shall be above them all. For if a person seeing one whom he loves, or rather, remembering him is roused in spirit, and elevated in thought, and bears all things easily, while he delights in the remembrance; one who has in mind Him who has vouchsafed to love us in deed, and remembers Him, when will he either feel anything painful, or dread anything fearful or dangerous? When will he be of cowardly spirit? Never.

For all things appear to us difficult, because we do not have the remembrance of God as we ought; because we do not carry Him about alway in our thoughts. For surely He might justly say to us, “Thou hast forgotten Me, I also will forget thee.” And so the evil becomes twofold, both that we forget Him and He us. For these two things are involved in each other, yet are two. For great is the effect of God’s remembrance, and great also of His being remembered by us. The result of the one is that we choose good things; of the other that we accomplish them, and bring them to their end. Therefore the prophet says, “I will remember Thee from the land of Jordan, and from the little hill of Hermon.” (Psalm 42:6) The people which were in Babylon say this: being there, I will remember Thee.

[7.] Therefore let us also, as being in Babylon, [do the same]. For although we are not sitting among warlike foes, yet we are among enemies. For

some [of them] indeed were sitting as captives, but others did not even feel their captivity, as Daniel, as the three children (cf. Psalm 137:1); who even while they were in captivity became in that very country more glorious even than the king who had carried them captive. And he who had taken them captive does obeisance to the captives.

Dost thou see how great virtue is? When they were in actual captivity he waited on them as masters. He therefore was the captive, rather than they. It would not have been so marvelous if when they were in their native country, he had come and done them reverence in their own land, or if they had been rulers there. But the marvelous thing is, that after he had bound them, and taken them captive, and had them in his own country, he was not ashamed to do them reverence in the sight of all, and to "offer an oblation." (Daniel 2:46)

Do you see that the really splendid things are those which relate to God, whereas human things are a shadow? He knew not, it seems, that he was leading away masters for himself, and that he cast into the furnace those whom he was about to worship. But to them, these things were as a dream.

Let us fear God, beloved, let us fear [Him]: even should we be in captivity, we are more glorious than all men. Let the fear of God be present with us, and nothing will be grievous, even though thou speak of poverty, or of disease, or of captivity, or of slavery, or of any other grievous thing: Nay even these very things will themselves work together for us the other way. These men were captives, and the king worshipped them: Paul was a tent-maker, and they sacrificed to him as a God.

[8.] Here a question arises: Why, you ask, did the Apostles prevent the sacrifices, and rend their clothes, and divert them from their attempt, and say with earnest lamentation, "What are ye doing? we also are men of like passions with you" (Acts 14:15); whereas Daniel did nothing of this kind.

For that he also was humble, and referred [the] glory to God no less than they, is evident from many places. Especially indeed is it evident, from the very fact of his being beloved by God. For if he had appropriated to himself the honor belonging to God, He would not have suffered him to live, much less to be in honor. Secondly, because even with great openness

he said, “And as to me, O King, this secret hath not been revealed to me through any wisdom that is in me.” (Daniel 2:30) And again; he was in the den for God’s sake, and when the prophet brought him food, he saith, “For God hath remembered me.” (Bel and the Dragon, verse 38) Thus humble and contrite was he.

He was in the den for God’s sake, and yet he counted himself unworthy of His remembrance, and of being heard. Yet we though daring [to commit] innumerable pollutions, and being of all men most polluted, if we be not heard at our first prayer, draw back. Truly, great is the distance between them and us, as great as between heaven and earth, or if there be any greater.

What sayest thou? After so many achievements, after the miracle which had been wrought in the den, dost thou account thyself so humble? Yea, he says; for what things soever we have done, “we are unprofitable servants.” (Luke 17:10) Thus by anticipation did he fulfill the evangelical precept, and accounted himself nothing. For “God hath remembered me,” he said. His prayer again, of how great lowliness of mind it is full. And again the three children said thus, “We have sinned, we have committed iniquity.” (Song of the Three Children, verse 6) And everywhere they show their humility.

And yet Daniel had occasions innumerable for being puffed up; but he knew that these also came to him on account of his not being puffed up, and he did not destroy his treasure. For among all men, and in the whole world he was celebrated, not only because the king cast himself on his face and offered sacrifice to him, and accounted him to be a God, who was himself honored as God in all parts of the world: for he ruled over the whole [earth]; (and this is evident from Jeremiah. “Who putteth on the earth,” saith he, “as a garment.” (See Jeremiah 43:12 and Psalm 104:2) And again, “I have given it to Nebuchadnezzar My servant” (Jeremiah 27:6), and again from what he [the King] says in his letter). And because he was held in admiration not only in the place where he was, but everywhere, and was greater than if the rest of the nations had been present and seen him; when even by letters [the King] confessed his submission and the miracle. But yet again for his wisdom he was also held in admiration, for it

is said, “Art thou wiser than Daniel?” (Ezekiel 28:3) And after all these things he was thus humble, dying ten thousand times for the Lord’s sake.

Why then, you ask, being so humble did he not repel either the adoration which was paid him by the king, or the offerings?

[9.] This I will not say, for it is sufficient for me simply to mention the question, and the rest I leave to you, that at least in this way I may stir up your thoughts. (This however I conjure you, to choose all things for the fear of God, having such examples; and because in truth we shall obtain the things here also, if we sincerely lay hold on the things which are to come.) For that he did not do this out of arrogance, is evident from his saying, “Thy gifts be to thyself.” (Daniel 5:17)

For besides this also again is another question, how while in words he rejected it, in deed he received the honor, and wore the chain [of gold]. (Daniel 5:29)

Moreover while Herod on hearing the cry “It is the voice of a God and not of a man,” inasmuch as “he gave not God the glory, burst in sunder, and all his bowels gushed out” (Acts 12:22, 23; see 1:18), this man received to himself even the honor belonging to God, not words only.

However it is necessary to say what this is. In that case [at Lystra] the men were falling into greater idolatry, but in this [of Daniel] not so. How? For his being thus accounted of, was an honor to God. Therefore he said in anticipation, “And as to me, not through any wisdom that is in me.” (Daniel 2:30) And besides he does not even appear to have accepted the offerings. For he [the king] said (as it is written) that they should offer sacrifice, but it did not appear that the act followed. But there [at Lystra] they carried it even to sacrificing the bulls, and “they called” the one “Jupiter and” the other “Mercurius.” (Acts 14:12)

The chain [of gold] then he accepted, that he might make himself known; the offering however why does it not appear that he rejected it? For in the other case too they did not do it, but they attempted it, and the Apostles hindered them; wherefore here also he ought at once to have rejected [the adoration]. And there it was the entire people: here the King. Why he did not divert him [Daniel] expressed by anticipation, [viz.] that [the king] was not making an offering [to him] as to a God, to the overthrow of

religious worship, but for the greater wonder. How so? It was on God's account that [Nebuchadnezzar] made the decree; wherefore [Daniel] did not mutilate the honor [offered]. But those others [at Lystra] did not act thus, but supposed them to be indeed gods. On this account they were repelled.

And here, after having done him reverence, he does these things: for he did not reverence him as a God, but as a wise man.

But it is not clear that he made the offering: and even if he did make it, yet not that it was with Daniel's acceptance.

And what [of this], that he called him" Belteshazzar, the name of" his own "God "? Thus [it seems] they accounted their gods to be nothing wonderful, when he called even the captive thus; he who commands all men to worship the image, manifold and of various colors, and who adores the dragon.

Moreover the Babylonians were much more foolish than those at Lystra. Wherefore it was not possible at once to lead them on to this. And many [more] things one might say: but thus far these suffice.

If therefore we wish to obtain all good things, let us seek the things of God. For as they who seek the things of this world fail both of them and of the others, so they who prefer the things of God, obtain both. Let us then not seek these but those, that we may attain also to the good things promised in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 27

HEBREWS 11:28-31

"Through faith, he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them. By faith they passed through the Red Sea, as by dry land; which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned. By faith, the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about seven days. By faith, the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace."

[1.] PAUL is wont to establish many things incidently, and is very full of thoughts. For such is the grace of The Spirit. He does not comprehend a few ideas in a multitude of words, but includes great and manifold thought in brevity of expressions. Observe at least how, in the midst of exhortation, and when discoursing about faith, of what a type and mystery he reminds us, whereof we have the reality. "Through faith" (he says) "he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them."

But what is "the sprinkling of blood"? A lamb was slain in every household, and the blood was smeared on the door-posts, and this was a means of warding off the Egyptian destruction If then the blood of a lamb preserved the Jews unhurt in the midst of the Egyptians, and under so great a destruction, much more will the blood of Christ save us, who have had it sprinkled not on the door-posts, but in our souls. For even now also the Destroyer is going about in this depth of night: but let us be armed with that Sacrifice. (He calls the "sprinkling" anointing.) For God has brought us out from Egypt, from darkness, from idolatry.

Although what was done, was nothing, what was achieved was great. For what was done was blood; but was achieved, was salvation, and the stopping, and preventing of destruction The angel feared the blood; for he knew of what it was a Type; he shuddered, thinking on the Lord's death; therefore he did not touch the door-posts.

Moses said, Smear, and they smeared, and were confident. And you, having the Blood of the Lamb Himself, are ye not confident?

[2.] "By faith, they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land." Again he compares one whole people with another, lest they should say, we cannot be as the saints.

"By faith" (he says) "they passed through the Red Sea, as by dry land, which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned." Here he leads them also to a recollection of the sufferings in Egypt.

How, "by faith "? Because they had hoped to pass through the sea, and therefore they prayed: or rather it was Moses who prayed. Seest thou that everywhere Faith goes beyond human reasonings, and weakness and lowliness? Seest thou that at the same time they both believed, and feared punishment, both in the blood on the doors, and in the Red Sea?

And he made it clear that it was [really] water, through those that fell into it, and were choked; that it was not a mere appearance: but as in the case of the lions those who were devoured proved the reality of the facts, and in the case of the fiery furnace, those who were burnt; so here also thou seest that the same things become to the one a cause of salvation and glory, and to the other of destruction.

So great a good is Faith. And when we fall into perplexity, then are we delivered, even though we come to death itself, even though our condition be desperate. For what else was left [for them]? They were unarmed, compassed about by the Egyptians and the sea; and they must either be drowned if they fled, or fall into the hands of the Egyptians. But nevertheless [He] saved them from impossibilities. That which was spread under the one as land, overwhelmed the others as sea. In the former case it forgot its nature: in the latter it even armed itself against them. (Cf. Wisd. 19:20)

[3.] "By faith, the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about for seven days." For assuredly the sound of trumpets is not able to throw down stones, though one blow for ten thousand years; but Faith can do all things.

Seest thou that in all cases it is not by natural sequence, nor yet by any law of nature that it was changed, but all is done contrary to expectation? Accordingly in this case also all is done contrary to expectation. For inasmuch as he had said again and again, that we ought to trust to the future hopes, he introduced all this argument with reason, showing that not now [only], but even from the beginning all the miracles have been accomplished and achieved by means of it.

"By faith, the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, having received the spies with peace." It would then be disgraceful, if you should appear more faithless even than a harlot. Yet she [merely] heard what the men related, and forthwith believed. Whereupon the end also followed; for when all perished, she alone was preserved. She did not say to herself, I shall be with my many friends. She did not say, Can I possibly be wiser than these judicious men who do not believe, — and shall I believe? She said no such thing, but believed what had taken place, which it was likely that they would suffer.

[4.] (Verse 32) "And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell." After this he no longer puts down the names: but having ended with an harlot, and put them to shame by the quality of the person, he no longer enlarges on the histories, lest he should be thought tedious. However he does not set them aside, but runs over them, [doing] both very judiciously, avoiding satiety, and not spoiling the closeness of arrangement; he was neither altogether silent, nor did he speak so as to annoy; for he effects both points. For when a man is contending vehemently [in argument], if he persist in contending, he wearies out the hearer, annoying him when he is already persuaded, and gaining the reputation of vain ambitiousness. For he ought to accommodate himself to what is expedient.

"And what do I more say" (he says)? "For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah, of David also and Samuel, and of the prophets."

Some find fault with Paul, because he puts Barak, and Samson, and Jephthah in these places. What sayest thou? After having introduced the harlot, shall he not introduce these? For do not tell me of the rest of their life, but only whether they did not believe and shine in Faith.

“And the prophets,” he says, (verse 33) “who through faith subdued kingdoms.” Thou seest that he does not here testify to their life as being illustrious; for this was not the point in question: but the inquiry thus far was about their faith. For tell me whether they did not accomplish all by faith?

“‘By faith,” he says, “they subdued kingdoms;” those with Gideon. “Wrought righteousness;” who? The same. Plainly he means here, kindness.

I think it is of David that he says “they obtained promises.” But of what sort were these? Those in which He said that his “seed should sit upon” his “throne.” (Psalm 132:12)

“Stopped the months of lions,” (verse 34) “quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword.” See how they were in death itself, Daniel encompassed by the lions, the three children abiding in the furnace, the Israelites, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, in divers temptations; and yet not even so did they despair. For this is Faith; when things are turning out adversely, then we ought to believe that nothing adverse is done, but all things in due order.

“Escaped the edge of the sword.”: I think hat he is again speaking of the three children.

“Out of weakness were made strong.” Here be alludes to what took place at their return from Babylon. For “out of weakness,” is out of captivity. When the condition of the Jews had now become desperate, when they were no better than dead bones, who could have expected that they would return from Babylon, and not return only; but also “wax valiant” and “turn to flight armies of aliens “? ‘ But to us,’ some one says, ‘ no such thing has happened.’ But these are figures of “the things to come.”

Verse 35 *“Women received their dead raised to life again.”* He here speaks of what occurred in regard to the prophets, Elisha, [and] Elijah; for they raised the dead.

[5.] Verse 35 *“And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.”* But we have not obtained a Resurrection. I am able however, he means, to show that they also were

cut off, and did "not accept [deliverance], that they might obtain a better resurrection." For why, tell me, when it was open to them to live, did they not choose it? Were they not evidently looking for a better life? And they who had raised up others, themselves chose to die; in order "to obtain a better resurrection," not such as the children of those women.

Here I think he alludes both to John and to James. For beheading is called "torturing." It was in their power still to behold the sun. It was in their power to abstain from reproving [sinners], and yet they chose to die; even they who had raised others chose to die themselves, "that they might obtain a better resurrection."

Verse 36 *"And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment."* He ends with these; with things that come nearer home. For these [examples] especially bring consolation, when the distress is from the same cause, since even if you mention something more extreme, yet unless it arise from the same cause, you have effected nothing. Therefore he concluded his discourse with this, mentioning "bonds, imprisonments, scourges, stonings," alluding to the case of Stephen, also to that of Zacharias.

Wherefore he added, "They were slain with the sword." What sayest thou? Some "escaped the edge of the sword," and some "were slain by the sword." (Verse 34) What is this? Which dost thou praise? Which dost thou admire? The latter or the former? Nay, he says: the former indeed, is appropriate to you, and the latter, because Faith was strong even unto death itself, and it is a type of things to come. For the wonderful qualities of Faith are two, that it both accomplishes great things, and suffers great things, and counts itself to suffer nothing.

And thou canst not say (he says) that these were sinners and worthless. For even if you put the whole world against them, I find that they weigh down the beam and are of greater value. What then were they to receive in this life? Here he raises up their thoughts, teaching them not to be riveted to things present, but to mind things greater than all that are in this present life, since the "world is not worthy" of them. What then dost thou wish to receive here? For it were an insult to thee, shouldst thou receive thy reward here.

[6.] Let us not then mind worldly things, nor seek our recompense here, nor be so beggarly. For if "the" whole "world is not worthy of" them, why dost thou seek after a part of it? And with good reason; for they are friends of God.

Now by "the world" does he mean here the people, or the creation itself? Both: for the Scripture is wont to use the word of both. If the whole creation, he would say, with the human beings that belong to it, were put in the balance, they yet would not be of equal value with these; and with reason. For as ten thousand measures of chaff and hay would not be of equal value to ten pearls, so neither they; for "better is one that doeth the will of the Lord, than ten thousand transgressors" (Ecclus. 16:3); meaning by "ten thousand" not [merely] many, but an infinite multitude.

Consider of how great value is the righteous man. Joshua the son of Nun said, "Let the sun stand still at Gibeon, the moon at the valley of Elom" (Joshua 10:12), and it was so. Let then the whole world come, or rather two or three, or four, or ten, or twenty worlds, and let them say and do this; yet shall they not be able. But the friend of God commanded the creatures of his Friend, or rather he besought his Friend, and the servants yielded, and he below gave command to those above. Seest thou that these things are for service fulfilling their appointed course?

This was greater than the [miracles] of Moses. Why (I ask)? Because it is not a like thing to command the sea and the heavenly [bodies]. For that indeed was also a great thing, yea very great, nevertheless it was not at all equal [to the other].

Why was this? The name of Joshua [JESUS], was a type. For this reason then, and because of the very name, the creation reverenced him. What then! Was no other person called Jesus? [Yes]; but this man was on this account so called in type; for he used to be called Hoshea. Therefore the name was changed: for it was a prediction and a prophecy. He brought in the people into the promised land, as JESUS [does] into heaven; not the Law; since neither did Moses [bring them in], but remained without. The Law has not power to bring in, but grace. Seest thou the types which have been before sketched out from the beginning? He laid his commands on the creation, or rather, on the chief part of the creation, on the very head itself as he stood below; that so when thou seest JESUS in the form of Man

saying the same, thou mayest not be disturbed, nor think it strange. He, even while Moses was living, turned back wars. Thus, even while the Law is living, He directs all things; but not openly.

[7.] But let us consider how great is the virtue of the saints. If *here* they work such things, if *here* they do such things, as the angels do, what then above? How great is the splendor they have?

Perhaps each of you might wish to be such as to be able to command the sun and moon. (At this point what would they say who assert that the heaven is a sphere? For why did he not [merely] say, "Let the sun stand still," but added "Let the sun stand still at the valley of Elom," that is, he will make the day longer? This was done also in the time of Hezekiah. The sun went back. This again is more wonderful than the other, to go the contrary way, not having yet gone round his course.)

We shall attain to greater things than these if we will. For what has Christ promised us? Not that we shall make the sun stand still, or the moon, nor that the sun shall retrace his steps, but what? "I and the Father will come unto him," He says, "and We will make our abode with him." (John 14:23) What need have I of the sun and the moon, and of these wonders, when the Lord of all Himself comes down and abides with me? I need these not. For what need I any of these things? He Himself shall be to me for Sun and for Light. For, tell me, if thou hadst entered into a palace, which wouldst thou choose, to be able to rearrange some of the things which have been fixed there, or so to make the king a familiar friend, as to persuade him to take up his abode with thee? Much rather the latter than the former.

[8.] But what wonder is it, says some one, that what a man commands, Christ should also? But Christ (you say) needs not the Father, but acts of His own authority, you say. Well. Therefore first confess and say, that he needs not the Father, and acts of His own authority: and then I will ask thee, whether His prayer is not in the way of condescension and arrangement (for surely Christ was not inferior to Joshua the son of Nun), and that He might teach us? For as when thou hearest a teacher lisping, and saying over the alphabet, thou dost not say that he is ignorant; and when he asks, Where is such a letter? thou knowest that he does not ask in ignorance, but because he wishes to lead on the scholar; in like manner

Christ also did not make His prayer as needing prayer, but desiring to lead thee on, that thou mayest continually apply thyself to prayer, that thou mayest do it without ceasing, soberly, and with great watchfulness.

And by watching, I do not mean, merely the rising at night, but also the being sober in our prayers during the day. For such an one is called watchful. Since it is possible both in praying by night to be asleep, and in praying by day to be awake, when the soul is stretched out towards God, when it considers with whom it holds converse, to whom its words are addressed, when it has in mind that angels stand by with fear and trembling, while he approaches gaping and scratching himself.

[9.] Prayer is a mighty weapon if it be made with suitable mind. And that thou mayest learn its strength, continued entreaty has overcome shamelessness, and injustice, and savage cruelty, and overbearing rashness. For He says," Hear what the unjust judge saith." (Luke 18:6) Again it has overcome sloth also, and what friendship did not effect, this continued entreaty did: and "although he will not give him because he is his friend" (He says), "yet because of his importunity he will rise and give to him." (Luke 11:8) And continued assiduity made her worthy who was unworthy. "It is not meet" (He says) "to take the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs. Yea! Lord! " she says, "for even the dogs eat [the crumbs] from their master's table." (Matthew 15:26, 27) Let us apply ourselves to Prayer. It is a mighty weapon if it be offered with earnestness, if without vainglory, if with a sincere mind. It has turned back wars, it has benefited an entire nation though undeserving. "I have heard their groaning" (He says) "and am come down to deliver them." (Acts 7:34) It is itself a saving medicine, and has power to prevent sins, and to heal misdeeds. In this the desolate widow was assiduous. (1 Timothy 5:5)

If then we pray with humility, smiting our breast as the publican, if we utter what he did, if we say, "Be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13), we shall obtain all. For though we be not publicans, yet have we other sins not less than his.

For do not tell me, that thou hast gone wrong in some small matter [only], since the thing has the same nature. For as a man is equally called a homicide whether he has killed a child or a man, so also is he called overreaching whether he be overreaching in much or in little. Yea and to

remember injuries too, is no small matter, but even a great sin. For it is said, “the ways of those who remember injuries [tend] to death.” (Proverbs 12:28, LXX.) And “He that is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of hell,” and he that “calleth his brother a fool” (Matthew 5:22), and senseless, and numberless such things.

But we partake even of the tremendous mysteries unworthily, and we envy, and we revile. And some of us have even oftentimes been drunk. But each one of these things, even itself by itself, is enough to cast us out of the kingdom, and when they even come all together, what comfort shall we have? We need much penitence, beloved, much prayer, much endurance, much perseverance, that we may be enabled to attain the good things which have been promised to us.

[10.] Let us then say, even we, “Be merciful to me a sinner,” nay rather, let us not say it only, but let us also be thus minded; and should another call us so, let us not be angry. He heard the words, “I am not as this Publican” (Luke 18:11), and was not provoked thereby, but filled with compunction. He accepted the reproach, and he put away the reproach. The other spoke of the wound, and he sought the medicine. Let us say then, “Be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13); but even if another should so call us, let us not be indignant.

But if we say ten thousand evil things of ourselves, and are vexed when we hear them from others, then there is no longer humility, nor confession, but ostentation and vainglory. Is it ostentation (you say) to call one’s self a sinner? Yes; for we obtain the credit of humility, we are admired, we are commended; whereas if we say the contrary of ourselves, we are despised. So that we do this too for the sake of credit. But what is humility? It is when another reviles us, to bear it, to acknowledge our fault, to endure evil speakings. And yet even this would not be [a mark] of humility but of candor. But now we call ourselves sinners, unworthy, and ten thousand other such names, but if another apply one of them to us, we are vexed, we become savage. Seest thou that this is not confession, nor even candor? Thou saidst of thyself that thou art such an one: be not indignant if thou hearest it also said by others, and art reproved.

In this way thy sins are made lighter for thee, when others reproach thee: for they lay a burden on themselves indeed, but thee they lead onwards

into philosophy. Hear what the blessed David says, when Shimei cursed him, “Let him alone” (he says) “the Lord hath bidden him, that He might look on my humiliation” (he says):”And the Lord will requite me good for his cursing on this day.” (2 Samuel 16:11, 12)

But thou while saying evil things of thyself, even in excess, if thou hearest not from others the commendations that are due to the most righteous, art enraged. Seest thou that thou art trifling with things that are no subjects for trifling? For we even repudiate praises in our desire for other praises, that we may obtain yet higher panegyrics, that we may be more admired. So that when we decline to accept commendations, we do it that we may augment them. And all things are done by us for credit, not for truth. Therefore all things are hollow, all impracticable. Wherefore I beseech you now at any rate to withdraw from this mother of evils, vainglory, and to live according to what is roved by God, that so you may attain to the good things. to come, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father be glory, together with His Holy and good Spirit, now and ever and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 28

HEBREWS 11:37, 38

"They wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom this world was not worthy); wandering in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth."

[1.] AT all times indeed, but especially then when I reflect upon the achievements of the saints, it comes over me to feel despondency concerning my own condition, because we have not even in dreams experienced the things among which those men spent their whole lives, not paying the penalty of sins, but always doing rightly and yet always afflicted.

For consider, I beseech you, Elijah, to whom our discourse has come round today, for he speaks of him in this passage, and in him his examples end: which [example] was appropriate to their case. And having spoken of what befell the Apostles, that "they were slain with the sword, were stoned," he goes back again to Elijah, who suffered the same things with them. (See 2 Kings 1:8) For since it was probable that they would not as yet hold the Apostles in so great estimation, he brings his exhortation and consolation from him who had been taken up [into Heaven] and who was held in special admiration.

For "they wandered about" (he says) "in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom this world was not worthy."

They had not even raiment, he says, through the excess of affliction, no city, no house, no lodging-place; the same which Christ said, "but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." (Matthew 8:20) Why do I say "no lodging-place"? No standing-place: for not even when they had gained the wilderness, were they at rest. For he said not, They sat down in the wilderness, but even when they were there, they fled, and were driven thence, not out of the inhabited world only, but even out of that which was uninhabitable. And he reminds them of the places where they were set, and of things which there befell [them].

Then next, he says, they bring accusations against you for Christ's sake. What accusation had they against Elijah, when they drove him out, and persecuted him, and compelled him to struggle with famine? Which these [Hebrews] were then suffering. At least, the brethren, it is said, decided to send [relief] to those of the disciples who were afflicted. "Every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judea" (Acts 11:29), which was [the case] of these also.

"Tormented" [or "ill-treated "], he says that is, suffering distress, in journeyings, in dangers.

But "They wandered about," what is this? "Wandering," he says, "in deserts and in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth," like exiles and outcasts, as persons taken in the basest [of crimes], as those not worthy to see the sun, they found no refuge from the wilderness, but must always be flying, must be seeking hiding-places, must bury themselves alive in the earth, always be in terror.

[2.] What then is the reward of so great a change? What is the recompense?

They have not yet received it, but are still waiting; and after thus dying in so great tribulation, they have not yet received it. They gained their victory so many ages ago, and have not yet received [their reward]. And you who are yet in the conflict, are you vexed?

Do you also consider what a thing it is, and how great, that Abraham should be sitting, and the Apostle Paul, waiting till thou hast been perfected, that then they may be able to receive their reward. For the Savior has told them before that unless we also are present, He will not give it them. As an affectionate father might say to sons who were well approved, and had accomplished their work, that he would not give them to eat, unless their brethren came. And art thou vexed, that thou hast not yet received the reward? What then shall Abel do, who was victor before all, and is sitting uncrowned? And what Noah? And what, they who lived in those [early] times: seeing that they wait for thee and those after thee?

Dost thou see that we have the advantage of them? For "God" (he says) "has provided some better thing for us." In order that they might not seem to have the advantage of us from being crowned before us, He appointed

one time of crowning for all; and he that gained the victory so many years before, receives his crown with thee. Seest thou His tender carefulness?

And he did not say, “that they without us might not be crowned,” but “that they without us might not be made perfect”; so that at that time they appear perfect also. They were before us as regards the conflicts, but are not before us as regards the crowns. He wronged not them, but He honored us. For they also wait for the brethren. For if we are “all one body,” the pleasure becomes greater to this body, when it is crowned altogether, and not part by part. For the righteous are also worthy of admiration in this, that they rejoice in the welfare of their brethren, as in their own. So that for themselves also, this is according to their wish, to be crowned along with their own members. To be glorified all together, is a great delight.

[3.] (C. 12:1) “Wherefore” (he says) “we also being compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.” In many places the Scripture derives its consolation in evils from corresponding things. As when the prophet says, “From burning heat, and from storm, and rain.” (Isaiah 4:6) This at least he says here also, that the memory of those holy men, reestablishes and recovers the soul which had been weighed down by woes, as a cloud does him who is burnt by the too hot rays [of the sun.]

And he did not say, “lifted on high above us,” but, “compassing us about,” which was more than the other; so that we are in greater security.

What sort of “cloud”? “A load of witnesses.” With good reason he calls not those in the New [Testament] only, but those in the Old also, “witnesses” [or “martyrs”]. For they also were witnesses to the greatness of God, as for instance, the Three Children, those with Elijah, all the prophets.

“Laying aside all things.” “All”: what? That is, slumber, indifference, mean reasonings, all human things.

“And the sin which doth [so] easily beset us”; eujperi>staton, that is either “which easily circumvents us,” or “what can easily be circumvented,” but rather this latter. For it is easy, if we will, to overcome sin.

“Let us run with patience” (he says) “the race that is set before us.” He did not say, Let us contend as boxers, nor, Let us wrestle, nor, Let us do battle: but, what was lightest of all, the [contest] of the foot-race, this has he brought forward. Nor yet did he say, Let us add to the length of the course; but, Let us continue patiently in this, let us not faint. “Let us run” (he says) “the race that is set before us.”

[4.] In the next place as the sum and substance of his exhortation, which he puts both first and last, even Christ. (Verse 2) “Looking” (he says) “unto JESUS the Author and Finisher of our Faith “; The very thing which Christ Himself also continually said to His disciples, “If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of His household?” (Matthew 10:25) And again, “The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord.” (Matthew 10:24)

“Looking” (he says), that is, that we may learn to run. For as in all arts and games, we impress the art upon our mind by looking to our masters, receiving certain rules through our sight, so here also, if we wish to run, and to learn to run well, let us look to Christ, even to Jesus “the author and finisher of our faith.” What is this? He has put the Faith within us. For He said to His disciples, “Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you” (John 15:16); and Paul too says, “But then shall I know, even as also I have been known.” (1 Corinthians 13:12) He put the Beginning into us, He will also put on the End.

“Who,” he days, “for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame.” That is, it was in His power not to suffer at all, if He so willed. For “He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth” (1 Peter 2:22); as He also says in the Gospels, “The Prince of the world cometh and haft nothing in Me.” (John 14:30) It lay then in His power, if so He willed, not to come to the Cross. For, “I have power,” He says, “to lay down My life; and I have power to take it again.” (John 10:18) If then He who was under no necessity of being crucified, was crucified for our sake, how much more is it right that we should endure all things nobly!

“Who for the joy that was set before Him” (he says) “endured the cross, despising the shame.” But what is, “Despising the shame”? He chose, he means, that ignominious death. For suppose that He died. Why [should He] also [die] ignominiously? For no other reason, but to teach us to make

no account of glory from men. Therefore though under no obligation He chose it, teaching us to be bold against it, and to set it at naught. Why did he say not "pain," but "shame"? Because it was not with pain that He bore these things.

What then is the end? "He is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Seest thou the prize which Paul also says in an epistle, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name, that at the Name of JESUS Christ every knee should bow." (Philippians 2:9, 10) He speaks in respect to the flesh. Well then, even if there were no prize, the example would suffice to persuade us to accept all [such] things. But now prizes also are set before us, and these no common ones, but great and unspeakable.

[5.] Wherefore let us also, whenever we suffer anything of this kind, before the Apostles consider Christ. Why? His whole life was full of insults. For He continually heard Himself called mad, and a deceiver, and a sorcerer; and at one time the Jews said," Nay," (it says) "but He deceiveth the people." (John 7:12) And again, "That deceiver said while He was yet alive, after three days I will rise again." (Matthew 27:63) As to sorcery too they calumniated Him, saying, "He casteth out the devils by Beelzebub." (Matthew 12:24) And that "He is mad and hath a devil." (John 10:20) "Said we not well" (it says) "that He hath a devil and is mad?" (John 8:48)

And these things He heard from them, when doing them good, performing miracles, showing forth the works of God. For indeed, if He had been so spoken of, when He did nothing, it would not have been so wonderful: But [it is wonderful] that when He was teaching what pertained to Truth He was called "a deceiver," and when He cast out devils, was said to "have a devil," and when He was overthrowing all that was opposed [to God], was called a sorcerer. For these things they were continually alleging against Him.

And if thou wouldst know both the scoffs and the ironical jeerings, which they made against Him (what particularly wounds our souls), hear first those from His kindred. "Is not this" (it says) "the carpenter's son, whose father and mother we know? Are not his brethren sit with us?" (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3; John 6:42) Also scoffing at Him from His country, they

said He was “of Nazareth.” And again, “search,” it says, “and see, for out of Galilee hath no prophet arisen.” (John 7:52) And He endured being so greatly calumniated. And again they said, “Doth not the Scripture say, that Christ cometh from the town of Bethlehem?” (John 7:42)

Wouldst thou see also the ironical jeerings they made? Coming, it says, to the very cross they worshipped Him; and they struck Him and buffeted Him, and said, “Tell us who it is that smote Thee” (Matthew 26:68); and they brought vinegar to Him, and said, “If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross.” (Matthew 27:40) And again, the servant of the High Priest struck Him with the palm of his hand; and He says, “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smiteth thou Me?” (John 18:23) And in derision they put a robe about Him; and they spat in His face; and they were continually applying their tests, tempting Him.

Wouldest thou see also the accusations, some secret, some open, some from disciples? “Will ye also go away?” (John 6:67) He says. And that saying, “Thou hast a devil” (John 8:48, 7:20), was uttered by those who already believed.

Was He not continually a fugitive, sometimes in Galilee, and sometimes in Judea? Was not His trial great, even from the swaddling clothes? When He was yet a young child, did not His mother take Him and go down into Egypt? For all these reasons he says, “Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

To Him then let us look, also to the [sufferings] of His disciples, reading the [writings] of Paul, and hearing him say,” In much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments.” (2 Corinthians 6:4, 5) And again, “Even to this present hour, we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place, and labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat.” (1 Corinthians 4:11-13) Has any one [of us] suffered the smallest part of these things? For, he says, [we are] “As deceivers, as dishonored, as having nothing.” (2 Corinthians 6:8, 10) And again, “Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with rods, once

was I stoned, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in tribulations, in distress, in hunger." (2 Corinthians 11:24-26) And that these things seem good to God, hear him saying, "For this I besought the Lord thrice, and He said to me, My Grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:8-10) "Wherefore," he says, "l take pleasure in infirmities, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Moreover, hear Christ Himself saying, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." (John 16:33)

[6.] Verse 3. *"For consider," saith he, "Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."* For if the sufferings of those near us arouse us, what earnestness will not those of our Master give us! What will they not work in us!

And passing by all [else], he expressed the whole by the [word] "Contradiction"; and by adding "such." For the blows upon the cheek, the laughter, the insults, the reproaches, the mockeries, all these he indicated by "contradiction." And not these only, but also the things which befell Him during His whole life, of teaching.

For a great, a truly great consolation are both the sufferings of Christ, and those of the Apostles. For He so well knew that this is the better way of virtue, as even to go that way Himself, not having need thereof: He knew so well that tribulation is expedient for us, and that it becomes rather a foundation for repose. For hear Him saying, "If a man take not his cross, and follow after Me, he is not worthy of Me." (Matthew 10:38) If thou art a disciple, He means, imitate the Master; for this is [to be] a disciple. But if while He went by [the path of] affliction, thou [goest] by that of ease, thou no longer treadest the same path, which He trod, but another. How then dost thou follow, when thou followest not? How shall thou be a disciple, not going after the Master? This Paul also says, "We are weak, but ye are strong; we are despised, but ye are honored." (1 Corinthians 4:10) How is it reasonable, he means, that we should be striving after opposite things, and yet that you should be disciples and we teachers?

[7.] Affliction then is a great thing, beloved, for it accomplishes two great things; It wipes out sins, and it makes men strong.

What then, you say, if it overthrow and destroy? Affliction does not do this, but our own slothfulness. How (you say)? If we are sober and watchful, if we beseech God that He would not "suffer us to be tempted above that we are able" (1 Corinthians 10:13), if we always hold fast to Him, we shall stand nobly, and set ourselves against our enemy. So long as we have Him for our helper, though temptations blow more violently than all the winds, they will be to us as chaff and a leaf born lightly along. Hear Paul saying, "In all these things" (are his words) "we are more than conquerors." (Romans 8:37) And again, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Romans 8:18) And again, "For the light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (2 Corinthians 4:17)

Consider what great dangers, shipwrecks, afflictions one upon another, and other such things, he calls "light "; and emulate this inflexible one, who wore this body simply and heedlessly. Thou art in poverty? But not in such as Paul, who was tried by hunger, and thirst, and nakedness. For he suffered this not for one day, but endured it continually. Whence does this appear? Hear himself saying, "Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst and are naked." (1 Corinthians 4:11) Oh! How great glory did he already have in preaching, when he was undergoing so great [afflictions]! Having now [reached] the twentieth year [thereof], at the time when he wrote this. For he says, "I knew a man fourteen years ago, whether in the body, or out of the body, I know not." (2 Corinthians 12:2) And again, "After three years" (he says) "I went up to Jerusalem." (Galatians 1:18) And again hear him saying, "It were better for me-to die, than that any man should make my glorying void." (1 Corinthians 9:15) And not only this, but again also in writing he said, "We are become as the filth of the world." (1 Corinthians 4:13) What is more difficult to endure than hunger? What than freezing cold? What than plottings made by brethren whom he afterwards calls "false brethren"? (2 Corinthians 11:26) Was he not called the pest of the world? An Impostor? A subverter? Was he not cut with scourging?

[8.] These things let us take into our mind, beloved, let us consider them, let us hold them in remembrance, and then we shall never faint, though we be wronged, though we be plundered, though we suffer innumerable evils.

Let it be granted us to be approved in Heaven, and all things [are] endurable. Let it be granted us to fare well there, and things here are of no account. These things are a shadow, and a dream; whatever they may be, they are nothing either in nature or in duration, while those are hoped for and expected.

For what wouldst thou that we should compare with those fearful things? What with the unquenchable fire? With the never-dying worm? Which of the things here canst thou name in comparison with the "gnashing of teeth," with the "chains," and the "outer darkness," with the "wrath," the "tribulation," the "anguish"? But as to duration? Why, what are ten thousand years to ages boundless and without end? Not so much as a little drop to the boundless ocean.

But what about the good things? There, the superiority is still greater. "Eye hath not seen," (it is said,) "ear hath not heard, neither have, entered into the heart of man" (1 Corinthians 2:9), and these things again shall be during boundless ages. For the sake of these then were it not well to be cut [by scourging] times out of number, to be slain, to be burned, to undergo ten thousand deaths, to endure everything whatsoever that is dreadful both in word and deed? For even if it were possible for one to live when burning in the fire, ought one not to endure all for the sake of attaining to those good things promised?

[9.] But Why do I trifle in saying these things to men who do not even choose to disregard riches, but hold fist to them as though they were immortal? And if they give a little out of much, think they have done all? This is not Almsgiving. For Almsgiving is that of the Widow who emptied out "all her living." (Mark 12:44) But if thou dost not go on to contribute so much as the widow, yet at least contribute the whole of thy superfluity: keep what is sufficient, not what is superfluous.

But there is no one who contributes even his superabundance. For so long as thou hast many servants, and garments of silk, these things are all superfluities. Nothing is indispensable or necessary, without which we are able to live; these things are superfluous, and are simply superadded. Let us then see, if you please, what we cannot live without. If we have only two servants, we can live. For whereas some live without servants, what excuse have we, if we are not content with two? We can also have a house

built of brick of three rooms; and this were sufficient for us. For are there not some with children and wife who have but one room? Let there be also, if you will, two serving boys.

[10.] And how is it not a shame (you say) that a gentlewoman should walk out with [only] two servants? It is no shame, that a gentlewoman should walk abroad with two servants, but it is a shame that she should go forth with many. Perhaps you laugh when you hear this. Believe me it is a shame. Do you think it a great matter to go out with many servants, like dealers in sheep, or dealers in slaves? This is pride and vainglory, the other is philosophy and respectability. For a gentlewoman ought not to be known from the multitude of her attendants. For what virtue is it to have many slaves? This belongs not to the soul, and whatever is not of the soul does not show gentility. When she is content with a few things, then is she a gentlewoman indeed; but when she needs many, she is a servant and inferior to slaves.

Tell me, do not the angels go to and fro about the world alone, and need not any one to follow them? Are they then on this account inferior to us? They who need no [attendants] to us who need them? If then not needing an attendant at all, is angelic, who comes nearer to the angelic life, she who needs many [attendants], or she who [needs] few? Is not this a shame? For a shame it is to do anything out of place.

Tell me who attracts the attention of those who are in the public places, she who brings many in her train, or she who [brings but] few? And is not she who is alone, less conspicuous even than she who is attended by few? Seest thou that this [first-named conduct] is a shame? Who attracts the attention of those in the public places, she who wears beautiful garments, or she who is dressed simply and artlessly? Again who attracts those in the public places, she who is born on mules, and with trappings ornamented with gold, or she who walks out simply, and as it may be, with propriety? Or we do not even look at this latter, if we even see her; but the multitudes not only force their way to see the other, but also ask, Who is she, and Where from? And I do not say how great envy is hereby produced. What then (tell me), is it disgraceful to be looked at or not to be looked at? When is the shame greater, when all stare at her, or when no one [does]? When they inform themselves about her, or when they do not even

care? Seest thou that we do everything, not for modesty's sake but for vainglory?

However, since it is impossible to draw you away from that, I am content for the present that you should learn that this [conduct] is no disgrace. Sin alone is a disgrace, which no one thinks to be a disgrace, Sin alone is a disgrace, which no one thinks to be a disgrace, but everything rather than this.

Let your dress be such as is needful, not superfluous. However, that we may not shut you up too narrowly, this I assure you, that we have no need of ornaments of gold, or of lace And it is not I who say this. For that the words are not mine, hear the blessed Paul saying, and solemnly charging women "to adorn themselves, not with plaitings [of the hair], or gold, or pearls, or costly apparel." (1 Timothy 2:9) But with what kind, O Paul, wouldest thou tell us? For perhaps they will say, that only golden things are costly; and that silks are not costly. Tell us with what kind thou wouldest? "But having food and raiment, let us therewith" (he says) "be content." a (1 Timothy 6:8) Let our garment be such as merely to cover us. For God hath given them to us for this reason, that we may cover our nakedness; and this any sort of garment can do, though but of trifling cost. Perhaps ye laugh, who wear dresses of silk; for in truth one may well laugh, considering what Paul enjoined and what we practice!

But my discourse is not addressed to women only, but also to men. For the rest of the things. which we have are all superfluous; only the poor possess no superfluities; and perhaps they too from necessity: since, if it had been in their power, even they would not have abstained [from theme. Nevertheless, "whether in pretense or in truth" (Philippians 1:18), so far they have no superfluities.

[12.] Let us then wear such clothes as are sufficient for our need. For what does much gold mean? To those on the stage these things are fitting, this apparel belongs to them, to harlots, to those who do everything to be looked at. Let her beautify herself, who is on the stage or the dancing platform. For she wishes to attract all to her. But a woman who professes godliness, let her not beautify herself thus, but in a different way. Thou hast a means of beautifying thyself far better than that. Thou also hast a theater: for that theater make thyself beautiful: clothe thyself with those

ornaments. What is thy theater? Heaven, the company of Angels. I speak not of Virgins only, but also of those in the world. All as many as believe in Christ have that theater. Let us speak such things that we may please those spectators. Put on such garments that thou mayest gratify them.

For tell me, if a harlot putting aside her golden ornaments, and her robes, and her laughter, and her witty and unchaste talk, clothe herself with a cheap garment, and having dressed herself simply come [on the stage], and utter religious words, and discourse of chastity, and say nothing indelicate, will not all rise up? Will not this theater be dispersed? Will they not cast her out, as one who does not know how to suit herself to the crowd, and speaks things foreign to that Satanic theater? So thou also, if thou enter into the Theater of Heaven clad with her garments, the spectators will cast thee out. For there, there is no need of these garments of gold, but of different ones. Of what kind? Of such as the prophet names, “clothed in fringed work of gold, and in varied colors” (Psalm 45:13), not so as to make the body white and glistering, but so as to beautify the soul. For the soul it is, which is contending and wrestling in that Theater. “All the glory of the King’s daughter is from within” (Psalm 45:13), it says. With these do thou clothe thyself; for [so] thou both deliverest thyself from other evils innumerable, and thy husband from anxiety and thyself from care.

For so thou wilt be respected by thy husband, when thou needest not many things. For every man is wont to be shy towards those who make requests of him; but when he sees that they have no need of him, then he lets down his pride, and converses with them as equals. When thy husband sees that thou hast no need of him in anything, that thou thinkest lightly of the presents which come from him, then, even though he be very arrogant, he will respect thee more, than if thou weft clad in golden ornaments; and thou wilt no longer be his slave. For those of whom we stand in need, we are compelled to stoop to. But if we restrain ourselves we shall no longer be regarded as criminals, but he knows that we pay him obedience from the fear of God, not for what is given by him. For now, when that he confers great favors on us, whatever honor he receives, he thinks he has not received all [that is due to him]: but then, though he obtain but a little, he will account it a favor he does not reproach, nor will he be himself compelled to overreach on thy account.

[13.] For what is more unreasonable, than to provide golden ornaments, to be worn in baths, and in market places? However, in baths and in market places it is perhaps no wonder, but that a woman should come into Church so decked out is very ridiculous. For, for what possible reason does she come in here wearing golden ornaments, she who ought to come in that she may hear [the precept] "that they adorn not themselves with gold, nor pearls, nor costly array"? (1 Timothy 2:9) With what object then, O woman, dost thou come? Is it indeed to fight with Paul, and show that even if he repeat these things ten thousand times thou regardest them not? Or is it as wishing to put us your teachers to shame as discoursing on these subjects in vain? For tell me; if any heathen and unbeliever, after he has heard the passage read where the blessed Paul says these things, having a believing wife, sees that she makes much account of beautifying herself, and puts on ornaments of gold, that she may come into Church and hear Paul charging [the women] that they adorn themselves, neither with "gold" (1 Timothy 2:9), nor with "pearls," nor with "costly array," will he not indeed say to himself, when he sees her in her little room, putting on these things, and arranging them beautifully, "Why is my wife staying within in her little room? Why is she so slow? Why is she putting on her golden ornaments? Where has she to go to? Into the Church? For what purpose? To hear? 'not with costly array';" will he not smile, will he not burst out into laughter? will he not think our religion a mockery and a deceit? Wherefore, I beseech [you], let us leave golden ornaments to processions, to theaters, to signs on the shops. But let not the image of God be decked out with these things: let the gentlewoman be adorned with gentility, and gentility is the absence of pride, and of boastful display.

Nay even if thou wish to obtain glory from men, thou wilt obtain it thus. For we shall not wonder so much that the wife of a rich man wears gold and silk (for this is the common practice of them all), as when she is dressed in a plain and simple garment made merely of wool. This all will admire, this they will applaud. For in that adorning indeed of ornaments of gold and of costly apparel, she has many to share with her. And if she surpass one, she is surpassed by another. Yea, even if she surpass all, she must yield the palm to the Empress herself. But in the other case, she outdoes all, even the Emperor's wife herself. For she alone in wealth, has

chosen the [dress] of the poor. So that even if we desire glory, here too the glory is greater.

[14.] I say this not only to widows, and to the rich; for here the necessity of widowhood seems to cause this: but to those also who have a husband.

But, you say, I do not please my husband Elf I dress plainly]. It is not thy husband thou wishest to please, but the multitude of poor women; or rather not to please them, but to make them pine [with envy], and to give them pain, and make their poverty greater. How many blasphemies are uttered because of thee! ‘Let there be no poverty’ (say they). ‘God hates the poor.’ ‘God loves not those in poverty.’ For that it is not thy husband whom thou wishest to please, and for this reason thou deckest thyself out, thou makest plain to all by what thou thyself doest. For as soon as thou hast passed over the threshold of thy chamber, thou immediately puttest off all, both the robes, and the golden ornaments, and the pearls; and at home of all places thou dost not wear them.

But if thou really wishest to please thy husband, there are ways of pleasing him, by gentleness, by meekness, by propriety. For believe me, O woman, even if thy husband be infinitely debased, these are the things which will more effectually win him, gentleness, propriety, freedom from pride and expensiveness and extravagance. For even if thou devise ten thousand such things, thou wilt not restrain the profligate. And this they know who have had such husbands. For however thou mayest beautify thyself, he being a profligate will go off to a courtesan; while [the husband] that is chaste and regular thou wilt gain not by these means, but by the opposite: yea by these thou even causest him pain, clothing thyself with the reputation of a lover of the world. For what if thy husband out of respect, and that as a sober-minded man, does not speak, yet inwardly he will condemn thee, and will not conceal ill-will and jealousy. Wilt thou not drive away all pleasure for the future, by exciting ill-will against thyself?

[15.] Possibly you are annoyed at hearing what is said, and are indignant, saying, ‘He irritates husbands still more against their wives.’ I say this, not to irritate your husbands, but I wish that these things should be done by you willingly, for your own sakes, not for theirs; not to free them from envy but to free you from the parade of this life.

Dost thou wish to appear beautiful? I also wish it, but with beauty which God seeks, which "the King desires." (Psalm 45:11) Whom wouldst thou have as a Lover? God or men? Shouldest thou be beautiful with that beauty, God will "desire thy beauty"; but if with the other apart from this, He will abominate thee, and thy lovers will be profligates. For no man who loves a married woman is good. Consider this even in regard to the adorning that is external. For the other adorning, I mean that of the soul, attracts God; but this again, profligates. Seest thou that I care for you, that I am anxious for you, that ye may be beautiful, really beautiful, splendid, really splendid, that instead of profligate men, ye may have for your Lover God the Lord of all? And she who has Him for her Lover, to whom will she be like? She has her place among the choirs of Angels. For if one who is beloved of a king is accounted happy above all, what will her dignity be who is beloved of God with much love? Though thou put the whole world [in the balance against it], there is nothing equivalent to that beauty.

This beauty then let us cultivate; with these embellishments let us adorn ourselves, that we may pass into the Heavens, into the spiritual chambers, into the nuptial chamber that is undefiled. For this beauty is liable to be destroyed by anything; and when it lasts well, and neither disease nor anxiety impair it (which is impossible), it does not last twenty years. But the other is ever blooming, ever in its prime. *There*, there is no change to fear; no old age coming brings a wrinkle, no undermining disease withers it; no desponding anxiety disfigures it; but it is far above all these things. But this [earthly beauty] takes flight before it appears, and if it appears it has not many admirers. For those of well-ordered minds do not admire it; and those who do admire it, admire with wantonness.

[16.] Let us not therefore cultivate this [beauty], but the other: let us have that, so that with bright torches we may pass into the bridal chamber. For not to virgins only has this been promised, but to virgin souls. For had it belonged merely to virgins, those five would not have been shut out. This then belongs to all who are virgins in soul, who are freed from worldly imaginations: for these imaginations corrupt our souls. If therefore we remain unpolluted, we shall depart thither, and shall be accepted. "For I have espoused you," he says, "to one husband, to present you a chaste virgin unto Christ." (2 Corinthians 11:2) These things he said, not with reference to Virgins, but to the whole body of the entire Church. For the

uncorrupt soul is a virgin, though she have a husband: she is a virgin as to that which is Virginity indeed, that which is worthy of admiration. For this of the body is but the accompaniment and shadow of the other: while that is the True Virginity. This let us cultivate, and so shall we be able with cheerful countenance to behold the Bridegroom, to enter in with bright torches, if the oil do not fail us, if by melting down our golden ornaments we procure such oil as makes our lamps bright. And this oil is loving-kindness.

If we impart what we have to others, if we make oil therefrom, then it will protect us, and we shall not say at that time, "Give us oil, for our lamps are going out" (Matthew 25:8), nor shall we beg of others, nor shall we be shut out when we are gone to them that sell, nor shall we hear that fearful and terrible voice, while we are knocking at the doors, "I know you not." (Matthew 25:12) But He will acknowledge us, and we shall go in with the Bridegroom, and having entered into the spiritual Bride-chamber we shall enjoy good things innumerable.

For if here the bride-chamber is so bright, the rooms so splendid, that none is weary of observing them, much more there. Heaven is the chamber, and the bride-chamber better than Heaven; then we shall enter. But if the Bride-chamber is so beautiful, what will the Bridegroom be?

And why do I say, 'Let us put away our golden ornaments, and give to the needy'? For if ye ought even to sell yourselves, if ye ought to become slaves instead of free women, that so ye might be able to be with that Bridegroom, to enjoy that Beauty, [nay] merely to look on that Countenance, ought you not with ready mind to welcome all things? We look at and admire a king upon the earth, but when [we see] a king and a bridegroom both, much more ought we to welcome him with readiness. Truly these things are a shadow, while those are a reality. And a King and a Bridegroom in Heaven! To be counted worthy also to go before Him with torches, and to be near Him, and to be ever with Him, what ought we not to do? What should we not perform? What should we not endure? I entreat you, let us conceive some desire for those blessings, let us long for that Bridegroom, let us be virgins as to the true Virginity. For the Lord seeks after the virginity of the soul. With this let us enter into Heaven, "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Ephesians 5:27); that we

may attain also to the good things promised, of which may we all be partakers through the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, power, honor, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 29

HEBREWS 12:4-6

"Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him. For whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth: and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."

[1.] THERE are two kinds of consolation, apparently opposed to one another, but yet contributing great strength each to the other; both of which he has here put forward. The one is when we say that persons have suffered much: for the soul is refreshed, when it has many witnesses of its own sufferings, and this he introduced above, saying, "Call to mind the former days, in which after ye had been illuminated ye endured a great fight of afflictions." (c. 10:32) The other is when we say, "Thou hast suffered no great thing." The former, when [the soul] has been exhausted refreshes it, and makes it recover breath: the latter, when it has become indolent and supine, turns it again and pulls down pride. Thus that no pride may spring up in them from that testimony [to their sufferings], see what he does. "Ye have not yet" (he says) "resisted unto blood, [striving] against sin." And he did not at once go on with what follows, but after having shown them all those who had stood "unto blood," and then brought in the glory of Christ, His sufferings, he afterwards easily pursued his discourse. This he says also in writing to the Corinthians, "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man" (1 Corinthians 10:13), that is, small. For this is enough to arouse and set right the soul, when it considers that it has not risen to the whole [trial], and encourages itself from what has already befallen it.

What he means is this: Ye have not yet submitted to death; your loss has extended to money, to reputation, to being driven from place to place. Christ however shed His blood for you, while you have not [done it] for yourselves. He contended for the Truth even unto death fighting for you; while ye have not yet entered upon dangers that threaten death.

"And ye have forgotten the exhortation." That is, And ye have slackened your hands, ye have become faint. "Ye have not yet," he said, "resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Here he indicates that sin is both very vigorous, and is itself armed. For the [expression] "Ye have resisted [stood firm against]," is used with reference to those who stand firm.

[2.] "Which" (he says) "speaketh unto you as unto sons, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor hint when thou art rebuked of Him." He has drawn his encouragement from the facts themselves; over and above he adds also that which is drawn from arguments, from this testimony.

"Faint not" (he says) "when thou art rebuked of Him." It follows that these things are of God. For this too is no small matter of consolation, when we learn that it is God's work that such things have power, He allowing [them]; even as also Paul says; "He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9) He it is who allows [them'].

"For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." Thou canst not say that any righteous man is without affliction: even if he appear to be so, yet *we* know not his other afflictions. So that of necessity every righteous man must pass through affliction. For it is a declaration of Christ, that the wide and broad way leads to destruction, but the strait and narrow one to life. (Matthew 7:13, 14) If then it is possible to enter into life by that means, and is not by any other, then all have entered in by the narrow [way], as many as have departed unto life.

Verse 7. *"Ye endure chastisement"* (he says); not for punishment, nor for vengeance, nor for suffering. See, from that from which they supposed they had been deserted [of God], from these he says they may be confident, that they have not been deserted. It is as if he had said, Because ye have suffered so many evils, do you suppose that God has left you and hates you? If ye did not suffer, then it were right to suppose this. For if "He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth," he who is not scourged, perhaps is not a son. What then, you say, do not bad men suffer distress? They suffer indeed; how then? He did not say, Every one who is scourged is a son, but every son is scourged. For in all cases He scourges His son:

what is wanted then is to show, whether any son is not scourged. But thou wouldest not be able to say: there are many wicked men also who are scourged, such as murderers, robbers, sorcerers, plunderers of tombs. These however are paying the penalty of their own wickedness, and are not scourged as sons, but punished as wicked: but ye as sons.

[3.] Then again [he argues] from the general custom. Seest thou how he brings up arguments from all quarters, from facts in the Scripture, from its words, from our own notions, from examples in ordinary life? (Verse 8) "But if ye be without chastisement" [etc.]. Seest thou that he said what I just mentioned, that it is not possible to be a son without being chastened? For as in families, fathers care not for bastards, though they learn nothing, though they be not distinguished, but fear for their legitimate sons lest they should be indolent, [so here.]. If then not to be chastised is [a mark] of bastards, we ought to rejoice at chastisement, if this be [a sign] of legitimacy. "God dealeth with you as with sons"; for this very cause.

Verse 9. *"Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence."* Again, [he reasons] from their own experiences, from what they themselves suffered. For as he says above, "Call to mind the former days" (c. 10:32), so here also "God" (he saith) "dealeth with you as with sons," and ye could not say, We cannot bear it: yea, "as with sons" tenderly beloved. For if they reverence their "fathers of the flesh," how shall not you reverence your heavenly Father?

However the difference arises not from this alone, nor from the persons, but also from the cause itself, and from the fact. For it is not on the same grounds that He and they inflict chastisement: but they [did it] with a view to "what seemed good to them," that is, fulfilling [their own] pleasure oftentimes, and not always looking to what was expedient. But here, that cannot be said. For He does this not for any interest of His own but for you, and for your benefit alone. They [did it] that ye might be useful to themselves also, oftentimes without reason; but here there is nothing of this kind. Seest thou that this also brings consolation? For we are most closely attached to those [earthly parents], when we see that not for any interests of their own they either command or advise us: but their earnestness is, wholly and solely, on our account. For this is genuine love, and love in reality, when we are beloved though we be of no use to him

who loves us, — not that he may receive, but that he may impart. He chastens, He does everything, He uses all diligence, that we may become capable of receiving His benefits. (Verse 10) “For they verily” (he says) “for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.”

What is “of his holiness”? It is, of His purity, so as to become worthy of Him, according to our power. He earnestly desires that ye may receive, and He does all that He may give you: do ye not earnestly endeavor that ye may receive? “I said unto the Lord” (one says) “Thou art my Lord, for of my good things Thou hast no need.” (Psalm 16:2)

“Furthermore,” he saith,” we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?” (“To the Father of spirits,” whether of spiritual gifts, or of prayers, or of the incorporeal powers.) If we die thus, then “we shall live. For they indeed for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure,” for what seems [so] is not always profitable, but “He for our profit.”

[4.] Therefore chastisement is “profitable”; therefore chastisement is a “participation of holiness.” Yea and this greatly: for when it casts out sloth, and evil desire, and love of the things of this life, when it helps the soul, when it causes a light esteem of all things here (for affliction [does] this), is it not holy? Does it not draw down the grace of the Spirit?

Let us consider the righteous, from what cause they all shone brightly forth. Was it not from affliction? And, if you will, let us enumerate them from the first and from the very beginning: Abel, Noah himself; for it is not possible that he, being the only one in that so great multitude of the wicked, should not have been afflicted; for it is said, “Noah being” alone “perfect in his generation, pleased God.” (Genesis 6:9) For consider, I beseech you, if now, when we have innumerable persons whose virtue we may emulate, fathers, and children, and teachers, we are thus distressed, what must we suppose he suffered, alone among so many? But should I speak of the circumstances of that strange and wonderful rain? Or should I speak of Abraham, his wanderings one upon another, the carrying away of his wife, the dangers, the wars, the famines? Should I speak of Isaac, what fearful things he underwent, driven from every place, and laboring in vain,

and toiling for others? Or of Jacob? for indeed to enumerate all his [afflictions] is not necessary, but it is reasonable to bring forward the testimony, which he himself (gave] when speaking with Pharaoh; “Few and evil are my days, and they have not attained to the days of my fathers.” (Genesis 47:9) Or should I speak of Joseph himself? Or of Moses? Or of Joshua? Or of David? Or of Elijah? Or of Samuel? Or wouldest thou [that I speak] of all the prophets? Wilt thou not find that all these were made illustrious from their afflictions? Tell me then, dost *thou* desire to become illustrious from ease and luxury? But thou canst not.

Or should I speak of the Apostles? Nay but they went beyond all. And Christ said this, “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” (John 16:33) And again, “Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice.” (John 16:20) And, that “Strait and narrow is the way that teadeth unto life.” (Matthew 7:14) The Lord of the way said, that it is “narrow and strait”; and dost thou seek the “broad” [way]? How is this not unreasonable? In consequence thou wilt not arrive at life, going another [way], but at destruction, for thou hast chosen the [path] which leads thither.

Wouldst thou that I bring before you those [that live] in luxury? Let us ascend from the last to the first. The rich man who is burning in the furnace; the Jews who live for the belly, “whose God is their belly” (Philippians 3:19), who were ever seeking ease in the wilderness, were destroyed; as also those in Sodore, on account of their gluttony; and those in the time of Noah, was it not because they chose this soft and dissolute life? For “they luxuriated,” it says, “in fullness of bread.” (Ezekiel 16:49) It speaks of those in Sodom. But if “fullness of bread” wrought so great evil, what should we say of other delicacies? Esau, was not he in ease? And what of those who being of “the sons of God” (Genesis 6:2), looked on women, and were born down the precipice? And what of those who were maddened by inordinate lust? and all the kings of the nations, of the Babylonians, of the Egyptians, did they not perish miserably? Are they not in torment?

[5.] And as to things now, tell me, are they not the same? Hear Christ saying, “They that wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses” (Matthew 11:8), but they who do not [wear] such things, are in Heaven. For the soft garment relaxes even the austere soul, breaks it and enervates it: yea, even

if it meet with a body rough and hard, it speedily by such delicate treatment makes it soft and weak.

For, tell me, for what other reason do you suppose women are so weak? Is it from their sex only? By no means: but from their way of living, and their bringing up. For their avoiding exposure, their inactivity, their baths, their unguents, their multitude of perfumes, the delicate softness of their couches, makes them in the end such as they are.

And that thou mayest understand, attend to what I say. Tell me; take from a garden a tree from those standing in the uncultivated part and beaten by the winds, and plant it in a moist and shady place, and thou wilt find it very unworthy of that from which thou didst originally take it. And that this is true, [appears from the fact that] women brought up in the country are stronger than citizens of towns: and they would overcome many such in wrestling. For when the body becomes more effeminate, of necessity the soul also shares the mischief, since, for the most part, its energies are affected in accordance with the [body]. For in illness we are different persons owing to weakness, and when we become well, we are different again. For as in the case of a string when the tones are weak and relaxed, and not well arranged, the excellence of the art is also destroyed, being obliged to serve the ill condition of the strings: so in the case of the body also, the soul receives from it many hurts, many necessities. For when it needs much nursing, the other endures a bitter servitude.

[6.] Wherefore, I beseech you, let us make it strong by work, and not nurse it as an invalid. My discourse is not to men only but to women also. For why dost thou, O woman, continually enfeeble [thy body] with luxury and exhaust it? Why dost thou ruin thy strength with fat? This fat is flabbiness, not strength. Whereas, if thou break off from these things, and manage thyself differently, then will thy personal beauty also improve according to thy wish, when strength and a good habit of body are there. If however thou beset it with ten thousand diseases, there will neither be bloom of complexion, nor good health; for thou wilt always be in low spirits. And you know that as when the air is smiling it makes a beautiful house look splendid, so also cheerfulness of mind when added to a fair countenance, makes it better: but if [a woman] is in low spirits and in pain she becomes more ill-looking. But diseases and pains produce low spirits;

and diseases are produced from the body too delicate through great luxury. So that even for this you will flee luxury, if you take my advice.

‘But, you will say, luxury gives pleasure.’ Yes, but not so great as the annoyances. And besides, the pleasure goes no further than the palate and the tongue. For when the table has been removed, and the food swallowed, thou wilt be like one that has not partaken, or rather much worse, in that thou bearest thence oppression, and distension, and headache, and a sleep like death, and often too, sleeplessness from repletion, and obstruction of the breathing, and eructation. And thou wouldest curse bitterly thy belly, when thou aughtest to curse thy immoderate eating.

[7.] Let us not then fatten the body, but listen to Paul saying, “Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof,” (Romans 13:14) As if one should take food and throw it into a drain, so is he who throws it into the belly: or rather it is not so, but much worse. For in the one case he uses the drain without harm to himself: but in the other he generates innumerable diseases. For what nourishes is a sufficiency which also can be digested: but what is over and above our need, not only does not nourish, but even spoils the other. But no man sees these things, owing to some prejudice and unseasonable pleasure.

Dost thou wish to nourish the body? Take away What is superfluous; give what is sufficient, and as much as can be digested, Do not load it, lest thou overwhelm it. A sufficiency is both nourishment and pleasure. For nothing is so productive of pleasure, as food well digested: nothing so [productive of] health: nothing [so productive of] acuteness of the faculties, nothing tends so much to keep away disease. For a sufficiency is both nourishment, and pleasure, and health; but excess is injury, and unpleasantness and disease. For what famine does, that also satiety does; or rather more grievous evils. For the former indeed within a few days carries a man off and sets him free; but the other eating into and putrefying the body, gives it over to long disease, and then to a most painful death. But *we*, while we account famine a thing greatly to be dreaded, yet run after satiety, which is more distressing than that.

Whence is this disease? Whence this madness? I do not say that we should waste ourselves away, but that we should eat as much food as also gives us pleasure, that is really pleasure, and can nourish the body, and furnish

it to us well ordered and adapted for the energies of the soul, well joined and fitted together. But when it comes to be water-logged by luxury, it cannot in the flood-wave, keep fast the bolts themselves, as one may say, and joints which hold the frame together. For the flood-wave coming in, the whole breaks up and scatters.

“Make not provision for the flesh” (he says) “to fulfill the lusts thereof.” (Romans 13:14) He said well. For luxury is fuel for unreasonable lusts; though the luxurious should be the most philosophical of all men, of necessity he must be somewhat affected by wine, by eating, he must needs be relaxed, he must needs endure the greater flame. Hence [come] fornications, hence adulteries. For a hungry belly cannot generate lust, or rather not one which has used just enough. But that which generates unseemly lusts, is that which is relaxed by luxury. And as land which is very moist and a dung-hill which is wet through and retains much dampness, generates worms, while that which has been freed from such moistness bears abundant fruits, when it has nothing immoderate: even if it be not cultivated, it yields grass, and if it be cultivated, fruits: [so also do we].

Let us not then make our flesh useless, or unprofitable, or hurtful, but let us plant in it useful fruits, and fruit-bearing trees; let us not enfeeble them by luxury, for they too put forth worms instead of fruit when they are become rotten. So also implanted desire, if thou moisten it above measure, generates unreasonable pleasures, yea the most exceedingly unreasonable. Let us then remove this pernicious evil, that we may be able to attain the good things promised us, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory now and ever and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 30

HEBREWS 12:11-13

"No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which area exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees: and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed."

[1.] THEY who drink bitter medicines, first submit to some unpleasantness, and afterwards feel the benefit. For such is virtue, such is vice. In the latter there is first the pleasure, then the despondency: in the former first the despondency, and then the pleasure. But there is no equality; for it is not the same, to be first grieved and afterwards pleased, and to be first pleased and afterwards grieved. How so? because in the latter case the expectation of coming despondency makes the present pleasure less: hut in the former the expectation of coming pleasure cuts away the violence of present despondency; so that the result is that in the one instance we never have pleasure, in the latter we never have grief. And the difference does not lie in this only, but also in other ways. As how? That the duration is not equal, but far greater and more ample. And here too, it is still more so in things spiritual.

From this [consideration] then Paul undertakes to console them; and again takes up the common judgment of men, which no one is able to stand against, nor to contend with the common decision, when one says what is acknowledged by all.

Ye are suffering, he says. For such is chastisement; such is its beginning. For "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous." Well said he, "seemeth not," Chastisement he means is not grievous but "seemeth" so. "All chastisement": not this and that, but "all," both human and spiritual. Seest thou that he argues from our common notions? "Seemeth" (he says) "to be grievous," so that it is not [really so]. For what sort of grief brings forth joy? So neither does pleasure bring forth despondency.

“Nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them which have been exercised thereby.” Not “fruit” but “fruits,” a great abundance.

“To them” (he says) “which have been exercised thereby.” What is “to them which have been exercised thereby”? To them that have endured for a long while, and been patient. And he uses an auspicious expression. So then, chastisement is exercise, making the athlete strong, and invincible in combats, irresistible in wars.

If then “all chastisement” be such, this also will be such: so that we ought to look for good things, and for a sweet and peaceful end. And do not wonder if, being itself hard, it has sweet fruits; since in trees also the bark is almost destitute of all quality, and rough; but the fruits are sweet. But he took it from the common notion. If therefore we ought to look for such things, why do ye vex yourselves? Why, after ye have endured the painful, do ye despond as to the good? The distasteful things which ye had to endure, ye endured: do not then despond as to the recompense.

He speaks as to runners, and boxers, and warriors. Seest thou how he arms them, how he encourages them? “Walk straight,” he says. Here he speaks with reference to their thoughts; that is to say, not doubting. For if the chastisement be of love, if it begin from loving care, if it end with a good result (and this he proves both by facts and by words, and by all considerations), why are ye dispirited? For such are they who despair, who are not strengthened by the hope of the future. “Walk straight,” he says, that your lameness may not be increased, but brought back to its former condition. For he that runs when he is lame, galls the sore place. Seest thou that it is in our power to be thoroughly healed?

[2.] Verse 14. *“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”* What he also said above, “Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together” (c. 10:25), he hints at in this place also. For nothing so especially makes persons easily vanquished and subdued in temptations, as isolation. For, tell me, scatter a phalanx in war, and the enemy will need no trouble, but will take them prisoners, coming on them separately, and thereby the more helpless.

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness" (he says). Therefore with the evil-doers as well? "If it be possible," he says, "as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." (Romans 12:18) For thy part (he means) "live peaceably," doing no harm to religion: but in whatever thou art ill-treated, bear it nobly. For the bearing with evil is a great weapon in trials. Thus Christ also made His disciples strong by saying, "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves," (Matthew 10:16) What dost Thou say? Are we "among wolves," and dost Thou bid us to be "as sheep," and "as doves"? Yea, He says. For nothing so shames him that is doing us evil, as bearing nobly the things which are brought upon us: and not avenging ourselves either by word or by deed. This both makes us more philosophical ourselves and procures a greater reward, and also benefits them. But has such an one been insolent? Do thou bless [him]. See how much thou wilt gain from this: thou hast quenched the evil, thou hast procured to thyself a reward, thou hast made him ashamed, and thou hast suffered nothing serious.

[3.] "Follow peace with all men, and holiness." What does he mean by "holiness"? Chaste, and orderly living in marriage. If any person is unmarried (he says) let him remain pure, let him marry: or if he be married, let him not commit fornication, but let him live with his own wife: for this also is "holiness." How? Marriage is not "holiness," but marriage preserves the holiness which [proceeds] from Faith, not permitting union with a harlot. For "marriage is honorable" (c. 13:4), not holy. Marriage is pure: it does not however also give holiness, except by forbidding the defilement of that [holiness] which has been given by our Faith.

"Without which" (he says) "no man shall see the Lord." Which he also says in the [Epistle] to the Corinthians. "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor idolaters, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor covetous persons, nor thieves, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) For how shall he who has become the body of a harlot, how shall he be able to be the body of Christ?

[4.] Verse 15. *"Looking diligently test any man come short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby*

many be defiled: lest there be any fornicator or profane person." Dost thou see how everywhere he puts the common salvation into the hands of each individual? "Exhorting one another daily" (he says) "while it is called Today." (c. 3:13) Do not then cast all [the burden] on your teachers; do not [cast] all upon them who have the rule over you: ye also (he means) are able to edify one another. Which also he said in writing to the Thessalonians, "Edify one another, even as also ye do." (1 Thessalonians 5:11) And again, "Comfort one another with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4:18) This we also now exhort you.

[5.] If ye be willing, ye will have more success with each other than we can have. For ye both are with one another for a longer time, and ye know more than we of each other's affairs, and ye are not ignorant of each other's failings, and ye have more freedom of speech, and love, and intimacy; and these are no small [advantages] for teaching, but great and opportune introductions for it: ye will be more able than we both to reprove and to exhort. And not this only, but because I am but one, whereas ye are many; and ye will be able, however many, to be teachers. Wherefore I entreat you, do not "neglect this gift." (1 Timothy 4:14) Each one of you has a wife, has a friend, has a servant, has a neighbor; let him reprove him, let him exhort him.

For how is it not absurd, with regard to [bodily] nourishment, to make associations for messing together, and for drinking together, and to have a set day whereon to club with one another, as they say, and to make up by the association what each person being alone by himself fails short of — as for instance, if it be necessary to go to a funeral, or to a dinner, or to assist a neighbor in any matter — and not to do this for the purpose of instruction in virtue? Yea, I entreat you, let no man neglect it. For great is the reward he receives from God. And that thou mayest understand, he who was entrusted with the five talents is the teacher: and he with the one is the learner. If the learner should say, I am a learner, I run no risk, and should hide the reason, which he received of God, that common and simple [reason], and give no advice, should not speak plainly, should not rebuke, should not admonish, if he is able, but should bury [his talents] in the earth (for truly that heart is earth and ashes, which hides the gift of God): if then he hides it either from indolence, or from wickedness, it will be no defense to him to say, 'I had but one talent.' Thou hadst one talent. Thou

aughtest then to have brought one besides, and to have doubled the talent. If thou hadst brought one in addition, thou wouldst not have been blamed. For neither did He say to him who brought the two, Wherefore hast thou not brought five? But He accounted him of the same worth with him who brought the five. Why? Because he gained as much as he had. And, because he had received fewer than the one entrusted with the five, he was not on this account negligent, nor did he use the smallness [of his trust, as an excuse] for idleness. And thou aughtest not to have looked to him who had the two; or rather, thou aughtest to have looked to him, and as he having two imitated him who had five, so aughtest thou to have emulated him who had two. For if for him who has means and does not give, there is punishment, how shall there not be the greatest punishment for him who is able to exhort in any way, and does it not? In the former case the body is nourished, in the latter the soul; there thou preventest temporal death, here eternal.

[6.] But I have no [skill of] speech, you say. But there is no need of [skill of] speech nor of eloquence. If thou see a friend going into fornication, say to him, Thou art going after an evil thing; art thou not ashamed? Dost thou not blush? This is wrong. ‘Why, does he not know’ (you say) ‘that it is wrong?’ Yes, but he is dragged on by lust. They that are sick also know that it is bad to drink cold water, nevertheless they need persons who shall hinder [them from it]. For he who is suffering, will not easily be able to help himself in his sickness. There is need therefore of thee who art in health, for his cure. And if he be not persuaded by thy words, watch for him as he goes away and hold him fist; peradventure he will be ashamed.

‘And what advantage is it’ (you say), ‘when he does this for my sake, and because he has been held back by me?’ Do not be too minute in thy calculations. For a while, by whatever means, withdraw him from his evil practice; let him be accustomed not to go off to that pit, whether through thee, or through any means whatever. When thou hast accustomed him not to go, then by taking him after he has gained breath a little thou wilt be able to teach him that he ought to do this for God’s sake, and not for man’s. Do not wish to make all right at once, since you cannot: but do it gently and by degrees.

If thou see him going off to drinking, or to parties where there is nothing but drunkenness, then also do the same; and again on the other hand entreat him, if he observe that thou hast any failing, to help thee and set thee right. For in this way, he will even of himself, bear reproof, when he sees both that thou needest reproofs as well, and that thou helpest him, not as one that had done everything right, nor as a teacher, but as a friend and a brother. Say to him, I have done thee a service, in reminding thee of things expedient: do thou also, whatever failing thou seest me have, hold me back, set me right. If thou see me irritable, if avaricious, restrain me, bind me by exhortation.

This is friendship; thus "brother aided by brother becomes a fortified city." (Proverbs 18:19) For not eating and drinking makes friendship: such friendship even robbers have and murderers. But if we are friends, if we truly care for one another, let us in these respects help one another. This leads us to a profitable friendship: let us hinder those things which lead away to hell.

[7.] Therefore let not him that is reproved be indignant: for we are men and we have failings; neither let him who reproves do it as exulting over him and making a display, but privately, with gentleness. He that reproves has need of greater gentleness, that thus he may persuade [them] to bear the cutting. Do you not see surgeons, when they burn, when they cut, with how great gentleness they apply their treatment? Much more ought those who reprove others to act thus. For reproof is sharper even than fire and knife, and makes [men] start. On this account surgeons take great pains to make them bear the cutting quietly, and apply it as tenderly as possible, even giving in a little, then giving time to take breath.

So ought we also to offer reproofs, that the reproved may not start away. Even if therefore, it be necessary to be insulted, yea even to be struck, let us not decline it. For those also who are cut [by the surgeons] utter numberless cries against those who are cutting them; they however heed none of these things, but only the health of the patients. So indeed in this case also we ought to do all things that our reproof may be effectual, to bear all things, looking to the reward which is in store.

"Bear ye one another's burdens," saith he, "and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2) So then, both reproving and bearing with one

another, shall we be able to fulfill edification. And thus will ye make the labor light for us, in all things taking a part with us, and stretching out a hand, and becoming sharers and partakers, both in one another's salvation, and each one in his own. Let us then endure patiently, both bearing "one another's burdens," and reproving: that we may attain to the good things promised in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, might, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 31

HEBREWS 12:14

***"Follow peace with all men, and holiness,
without which no one shall see the Lord."***

[1.] THERE are many things characteristic of Christianity: but more than all, and better than all, Love towards one another, and Peace. Therefore Christ also saith, "My peace I give unto you." (John 14:27) And again, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another." (John 13:35) Therefore Paul too says, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness," that is, purity, "without which no man shall see the Lord."

"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God." As if they were traveling together on some long journey, in a large company, he says, Take heed that no man be left behind: I do not seek this only, that ye should arrive yourselves, but also that ye should look diligently after the others.

"Lest any man" (he says) "fail of the grace of God." (He means the good things to come, the faith of the gospel, the best course of life: for they all are of" the Grace of God.") Do not tell me, It is [but] one that perisheth. Even for one Christ died. Hast thou no care for him "for whom Christ died"? (1 Corinthians 8:11)

"Looking diligently," he saith, that is, searching carefully, considering, thoroughly ascertaining, as is done in the case of sick persons, and in all ways examining, thoroughly ascertaining. "Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you." (Deuteronomy 29:18) This is found in Deuteronomy; and he derived it from the metaphor of plants. "Lest any root of bitterness," he says; which he said also in another place when he writes, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (1 Corinthians 5:6) Not for his sake alone do I wish this, he means, but also on account of the harm arising therefrom. That is to say, even if there be a root of this kind, do not suffer any shoot to come up, but let it be cut off, that it may not bear its proper fruits, that so it may not defile and pollute the others also. For, he

saith, “Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you; and by it many be defiled.”

And with good reason did he call sin “bitter”: for truly nothing is more bitter than sin, and they know it, who after they have committed it pine away under their conscience, who endure much bitterness. For being exceedingly bitter, it perverts the reasoning faculty itself. Such is the nature of what is bitter: it is unprofitable.

And well said he, “root of bitterness.” He said not, “bitter,” but “of bitterness.” For it is possible that a bitter root might bear sweet fruits; but it is not possible that a root and fountain and foundation of bitterness, should ever bear sweet fruit; for all is bitter, it has nothing sweet, all are bitter, all unpleasant, all full of hatred and abomination.

“And by this” (he says) “many be defiled.” That is, Cut off the lascivious persons.

[2.] Verse 16. *“Lest there be any fornicator: or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.”*

And wherein was Esau a “fornicator”? He does not say that Esau was a fornicator. “Lest there be any fornicator,” he says, then, “follow after holiness: lest there be any, as Esau, profane”: that is, gluttonous, without self-control, worldly, selling away things spiritual.

“Who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright,” who through his own slothfulness sold this honor which he had from God, and for a little pleasure, lost the greatest honor and glory. This was suitable to them. This [was the conduct] of an abominable, of an unclean person. So that not only is the fornicator unclean, but also the glutton, the slave of his belly. For he also is a slave of a different pleasure. He is forced to be overreaching, he is forced to be rapacious, to behave himself unseemly in ten thousand ways, being the slave of that passion, and oftentimes he blasphemes. So he accounted “his birthright” to be nothing worth. That is, providing for temporary refreshment, he went even to the [sacrifice of his] “birthright.” So henceforth “the birthright” belongs to us, not to the Jews. And at the same time also this is added to their calamity, that the first is become last, and the second, first: the one, for courageous endurance; the other last for indolence.

[3.] Verse 17. *"For ye know" (he says) "how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected. For he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."* What now is this? Doth he indeed exclude repentance? By no means. 'But how, you say, was it that "he found no place of repentance"?' For if he condemned himself, if he made a great wailing, why did he "find no place of repentance"? Because it was not really a case of repentance. For as the grief of Cain was not of repentance, and the murder proved it; so also in this case, his words were not those of repentance, and the murder afterwards proved it. For even he also in intention slew Jacob. For "The days of mourning for my father," he said, "are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob." (Genesis 27:41) "Tears" had not power to give him "repentance." And [the Apostle] did not say "by repentance" simply, but even "with tears, he found no place of repentance." Why now? Because he did not repent as he ought, for this is repentance he repented not as it behooved him.

For how is it that he [the Apostle] said this? How did he exhort them again after they had become "sluggish" (c. 6:12)? How, when they were become "lame"? How, when they were "paralyzed" (verse 13)? How, when they were "relaxed" (verse 12)? For this is the beginning of a fall. He seems to me to hint at some fornicators amongst them, but not to wish at that time to correct them: but feigns ignorance that they might correct themselves. For it is right at first indeed to pretend ignorance: but afterwards, when they continue [in sin], then to add reproof also, that so they may not become shameless. Which Moses also did in the case of Zimri and the daughter of Cosbi.

"For he found" (he says) "no place of repentance," he found not repentance; or that he sinned beyond repentance. There are then sins beyond repentance. His meaning is, Let us not fall by an incurable fall. So long as it is a matter of lameness, it is easy to become upright: but if we turn out of the way, what will be left? For it is to those who have not yet fallen that he thus discourses, striking them with terror, and says that it is not possible for him who is fallen to obtain consolation; but to those who have fallen, that they may not fall into despair, he says the contrary, speaking thus, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ he formed in you." (Galatians 4:19) And again, "Whosoever of you are justified by the Law, are fallen from Grace." (Galatians 5:4) Lo! he

testifies that they had fallen away. For he that standeth, hearing that it is not possible to obtain pardon after having fallen, will be more zealous, and more cautious about his standing: if however thou use the same violence towards one also who is fallen, he will never rise again. For by what hope will he show forth the change?

But he not only wept (you say), but also sought earnestly." He does not then exclude repentance; but makes them careful not to fall.

[4.] As many then as do not believe in Hell, let them call these things to mind: as many as think to sin without being punished, let them take account of these things. Why did Esau not obtain pardon? Because he repented not as he ought. Wouldest thou see perfect repentance? Hear of the repentance of Peter after his denial. For the Evangelist in relating to us the things concerning him, says, "And he went out and wept bitterly." (Matthew 26:75) Therefore even such a sin was forgiven him, because he repented as he ought. Although the Victim had not yet been offered, nor had The Sacrifice as yet been made, nor was sin as yet-taken away, it still had the rule and sovereignty.

And that thou mayest learn, that this denial [arose] not so much from sloth, as from His being forsaken of God, who was teaching him to know the measures of man and not to contradict the sayings of the Master, nor to be more high-minded than the rest, but to know that nothing can be done without God, and that "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it" (Psalm 127:1): therefore also Christ said to him alone, "Satan desired to sift thee as wheat," and I allowed it not, "that thy faith may not fail." (Luke 22:31, 32) For since it was likely that he would be high-minded, being conscious to himself that he loved Christ more than they all, therefore "he wept bitterly"; and he did other things after his weeping, of the same character. For what did he do? After this he exposed himself to dangers innumerable, and by many means showed his manliness and courage.

Judas also repented, but in an evil way: for he hanged himself. Esau too repented; as I said; or rather, he did not even repent; for his tears were not [tears] of repentance, but rather of pride and wrath. And what followed proved this. The blessed David repented, thus saying, "Every night will I wash my bed: I will water my conch with my tears." (Psalm 6:6) And the

sin which had been committed long ago, after so many years, after so many generations he bewailed, as if it had recently occurred.

[5.] For he who repents ought not to be angry, nor to be fierce, but to be contrite, as one condemned, as not having boldness, as one on whom sentence has been passed, as one who ought to be saved by mercy alone, as one who has shown himself ungrateful toward his Benefactor, as unthankful, as reprobate, as worthy of punishments innumerable. If he considers these things, he will not be angry, he will not be indignant, but will mourn, will weep, will groan, and lament night and day.

He that is penitent ought never to forget his sin, but on the one hand, to beseech God not to remember it; while on the other, he himself never forgets it. If we remember it, God will forget it. Let us exact punishment from ourselves; let us accuse ourselves; thus shall we propitiate the Judge. For sin confessed becomes less, but not confessed worse. For if sin add to itself shamelessness and ingratitude, how will he who does not know that he sinned before be at all able to guard himself from falling again into the same [evils]?

Let us then not deny [our sins], I beseech you, nor be shameless, that we may not unwillingly pay the penalty. Cain heard God say, “Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not; am I my brother’s keeper?” (Genesis 4:9) Seest thou how this made his sin more grievous? But his father did not act thus. What then? When he heard,” Adam, where art thou?” (Genesis 3:9), he said, “I heard Thy voice, and I was afraid, because I am naked, and I hid myself.” (Genesis 3:10) It is a great good to acknowledge our sins, and to bear them in mind continually. Nothing so effectually cures a fault, as a continual remembrance of it. Nothing makes a man so slow to wickedness.

[6.] I know that conscience starts back, and endures not to be scourged by the remembrance of evil deeds; but hold tight thy soul and place a muzzle on it. For like an ill-broken horse, so it bears impatiently [what is put upon it], and is unwilling to persuade itself that it has sinned: but all this is the work of Satan. But let us persuade it that it has sinned; let us persuade it that it has sinned, that it may also repent, in order that having repented it may escape torment. How dost thou think to obtain pardon for thy sins, tell me, when thou hast not yet confessed them? Assuredly he is worthy

of compassion and kindness who has sinned. But thou who hast not yet persuaded thyself [that thou hast sinned], how dost thou think to be pitied, when thou art thus without shame for some things?

Let us persuade ourselves that we have sinned. Let us say it not with the tongue only, but also with the mind. Let us not call ourselves sinners, but also count over our sins, going over them each specifically. I do not say to thee, Make a parade of thyself, nor accuse thyself before others: but be persuaded by the prophet when he saith, "Reveal thy way unto the Lord." (Psalm 37:5) Confess these things before God. Confess before the Judge thy sins with prayer; if not with tongue, yet in memory, and be worthy of mercy.

If thou keep thy sins continually in remembrance, thou wilt never bear in mind the wrongs of thy neighbor. I do not say, if thou art persuaded that thou art thyself a sinner; this does not avail so to humble the soul, as sins themselves [taken] by themselves, and examined specifically. Thou wilt have no remembrance of wrongs [done thee], if thou hast these things continually in remembrance; thou wilt feel no anger, thou wilt not revile, thou wilt have no high thoughts, thou wilt not fall again into the same [sins], thou wilt be more earnest towards good things.

[7.] Seest thou how many excellent [effects] are produced from the remembrance of our sins? Let us then write them in our minds. I know that the soul does not endure a recollection which is so bitter: but let us constrain and force it. It is better that it should be gnawed with the remembrance now, than at that time with vengeance.

Now, if thou remember them, and continually present them before God (see p. 448), and pray for them, thou wilt speedily blot them out; but if thou forget them now, thou wilt then be reminded of them even against thy will, when they are brought out publicly before the whole world, displayed before all, both friends and enemies, and Angels. For surely He did not say to David only, "What thou didst secretly, I will make manifest to" (2 Samuel 12:12) all, but even to us all. Thou wert afraid of men (he said) and respected them more than God; and God seeing thee, thou caredst not, but wert ashamed before men. For it says, "the eyes of men, this is their fear." Therefore thou shalt suffer punishment in that very point; for I will reprove thee, setting thy sins before the eyes of all. For

that this is true, and that in that day the sins of us all are [to be] publicly displayed, unless we now do them away by continual remembrance, hear how cruelty and inhumanity are publicly exposed, “I was an hungered” (He says) “gave Me no meat.” and ye (Matthew 25:42) When are these things said? Is it in a corner? Is it in a secret place? By no means. When then? “When the Son of Man shall come in His glory” (Matthew 25:31, 32), and “all the nations” are gathered together, when He has separated the one from the other, then will He speak in the audience of all, and will “set” them “on His right hand” and “on” His “left” (Matthew 25:33): “I was an hungered and ye gave Me no meat.”

See again the five virgins also, hearing before all, “I know you not.” (Matthew 25:12) For the five and five do not set forth the number of five only, but those virgins who are wicked and cruel and inhuman, and those who are not such. So also he that buried his one talent, heard before all, even of those who had brought the five and the two, “Thou wicked and slothful servant.” (Matthew 25:26) But not by words alone, but by deeds also does He then convict them: even as the Evangelist also says, “They shall look on Him whom they pierced.” (John 19:37) For the resurrection shall be of all at the same time, of sinners and of the righteous. At the same time shall He be present to all in the judgment.

[8.] Consider therefore who they are who shall then be in dismay, who in grief, who dragged away to the fire, while the others are crowned. “Come” (He says), “ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom which hath been prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Matthew 25:34) And again, “Depart from Me into the fire which hath been prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matthew 25:41)

Let us not merely hear the words but writes them also before our sight, and let us imagine Him to be now present and saying these things, and that we are led away to that fire. What heart shall we have? What consolation? And what, when we are cut asunder? And what when we are accused of rapacity? What excuse shall we have to utter? What specious argument? None: but of necessity bound, bending down, we must be dragged to the mouths of the furnace, to the river of fire, to the darkness, to the never-dying punishments, and entreat no one. For it is not, it is not possible, He says, to pass across from this side to that: for “there is a

great gulf betwixt us and you" (Luke 16:26), and it is not possible even for those who wish it to go across, and stretch out a helping hand: but we must needs burn continually, no one aiding us, even should it be father or mother, or any whosoever, yea though he have much boldness toward God. For, it says, "A brother doth not redeem; shall man redeem?" (Psalm 49:8)

Since then it is not possible to have one's hopes of salvation in another, but [it must be] in one's self after the loving-kindness of God, let us do all things, I entreat you, so that our conduct may be pure, and our course of life the best, and that it may not receive any stain even from the beginning. But if not, at all events, let us not sleep after the stain, but continue always washing away the pollution by repentance, by tears, by prayers, by works of mercy.

What then, you say, if I cannot do works of mercy? But thou hast "a cup of cold water" (Matthew 10:42), however poor thou art. But thou hast "two mites" (Mark 12:42), in whatever poverty thou art; but thou hast feet, so as to visit the sick, so as to enter into a prison; but thou hast a roof, so as to receive strangers. For there is no pardon, no, none for him who does not do works of mercy.

These things we say to you continually, that we may effect if it be but a little by the continued repetition: these things we say, not caring so much for those who receive the benefits, as for yourselves. For ye give to them indeed things here, but in return you receive heavenly things: which may we all obtain, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father be glory, together with the Holy Ghost, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 32

HEBREWS 12:18-24

"For ye are not come unto a fire that might be touched and that burned, and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more. (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned. And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.) But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of Angels, to the general assembly, and Church of the first-born which are written in Heaven; and to God the Judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect: and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant: and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

[1.] WONDERFUL indeed were the things in the Temple, the Holy of Holies; and again awful were those things also that were done at Mount Sins, "the fire, the darkness, the blackness, the tempest." (Cf. Deuteronomy 33:2) For, it says, "God appeared in Sins," and long ago were these things celebrated. The New Covenant, however, was not given with any of these things, but has been given in simple discourse by God.

See then how he makes the comparison in these points also. And with good reason has he put them afterwards. For when he had persuaded them by innumerable [arguments], when he had also shown the difference between each covenant, then afterwards, the one having been already condemned, he easily enters on these points also.

And what says he? "For ye are not come unto a fire that might be touched, and that burned, and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more."

These things, he means, are terrible; and so terrible that they could not even bear to hear them, that not even "a beast" dared to go up. (But things that come hereafter are not such. For what is Sins to Heaven? And what the "fire which might be touched" to God who cannot be touched? For

"God is a consuming fire." — c. 5:29) For it is said, "Let not God speak, but let Moses speak unto us. And so fearful was that which was commanded, Though even a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned; Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." (Exodus 20:19) What wonder as respects the people? He himself who entered into "the darkness where God was," saith, "I exceedingly fear and quake." (Exodus 20:21)

[2.] "But ye are come unto Mount Sion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem: and to an innumerable company of angels and to the general assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better [things] hun that of Abel."

Instead of "Moses," Jesus. Instead of the people, "myriads of angels."

Of what "first-born" does he speak? Of the faithful.

"And to the spirits of just men made perfect." With these shall ye be, he says.

"And to Jesus the mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better [things] than that of Abel." Did then the [blood] "of Abel" speak? "Yea," he saith, "and by it he being dead yet speaketh." (c. 11:4) And again God says, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me." (Genesis 4:10) Either this [meaning] or that; because it is still even now celebrated: but not in such way as that of Christ. For this has cleansed all men, and sends forth a voice more clear and more distinct, in proportion as it has greater testimony, namely that by facts.

Verse 25-29. *"See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not, who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven. Whose voice then shook the earth: but now hath He promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we*

serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire."

[3.] Fearful were those things, but these are far more admirable and glorious. For here there is not "darkness," nor "blackness," nor "tempest." It seems to me that by these words he hints at the obscurity of the Old [Testament], and the overshadowed and veiled character of the Law. And besides the Giver of the Law appears in fire terrible, and apt to punish those who transgress.

But what are "the sounds of the trumpet"? Probably it is as though some King were coming. This at all events will also be at the second coming. "At the last trump" (1 Corinthians 15:52) all must be raised. But it is the trumpet of His voice which effects this. At that time then all things were objects of sense, and sights, and sounds; now all are objects of understanding, and invisible.

And, it says, "there was much smoke." (See Exodus 19:18) For since God is said to be fire, and appeared thus in the bush, He indicates the fire even by the smoke. And what is "the blackness and the darkness"? He again expresses its fearfulness. Thus Isaiah also says; "And the house was filled with smoke." (Isaiah 6:4) And what is the object of "the tempest"? The human race was careless. It was therefore needful that they should be aroused by these things. For no one was so dull as not to have had his thoughts raised up, when these things were done, and the Law ordained.

"Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice" (Exodus 19:19): for it was necessary that the voice of God should be uttered. Inasmuch as He was about to promulgate His Law through Moses, therefore He makes him worthy of confidence. They saw him not, because of the thick darkness: they heard him not, because of the weakness of his voice. What then? "God answered by a voice," addressing the multitude: yea and his name shall be called.

"They entreated" (he says) "that the word should not be spoken to them any more."

From the first therefore they were themselves the cause of God's being manifested through the Flesh. Let Moses speak with us, and "Let not God speak with us." (Exodus 20:9) They who make comparisons elevate the

one side the more, that they may show the other to be far greater. In this respect also our [privileges] are more gentle and more admirable. For they are great in a twofold respect: because while they are glorious and greater, they are more accessible. This he says also in the Epistle to the Corinthians: “with unveiled countenance” (2 Corinthians 3:18), and, “not as Moses put a veil over his face.” (2 Corinthians 3:13) They, he means, were not counted worthy of what we [are]. For of what were they thought worthy? They saw “darkness, blackness”; they heard “a voice.” Put thou also hast heard a voice, not through darkness, but through flesh. Thou hast not been disturbed, neither troubled, but thou hast stood and held discourse with the Mediator.

And in another way, by the “darkness” he shows the invisibleness. “And darkness” (it says) “was under His feet.” (Psalm 18:9)

Then even Moses feared, but now no one.

As the people then stood below, so also do we. They were not below, but below Heaven. The Son is near to God, but not as Moses,

There was a wilderness, here a city.

[4.] “And to an innumerable company of angels.” Here he shows the joy, the delight, in place of the “blackness” and “darkness” and “tempest.”

“And to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all.” They did not draw near, but stood afar off, even Moses: but “ye are come near.”

Here he makes them fear, by saying, “And to God the Judge of all”; not of the Jews alone, and the faithful, but even of the whole world.

“And to the spirits of just men made perfect.” He means the souls of those who are approved.

“And to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant: and to the blood of sprinkling,” that is, of purification, “which speaketh better things than that of Abel.” And if the blood speaks, much more does He who, having been slain, lives. But what does it speak? “The Spirit also” (he says) “speaketh with groanings which cannot be uttered.” (Romans 8:26) How

does He speak? Whenever He falls into a sincere mind, He raises it up and makes it speak.

[5.] “See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh”; that is, that ye reject [Him] not. “For if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth.” Whom does he mean? Moses, I suppose. But what he says is this: if they, having “refused Him “when He gave laws “on earth, did not escape,” how shall we refuse Him, when He gives laws from Heaven? He declares here not that He is another; far from it. He does not set forth One and Another, but He appears terrible, when uttering His Voice “from Heaven.” It is He Himself then, both the one and the other: but the One is terrible. For he expresses not a difference of Persons but of the gift. Whence does this appear? “For if they escaped not,” he says, “who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven.” What then? Is this one different from the other? How then does he say, “whose voice then shook the earth”? For it was the “voice” of Him who “then” gave the Law, which “shook the earth. But now hath He promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things which are shaken, as of things that are made.” All things therefore will be taken away, and will be compacted anew for the better. For this is what he suggests here. Why then dost thou grieve when thou sufferest in a world that abideth not; when thou art afflicted in a world which will very shortly have passed away? If our rest were [to be] in the latter period of the world, then one ought to be afflicted in looking to the end.

“That” (he says) “those which cannot be shaken may remain.” But of what sort are “those things which cannot be shaken”? The things to come.

[6.] Let us then do all for this, that we may attain that [rest], that we may enjoy those good things. Yea, I pray and beseech you, let us be earnest for this. No one builds in a city which is going to fall down. Tell me, I pray you, if any one said that after a year, this city would fall, but such a city not at all, wouldest thou have built in that which was about to fall? So I also now say this, Let us not build in this world; it will fall after a little, and all will be destroyed. But why do I say, It will fall? Before its fall we

shall be destroyed, and suffer what is fearful; we shall be removed from them.

Why build we upon the sand? Let us build upon the rock: for whatsoever may happen, that building remains impregnable, nothing will be able to destroy it. With good reason. For to all such attacks that region is inaccessible, just as this is accessible. For earthquakes, and fires, and inroad of enemies, take it away from us even while we are alive: and oftentimes destroy us with it.

And even in case it remains, disease speedily removes us, or if we stay, suffers us not to enjoy it fairly. For what pleasure [is there], where there are sicknesses, and false accusations, and envy, and intrigues? Or should there be none of these things, yet oftentimes if we have no children, we are disquieted, we are impatient, not having any to whom we may leave houses and all other things; and thenceforward we pine away as laboring for others. Yea oftentimes too the inheritance passes away to our enemies, not only after we are gone, but even while we live. What is more miserable then than to toil for enemies, and ourselves to be gathering sins together in order that they may have rest? And many are the instances of this that are seen in our cities. And yet [I say no more] lest I should grieve those who have been despoiled. For I could have mentioned some of them even by name, and have had many histories to tell, and many houses to show you, which have received for masters the enemies of those who labored for them: nay not houses only, but slaves also and the whole inheritance have oftentimes come round to enemies. For such are things human.

But in Heaven there is nothing of this to fear, — lest after a man is dead, his enemy should come, and succeed to his inheritance. For there is neither death nor enmity; the tabernacles of the saints are permanent abodes; and among those saints is exultation, joy, gladness. For “the voice of rejoicing” (it is said) is “in the tabernacles of the righteous.” (Psalm 118:15) They are eternal, having no end. They do not fall down through age, they do not change their owners, but stand continually in their best estate. With good reason. For there is nothing corruptible, nor perishable there, but all is immortal, and undefiled. On this building let us exhaust all our wealth. We have no need of carpenters nor of laborers. The hands of the poor build such houses; the lame, the blind, the maimed, they build those houses.

And wonder not, since they procure even a kingdom for us, and give us confidence towards God.

[7.] For mercifulness is as it were a most excellent art, and a protector of those who labor at it. For it is dear to God, and ever stands near Him readily asking favor for whomsoever it will, if only it be not wronged by us; And it is wronged, when we do it by extortion. (See p. 481) So, if it be pure, it gives great confidence to those who offer it up. It intercedes even for those who have offended, so great is its power, even for those who have sinned. It breaks the chains, disperses the darkness, quenches the fire, kills the worm, drives away the gnashing of teeth. The gates of heaven open to it with great security: And as when a Queen is entering, no one of the guards stationed at the doors dares to inquire who she is, and whence, but all straightway receive her; so also indeed with mercifulness. For she is truly a queen indeed, making men like God. For, he says, "ye shall be merciful, as your Heavenly Father is merciful." (Luke 6:36)

She is winged and buoyant, having golden pinions, with a flight which greatly delights the angels. There, it is said, are "the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her back with the yellowness of gold." (Psalm 68:13) As some dove golden and living, she flies, with gentle look, and mild eye. Nothing is better than that eye. The peacock is beautiful, but in comparison of her, is a jackdaw. So beautiful and worthy of admiration is this bird. She continually looks upwards; she is surrounded abundantly with God's glory: she is a virgin with golden wings, decked out, with a fair and mild countenance. She is winged, and buoyant, standing by the royal throne. When we are judged, she suddenly flies in, and shows herself, and rescues us from punishment, sheltering us with her own wings.

God would have her rather than sacrifices. Much does He discourse concerning her: so He loves her. "He will relieve" (it is said) "the widow" and "the fatherless" (Psalm 146:9) and the poor. God wishes to be called from her. "The Lord is pitiful and merciful, long-suffering, and of great mercy" (Psalm 145:8), and true. The mercy of God is over all the earth. She hath saved the race of mankind (see Psalm 145:9): For unless she had pitied us, all things would have perished. "When we were enemies" (see Romans 5:10), she "reconciled" us, she wrought innumerable blessings; she

persuaded the Son of God to become a slave, and to empty Himself [of His glory]. (Philippians 2:7)

Let us earnestly emulate her by whom we have been saved; let us love her, let us prize her before wealth, and apart from wealth, let us have a merciful soul. Nothing is so characteristic of a Christian, as mercy. There is nothing which both unbelievers and all men so admire, as when we are merciful. For oftentimes we are ourselves also in need of this mercy, and say to God "Have mercy upon us, after Thy great goodness." (Psalm 51:1) Let us begin first ourselves: or rather it is not we that begin first. For He has Himself already shown His mercy towards us: yet at least let us follow second. For if men have mercy on a merciful man, even if he has done innumerable wrongs, much more does God.

[8.] Hear the prophet saying, "But I" (his words are) "am like a fruitful olive tree in the house of God." (Psalm 52:8) Let us become such: let us become "as an olive tree": let us be laden on every side with the commandments. For it is not enough to be as an olive tree, but also to be fruitful. For there are persons who in doing alms give little, [only once] in the course of the whole year, or in each week, or who give away a mere chance matter. These are indeed olive trees, but not fruitful ones, but even withered. For because they show compassion they are olive trees, but because they do it not liberally, they are not fruitful olive trees. But let us be fruitful.

I have often said and I say now also: the greatness of the charity is not shown by the measure of what is given, but by the disposition of the giver. You know the case of the widow. It is well continually to bring this example [forward], that not even the poor man may despair of himself, when he looks on her who threw in the two mites. Some contributed even hair in the fitting up of the temple, and not even these were rejected. (Exodus 35:23) But if when they had gold, they had brought hair, they [would have been] accursed: but if, having this only, they brought it, they were accepted. For this cause Cain also was blamed, not because he offered worthless things, but because they were the most worthless he had. "Accursed" (it is said) "is he which hath a male, and sacrificeth unto God a corrupt thing." (Malachi 1:14) He did not speak absolutely, but, "he that hath" (he says) and spareth [it]. If then a man have nothing, he is

freed from blame, or rather he has a reward. For what is of less value than two farthings, or more worthless than hair? What than a pint of meal? But nevertheless these were approved equally with the calves and the gold. For “a man is accepted according to that he hath, not according to that he hath not.” (2 Corinthians 8:12) And, it says, “according as thy hand hath, do good.” (Proverbs 3:27)

Wherefore, I entreat you, let us readily empty out what we have for the poor. Even if it be little we shall receive the same reward with them who have cast the most; or rather, more than those who cast in ten thousand talents. If we do these things we shall obtain the unspeakable treasures of God; if we not only hear, but practice also, if we do not praise [charity], but also show [it] by our deeds. Which may we all attain, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, might, honor, now and for ever and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 33

HEBREWS 12:28, 29

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace [or gratitude,] whereby we serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire."

[1.] IN another place he says the same, "for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2. Corinthians 4:18); and from this makes an exhortation with regard to the evils which we endure in this present life; and here he does this, and says, let us continue steadfast; "let us have thankfulness," i.e., let us give thanks unto God. For not only we ought not to be discouraged at present things, but even to show the greatest gratitude to Him, for those to come.

"Whereby we serve God acceptably," that is to say, 'for thus is it possible to serve God acceptably,' by giving him thanks in all things. "Do all things" (he says) "without murmurings and disputings." (Philippians 2:14) For whatever work a man does with murmuring, he cuts away and loses his reward; as the Israelites — how great a penalty they paid for their murmurings. Wherefore he says, "Neither murmur ye." (1 Corinthians 10:10) It is not therefore possible to "serve" Him "acceptably" without a sense of gratitude to Him for all things, both for our trials, and the alleviations of them. That is, let us utter nothing hasty, nothing disrespectful, but let us humble ourselves that we may be reverential. For this is "with reverence and godly fear."

Chapter 13:1, 2. *"Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful of hospitality, for hereby some have entertained angels unawares."* See how he enjoins them to preserve what they had: he does not add other things. He did not say, "Be loving as brethren," but, "Let brotherly love continue." And again, he did not say, "Be hospitable," as if they were not, but, "Be not forgetful of hospitality," for this was likely to happen owing to their afflictions.

Therefore (he says) "some have entertained angels unawares." Seest thou how great was the honor, how great the gain!

What is "unawares"? They entertained them without knowing it. Therefore the reward also was great, because he entertained them, not knowing that they were Angels. For if he had known it, it would have been nothing wonderful. Some say that he here alludes to Lot also.

[2.] Verse 3-5. *"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them, them which suffer adversity as being yourselves also in the body. Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. Let your conversation be without covetousness: being content with such things as ye have."*

See how large is his discourse concerning chastity. "Follow peace," he said, "and holiness; Lest there be any fornicator or profane person" (c. 12:14); and again, "Fornicators and adulterers God will judge." (c. 12:16) In every case, the prohibition is with a penalty. "Follow peace with all men," he says, "and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: But fornicators and adulterers God will judge."

And having first set down "Marriage is honorable in all men, and the bed undefiled," he shows that he rightly added what follows. For if marriage has been conceded, justly is the fornicator punished, justly does the adulterer suffer vengeance.

Here he strips for the heretics. He did not say again, Let no one be a fornicator; but having said it once for all, he then went on as with a general exhortation, and not as directing himself against them.

"Let your conversation be without covetousness," he says. He did not say, Possess nothing, but, "Let your conversation be without covetousness": that is, let it show forth the philosophical character of your mind. [And it will show it, if we do not seek superfluities, if we keep only to what is necessary.] For he says above also, "And ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods." (c. 10:34) He gives these exhortations, that they might not be covetous.

"Being content" (he says) "with such things as ye have." Then here also the consolation; (verse 5) "For He" (he says) "hath said, I will never leave

thee nor forsake thee"; (verse 6) "so that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Again consolation in their trials.

[3.] Verse 7. *"Remember them which have the rule over you."* This he was laboring to say above: therefore "Follow peace with all men." (c. 12:14) He gave this exhortation also to the Thessalonians, to "hold them in honor exceedingly." (1 Thessalonians 5:13)

"Remember" (he says) "them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." What kind of following is this? Truly the best: for he says, beholding their life, "follow their faith." For from a pure life [cometh] faith.

Or else by "faith," he means steadfastness. How so? Because they believe in the things to come. For they would not have shown forth a pure life, if they had questioned about the things to come, if they had doubted. So that here also he is applying a remedy to the same [evil].

Verse 8, 9. *"Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established with grace, not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein."*

In these words, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today and for ever," "yesterday" means all the time that is past: "today," the present: "for ever," the endless which is to come. That is to say: Ye have heard of an High Priest, but not an High Priest who fails. He is always the same. As though there were some who said, 'He is not, another will come,' he says this, that He who was "yesterday and to-day," is "the same also for ever." For even now the Jews say, that another will come; and having deprived themselves of Him that is will fall into the hands of Antichrist.

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines." Not "with strange doctrines" only, but neither with "divers ones."

"For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace, not with meats which have not profited them that have been occupied therein." Here he gently hints at those who introduce the observance of "meats."

For by Faith all things are pure. There is need then of Faith, not of "meats."

For (verse 10) "we have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the Tabernacle." Not as the Jewish [ordinances], are those among us, as it is not lawful even for the High Priest to partake of them. So that since he had said, "Do not observe," and this seemed to be [the language] of one who is throwing down his own building, he again turns it round. What, have not we then observances as well (he says)? [Yea we have], and we observe them very earnestly too, not sharing them even with the priests themselves.

[4.] Verse 11, 12. *"For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the High Priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered" (he says) "without the gate."* Seest thou the type shining forth? "For sin," he says, and "suffered without the gate." (Verse 13) "Let us go forth therefore to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach," that is, suffering the same things; having communion with Him in His sufferings. He was crucified without as a condemned person: neither let us then be ashamed to "go forth out" [of the world].

Verse 14, 15. *"For we have here no continuing city" (he says) "but we seek one to come. By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His Name."*

"By Him," as by an High Priest, according to the flesh. "Giving thanks" (be says) "to His Name." (See p. 514) Let us utter nothing blasphemous, nothing hasty, nothing bold, nothing presumptuous, nothing desperate. This is "with reverence and godly fear." (c. 12:28) For a soul in tribulations becomes desponding, and reckless. But let not us [be so]. See here he again says the same thing which he said before, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together," for so shall we be able to do all things with reverence. For oftentimes even out of respect for men, we refrain from doing many evil things.

Verse 16. *"But to do good and to communicate forget not."*

I speak not [merely] with reference to the brethren present, but to those absent also. But if others have plundered your property, display your

hospitality out of such things as ye have. What excuse then shall we have henceforward, when they, even after the spoiling of their goods, were thus admonished?

[5.] And he did not say, "Be not forgetful" of the entertaining of strangers, but "of hospitality": that is, do not merely entertain strangers, but [do it] with love for the strangers. Moreover he did not speak of the recompense that is future, and in store for us, lest he should make them more supine, but of that already given. For "thereby some" (he says) "have entertained angels unawares."

But let us see in what sense "Marriage is honorable in all and the bed undefiled." Because (he means) it preserves the believer in chastity. Here he also alludes to the Jews, because they accounted the woman after childbirth polluted: and "whosoever comes from the bed," it is said, "is not clean." Those things are not polluted which arise from nature O ungrateful and senseless Jew, but those which arise from choice. For if "marriage is honorable" and pure, why forsooth dost thou think that one is even polluted by it?

"Let your conversation" (he says) "be without covetousness": since many after having exhausted their property, afterwards wish to recover it again under the guise of alms, therefore he says, "Let your conversation be without covetousness"; that is, that we should be [desirous only] of what is necessary and indispensable. What then (you say) if we should not have a supply even of these? This is not possible; indeed it is not. "For He hath said," and He doth not lie, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we boldly say, The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Thou hast the promise from Himself: do not doubt henceforward. He has promised; make no question. But this, "I will never leave thee," he says not concerning money only, but concerning all other things also. "The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me"; with good reason.

This then also let us say in all temptations; let us laugh at human things, so long as we have God favorable to us. For as, when He is our enemy, it is no gain, though all men should be our friends, so when He is our friend, though all men together war against us, there is no harm. "I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

[6.] “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God.” In this place I think that he is speaking about assistance also. For this is [implied in the words] “who have spoken unto you the word of God.”

“Whose faith follow considering the end of their conversation.” What is, “considering”? Continually revolving, examining it by yourselves, reasoning, investigating accurately, testing it as you choose. “The end of their conversation,” that is, their conversation to the end: for “their conversation” had a good end.

“JESUS Christ the same yesterday and today and for ever.” Do not think that then indeed He wrought wonders, but now works no wonders. He is the same. This is, “remember them that have the rule over you.”

“Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.” “Strange,” that is, different from those ye heard from us; [“Divers”] that is, of all sorts: for they have no stability, but are different [one from another]. For especially manifold is the doctrine of meats.

“For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats.” These are the” divers,” these the “strange” [doctrines]: especially as Christ has said, “not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man, but that which cometh out.” (Matthew 15:11) And observe that he does not make bold to say this openly, but as it were by a hint. “For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace, not with meats.”

Faith is all. If that establishes [it], the heart stands in security. It follows that Faith establishes: consequently reasonings shake. For Faith is contrary to reasoning.

“Which” (he says) “have not profited them that have been occupied therein.” For what is the gain from the observance [of them], tell me. Does it not rather destroy? Does it not make such an one to be under sin? If it be necessary to observe [them], we must guard ourselves.

“Which” (he says) “have not profiled them that have been occupied therein.” That is, who have always diligently kept them.

There is one observance, abstaining from sin. For what profit is it, when some are so polluted, as not to be able to partake of the sacrifices? So that

it did not save them at all; although they were zealous about the observances. But because they had not faith, even thus they profiled nothing.

[7.] In the next place he takes away the sacrifice from the type, and directs his discourse to the prototype, saying, “The bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the High Priest, are burned without the camp.” Then those things were a type of these and thus Christ, suffering “without,” fulfilled all.

Here he makes it plain too that He suffered voluntarily, showing that those things were not accidental, but even the [Divine] arrangement itself was of a suffering “without.” [He suffered] without, but His Blood was born up into Heaven. Thou seest then that we partake of Blood which has been carried into the Holy Place, the True Holy Place; of the Sacrifice of which the Priest alone had the privilege. We therefore partake of the Truth [the Reality]. If then we partake not of “reproach” [only] but of sanctification, the “reproach” is the cause of the sanctification. For as He was reproached, so also are we. If we go forth “without” therefore, we have fellowship with Him.

But what is, “Let us go forth to Him”? Let us have fellowship with Him in His sufferings; let us bear His reproach. For He did not simply bid us dwell “outside the gate,” but as He was reproached as a condemned person, so also we.

And “by Him let us offer a sacrifice to God.” Of what kind of sacrifice does he speak? “The fruit of lips giving thanks to His Name.” They [the Jews] brought sheep, and calves, and gave them to the Priest: let “us” bring none of these things, but thanksgiving. This “fruit” let “our lips” put forth.

“For with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” Let us give such a sacrifice to Him, that He may offer [it] to The Father. For in no other way it is offered except through the Son, or rather also through a contrite mind. All these things [are said] for the weak. For that the thanks belong to the Son is evident: since otherwise, how is the honor equal? “That all men” (He says) “should honor the Son even as they honor the Father.” (John 5:23)

Wherein is the honor equal? “The fruit of our lips giving thanks to His Name.”

[8.] Let us bear all things thankfully, be it poverty, be it disease, be it anything else whatever: for He alone knows the things expedient for us. “For we know not what we should pray for as we ought.” (Romans 8:26) We then who do not know even how to ask for what is fitting, unless we have received of the Spirit, let us take care to offer up thanksgiving for all things, and let us bear all things nobly. Are we in poverty? Let us give thanks. Are we in sickness? Let us give thanks. Are we falsely accused? Let us give thanks: when we suffer affliction, let us give thanks.

This brings us near to God: then we even have God for our debtor. But when we are in prosperity, it is we who are debtors and liable to be called to account. For when we are in prosperity, we are debtors to God: and oftentimes these things bring a judgment upon us, while those are for a payment of sins. Those [afflictions] draw down mercy, they draw down kindness: while these on the other hand lift up even to an insane pride, and lead also to slothfulness, and dispose a man to fancy great things concerning himself; they puff up. Therefore the prophet also said, “It is good for me, Lord, that Thou hast afflicted me; that I may learn Thy statutes.” (Psalm 119:71) When Hezekiah had received blessings and been freed from calamities, his heart was lifted up on high; when he fell sick, then was he humbled, then he became near to God. “When He slew them,” it says, “then they sought Him diligently, and turned, and were early in coming to God.” (Psalm 78:34) And again, “When the beloved waxed gross and fat, then he kicked.” (Deuteronomy 32:15) For “the Lord is known when He executeth judgments.” (Psalm 9:16)

[9.] Affliction is a great good. “Narrow is the way” (Matthew 7:14), so that affliction thrusts us into the narrow [way]. He who is not pressed by affliction cannot enter. For he who afflicts himself in the narrow [way], is he who also enjoys ease; but he that spreads himself out, does not enter in, and suffers from being so to say wedged in. See how Paul enters into this narrow way. He “keeps under” his “body” (1 Corinthians 9:27), so as to be able to enter. Therefore, in all his afflictions, he continued giving thanks unto God. Hast thou lost thy property? This hath lightened thee of the most of thy wideness. Hast thou fallen from glory? This is another sort of

wideness. Hast thou been falsely: accused? Have the things said against thee, of which thou art nowise conscious to thyself been believed? "Rejoice and leap for joy." For "blessed are ye" (He says) "when men reproach you, and say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven." (Matthew 5:11, 12)

Why dost thou marvel, if thou art grieved, and wish to be set free from temptations? Paul wished to be set free, and oftentimes entreated God, and did not obtain. For the "thrice for this I besought the Lord," is oftentimes; "and He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:8, 9) By "weakness," he here means "afflictions." What then? When he heard this he received it thankfully, and says, "Wherefore I take pleasure in infirmities" (2 Corinthians 12:10); that is, I am pleased, I rest in my afflictions. For all things then let us give thanks, both for comfort, and for affliction. Let us not murmur: let us not be unthankful. "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, naked also shall I depart." (Job 1:21) Thou didst not come forth glorious, do not seek glory. Thou wast brought into life naked, not of money alone, but also of glory, and of honorable name.

Consider how great evils have oftentimes arisen from wealth. For "It is easier" (it is said) "for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 19:24) Seest thou to how many good things wealth is a hindrance, and dost thou seek to be rich? Dost thou not rejoice that the hindrance has been overthrown? So narrow is the way which leadeth into the Kingdom. So broad is wealth, and full of bulk and swelling out. Therefore He says, "Sell that thou hast" (Matthew 19:21), that that way may receive thee. Why dost thou yearn after wealth? For this cause He took it away from thee, that He might free thee from slavery. For true fathers also, when a son is corrupted by some mistress, and having given him much exhortation they do not persuade him to part from her, send the mistress into banishment. Such also is abundance of wealth. Because the Lord cares for us, and delivers us from the harm [which arises] therefrom, He takes away wealth from us.

Let us not then think poverty an evil: sin is the only evil. For neither is wealth a good thing by itself: to be well-pleasing to God is the only good,

Poverty then let us seek, this let us pursue: so shall we lay hold on heaven, so shall we attain to the other good things, Which may we all attain by the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father together with the Holy Ghost be glory, power, honor, now and ever and world without end, Amen,

HOMILY 34

HEBREWS 13:17

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves. For they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, a for this is unprofitable for you."

[1.] ANARCHY is an evil, and the occasion of many calamities, and the source of disorder and confusion. For as, if thou take away the leader from a chorus, the chorus will not be in tune and in order; and if from a phalanx of an army thou remove the commander, the evolutions will no longer be made in time and order, and if from a ship thou take away the helmsman, thou wilt sink the vessel; so too if from a flock thou remove the shepherd, thou hast overthrown and destroyed all.

Anarchy then is an evil, and a cause of ruin. But no less an evil also is the disobedience to rulers. For it comes again to the same. For a people not obeying a ruler, is like one which has none; and perhaps even worse. For in the former case they have at least an excuse for disorder, but no longer in the latter, but are punished.

But perhaps some one will say, there is also a third evil, when the ruler is bad. I myself too know it, and no small evil it is, but even a far worse evil than anarchy. For it is better to be led by no one, than to be led by one who is evil. For the former indeed are oftentimes saved, and oftentimes are in peril, but the latter will be altogether in peril, being led into the pit [of destruction].

How then does Paul say, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves"? Having said above, "whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (c. verse 7), he then said, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves."

What then (you say), when he is wicked should we obey?

Wicked? In what sense? If indeed in regard to Faith, flee and avoid him; not only if he be a man, but even if he be an angel come down from

Heaven; but if in regard to life, be not over-curious. And this instance I do not allege from my own mind, but from the Divine Scripture. For hear Christ saying, “The Scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat.” (Matthew 23:2) Having previously spoken many fearful things concerning them, He then says, “They sit on Moses’ seat: all therefore whatsoever they tell you observe, do; but do not ye after their works.” (Matthew 23:2, 3) They have (He means) the dignity of office, but are of unclean life. Do thou however attend, not to their life, but to their words. For as regards their characters, no one would be harmed [thereby]. How is this? Both because their characters are manifest to all, and also because though he were ten thousand times as wicked he will never teach what is wicked. But as respects Faith, [the evil] is not manifest to all, and the wicked [ruler] will not shrink from teaching it.

Moreover, “Judge not that ye be not judged” (Matthew 7:1) concerns life, not faith: surely what follows makes this plain. For “why” (He says) “beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” (Matthew 7:3)

“All things therefore” (He says) “which they bid you observe, do ye” (now to “do” belongs to works not to Faith) “but do not ye after their works.” Seest thou that [the discourse] is not concerning doctrines, but concerning life and works?

[2.] Paul however previously commended them, and then says, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that shall give account.”

Let those who rule also hear, and not only those who are under their rule; that as the subjects ought to be obedient, so also the rulers ought to be watchful and sober. What sayest thou? He watches; he imperils his own head; he is subject to the punishments of thy sins, and for thy sake is amenable to what is so fearful, and art thou slothful, and affectedly indifferent, and at ease? Therefore he says, “That they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this is unprofitable for you.”

Seest thou that the despised ruler ought not to avenge himself, but his great revenge is to weep and lament? For neither is it possible for the physician, despised by his patient, to avenge himself, but to weep and

lament. But if [the ruler] lament (he means), God inflicts vengeance on thee. For if when we lament for our own sins we draw God to us, shall we not much rather [do this], when we lament for the arrogance and scornfulness of others? Seest thou that he does not suffer him to be led on to reproaches? Seest thou how great is his philosophy? He ought to lament who is despised, is trodden under foot, is spit upon.

Be not confident because he does not avenge himself on thee, for lamenting is worse than any revenge. For when of himself he profits nothing by lamenting, he calls on the Lord: and as in the case of a teacher and nurse, when the child does not listen to him, one is called in who will treat him more severely, so also in this case.

[3.] Oh! how great the danger! What should one say to those wretched men, who throw themselves upon so great an abyss of punishments? Thou hast to give account of all over whom thou rulest, women and children and men; into so great a fire dost thou put thy head. I marvel if any of the rulers can be saved, when in the face of such a threat, and of the present indifference, I see some still even running on, and casting themselves upon so great a burden of authority.

For if they who are dragged by force have no refuge or defense, if they discharge duty ill and are negligent; since even Aaron was dragged by force, and yet was imperiled; and Moses again was imperiled, although he had oftentimes declined; and Saul having been entrusted with another kind of rule, after he had declined it, was in peril, because he managed it amiss; how much more they who take so great pains to obtain it, and cast themselves upon it? Such an one much more deprives himself of all excuse. For men ought to fear and to tremble, both because of conscience, and because of the burden of the office; and neither when dragged to it should they once for all decline, nor, when not dragged cast themselves upon it, but should even flee, foreseeing the greatness of the dignity; and when they have been seized, they ought again to show their godly fear. Let there be nothing out of measure. If thou hast perceived it beforehand, retire; convince thyself that thou art unworthy of the office. Again, if thou hast been seized, in like manner be thou reverential, always showing right-mindedness.

[4.] Verse 18. “Pray for us” (he says); “for we trust we have a good conscience among all, willing to live honestly.”

Thou seest that he used these apologies, as writing to persons grieved with him, as to those who turned away, who were disposed as towards a transgressor, not enduring even to hear his name? Inasmuch then as he asked from those who hated him what all others ask from those who love them [their prayers for him], therefore he here introduces this; saying, “We trust that we have a good conscience.” For do not tell me of accusations; our conscience, he says, in nothing hurts us; nor are we conscious to ourselves that we have plotted against you. “For we trust,” he says, “that we have a good conscience among all,” not among the Gentiles only, but also among you. We have done nothing with deceitfulness, nothing with hypocrisy: for it was probable that these [calumnies] were reported respecting him. “For they have been informed concerning thee” (it is said) “that thou teachest apostasy.” (Acts 21:21) Not as an enemy, he means, nor as an adversary I write these things, but as a friend. And this he shows also by what follows.

Verse 19. *“But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.”*

His thus praying was [the act] of one who loved them greatly, and that not simply, but with all earnestness, that so, he says, I may come to you speedily. The earnest desire to come to them is [the mark] of one conscious to himself of nothing [wrong], also the entreating them to pray for him.

Therefore having first asked their prayers, he then himself also prays for all good things on them. (Verse 20) “Now the God of peace,” he says (be ye not therefore at variance one with another), “that brought again from the earth the Shepherd of the sheep” (this is said concerning the resurrection) “the Great [Shepherd]” (another addition: here again he confirms to them even to the end, his discourse concerning the Resurrection) “through the blood of the everlasting covenant, our Lord Jesus Christ,” (verse 21) “make you perfect in every good work, to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight.”

Again he bears high testimony to them. For that is made "perfect" which having a beginning is afterwards completed. And he prays for them which is the act of one who yearns for them. And while in the other Epistles, he prays in the prefaces, here he does it at the end. "Working in you," he says, "that which is well-pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

[5.] Verse 22. *"And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation, for indeed I have written a letter unto you in few words."* Seest thou that what he wrote to no one [else], he writes to them? For (he means) I do not even trouble you with long discourse.

I suppose that they were not at all unfavorably disposed towards Timothy: wherefore he also put him forward. For (verse 23) "know ye," he says, "that our brother Timothy is set at liberty, with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you." "Set at liberty," he says; from whence? I suppose he had been cast into prison: or if not this, that he was sent away from Athens. For this also is mentioned in the Acts.

Verse 24, 25. *"Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you. Grace be with you all. Amen."*

[6.] Seest thou how he shows that virtue is born neither wholly from God, nor yet from ourselves alone? First by saying, "make you perfect in every good work"; Ye have virtue indeed, he means, but need to be made complete. What is "good work and word"? So as to have both life and doctrines right. "According to His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight."

"In His sight," he says. For this is the highest virtue, to do that which is well-pleasing in the sight of God, as the Prophet also says, "And according to the cleanness of my hands in His eye-sight." (Psalm 18:24)

And having written thus much, he said this was little, in comparison with what he was going to say. As he says also in another place, "As I wrote to you in few words: whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ." (Ephesians 3:3, 4)

And observe his wisdom. He says not, "I beseech you, suffer the word of" admonition, but "the word of exhortation," that is, of consolation, of

encouragement. No one, he means, can be wearied at the length of what has been said (Did this then make them turn away from him? By no means: he does not indeed wish to express this): that is, even if ye be of little spirit, for it is the peculiarity of such persons not to endure a long discourse.

“Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty, with whom if he come shortly I will see you.” This is enough to persuade them to submit themselves, if he is ready to come with his disciple.

“Salute them that have the rule over you, and all the saints.” See how he honored them, since he wrote to them instead of to those [their rulers].

“They of Italy salute you. Grace be with you all. Amen.” Which was for them all in common.

But how does “Grace” come to be “with” us? If we do not do despite to the benefit, if we do not become indolent in regard to the Gift. And what is “the grace”? Remission of sins, Cleansing: this is “with” us. For who (he means) can keep the Grace despitefully, and not destroy it? For instance; He freely forgave thee thy sins. How then shall the “Grace be with” thee, whether it be the good favor or the effectual working of the SPIRIT? If thou draw it to thee by good deeds. For the cause of all good things is this, the continual abiding with us of the “grace” of the Spirit. For this guides us to all [good things], just as when it flies away from us, it ruins us, and leaves us desolate.

[7.] Let us not then drive it from us. For on ourselves depends, both its remaining, and its departing. For the one results, when we mind heavenly things; the other, when [we mind] the things of this life. “Which the world” (He says) “cannot receive because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him.” (John 14:17) Seest thou that a worldly soul cannot have Him? We need great earnestness that so there He may be held fast by us, so as to direct all our affairs, and do them in security, and in much peace.

For as a ship sailing with favorable winds is neither to be hindered nor sunk, so long as it enjoys a prosperous and steady breeze, but also causes great admiration according to the march of its progress both to the mariners, and to the passengers, giving rest to the one, and not forcing them to toil on at their oars, and setting the others free from all fear, and giving them the most delightful view of her course; so too a soul

strengthened by the Divine Spirit, is far above all the billows of this life, and more strongly than the ship, cuts the way bearing on to Heaven, since it is not sent along by wind, but has all the pure sails filled by the Paraclete Himself: and He casts out of our minds all that is slackened and relaxed.

For as the wind if it fall upon a slackened sail, would have no effect; so neither does the Spirit endure to continue in a slack soul; but there is need of much tension, of much vehemence, so that our mind may be on fire, and our conduct under all circumstances on the stretch, and braced up. For instance when we pray, we ought to do it with much intentness, stretching forth the soul toward Heaven, not with cords, but with great earnestness. Again when we do works of mercy, we have need of intentness, lest by any means, thought for our household, and care for children, and anxiety about wife, and fear of poverty entering in, should slacken our sail. For if we put it on the stretch on all sides by the hope of the things to come, it receives well the energy of the Spirit; and none of those perishable and wretched things will fall upon it, yea, and if any of them should fall, it does it no harm, but is quickly thrown back by the tightness, and is shaken off and fails down.

Therefore we have need of much intentness. For we too are sailing over a great and wide sea, full of many monsters, and of many rocks, and bringing forth for us many storms, and from the midst of serene weather raising up a most violent tempest. It is necessary then if we would sail with ease, and without danger, to stretch the sails, that is, our determination: for this is sufficient for us. For Abraham also, when he had stretched forth his affections towards God and set before Him his fixed resolution, what else had he need of? Nothing: but “he believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” (Genesis 15:6) But Faith [comes] of a sincere will. He offered up his son, and though he did not slay him, he received a recompense as if he had slain him, and though the work was not done the reward was given.

Let our sails then be in good order, not grown old (for everything “that is decayed and waxen old is nigh to vanishing away”) (c. 8:13), not worn into holes, that so they may bear the energy of the Spirit. “For the natural man,” it is said, “receiveth not the things of the Spirit.” (1 Corinthians

2:14) For as the webs of spiders could not receive a blast of wind, so neither will the soul devoted to this life, nor the natural man ever be able to receive the grace of the Spirit: for our reasonings differ nothing from them, preserving a connection in appearance only but destitute of all power.

[8.] Our condition, however, is not such, if we are watchful: but whatever may fall upon [the Christian], he bears all, and is above all, stronger than any whirlpool. For suppose there be a spiritual man, and that innumerable calamities befall him, yet is he overcome by none of them. And what do I say? Let poverty come upon him, disease, insults, revilings, mockings, stripes, every sort of infliction, every sort of mocking, and slanders, and insults: yet, as though he were outside the world, and set free from the feelings of the body, so will he laugh all to scorn.

And that my words are not mere boasting, I think many [such] exist even now; for instance, of those who have embraced the life of the desert. This however, you say, is nothing wonderful. But I say that of those also who live in cities, there are such men unsuspected. If thou wish however, I shall be able to exhibit some among those of old. And that thou mayest learn, consider Paul, I pray thee. What is there fearful that he did not suffer, and that he did not submit to? But he bore all nobly. Let us imitate him, for so shall we be able to land in the tranquil havens with much merchandise.

Let us then stretch our mind towards Heaven, let us be held fast by that desire, let us clothe ourselves with spiritual fire, let us gird ourselves with its flame. No man who bears flame fears those who meet him; be it wild beast, be it man, be it snares innumerable, so long as he is armed with fire, all things stand out of his way, all things retire. The flame is intolerable, the fire cannot be endured, it consumes all.

With this fire let us clothe ourselves, offering up glory to our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father, together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, might, honor, now and ever and world without end. Amen.