

A COMMENTARY

ON

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES,

BY

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HOMILY 1

ACTS 1:1, 2

“The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, concerning all things which Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day on which, having given charge to the Apostles, whom He had chosen, by the Holy Spirit, He was taken up.”

To many persons this Book is so little known, both it and its author, that they are not even aware that there is such a book in existence. For this reason especially I have taken this narrative for my subject, that I may draw to it such as do not know it, and not let such a treasure as this remain hidden out of sight. For indeed it may profit us no less than even the Gospels; so replete is it with Christian wisdom and sound doctrine, especially in what is said concerning the Holy Ghost. Then let us not hastily pass by it, but examine it closely. Thus, the predictions which in the Gospels Christ utters, here we may see these actually come to pass; and note in the very facts the bright evidence of Truth which shines in them, and the mighty change which is taking place in the disciples now that the Spirit has come upon them. For example, they heard Christ say, “Who-so believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater

works than these shall here” (John 14:12): and again, when He foretold to the disciples, that they should be brought before rulers and kings, and in their synagogues they should scourge them, and that they should suffer grievous things, and overcome all (Matthew 10:18): and that the Gospel should be preached in all the world (Ib. 24:14): now all this, how it came to pass exactly as it was said, may be seen in this Book, and more besides, which He told them while yet with them. Here again you will see the Apostles themselves, speeding their way as on wings over land and sea; and those same men, once so timorous and void of understanding, on the sudden become quite other than they were; men despising wealth, and raised above glory and passion and concupiscence, and in short all such affections: moreover, what unanimity there is among them now; nowhere any envying as there was before, nor any of the old hankering after the preeminence, but all virtue brought in them to its last finish, and shining through all, with surpassing luster, that charity, concerning which the Lord had given so many charges saying, “In this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another.” (John 13:35.) And then, besides, there are doctrines to be found here, which we could not have known so surely as we now do, if this Book had not existed, but the very crowning point of our salvation would be hidden, alike for practice of life and for doctrine.

The greater part, however, of this work is occupied with the acts of Paul, who “labored more abundantly than they all.” (1 Corinthians 15:10.) And the reason is, that the author of this Book, that is, the blessed Luke, was his companion: a man, whose high qualities, sufficiently visible in many other instances, are especially shown in his firm adherence to his Teacher, whom he constantly followed. Thus at a time when all had forsaken him, one gone into Galatia, another into Dalmatia, hear what he says of this disciple: “Only Luke is with me.” (2 Timothy 4:10.) And giving the Corinthians a charge concerning him, he Says, “Whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the Churches.” (2 Corinthians 8:18.) Again, when he says, “He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve,” and, “according to the Gospel which ye received” (1 Corinthians 15:5, 1), he means the Gospel of this Luke. So that there can be no mistake in attributing this work to him: and when I say, to him, I mean, to Christ. And why then did he not relate every thing, seeing he was with Paul to the end? We may answer,

that what is here written, was sufficient for those who would attend, and that the sacred writers ever addressed themselves to the matter of immediate importance, whatever it might be at the time it was no object with them to be writers of books: in fact, there are many things which they have delivered by unwritten tradition. Now while all that is contained in this Book is worthy of admiration, so is especially the way the Apostles have of coming down to the wants of their hearers: a condescension suggested by the Spirit who has so ordered it, that the subject on which they chiefly dwell is that which pertains to Christ as man. For so it is, that while they discourse so much about Christ, they have spoken but little concerning His Godhead; it was mostly of the Manhood that they discoursed, and of the Passion, and the Resurrection, and the Ascension. For the thing required in the first instance was this, that it should be believed that He was risen, and ascended into heaven. As then the point on which Christ himself most insisted was, to have it known that He was come from the Father, so is it this writer's principal object to declare, that Christ was risen from the dead, and was received up into Heaven, and that He went to God, and came from God. For, if the fact of His coming from God were not first believed, much more, with the Resurrection and Ascension added thereto, would the Jews have found the entire doctrine incredible. Wherefore gently and by degrees he leads them on to higher truths. Nay, at Athens Paul even calls Him man simply, without saying more (Acts 17:31). For if, when Christ Himself spoke of His equality with the Father, they often attempted to stone Him, and called Him a blasphemer for this reason, it was little to be expected that they would receive this doctrine from the fishermen, and that too, with the Cross coming before it.

But why speak of the Jews, seeing that even the disciples often upon hearing the more sublime doctrines were troubled and offended? Therefore also He told them, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." (John 16:12.) If those could not, who had been so long time with Him, and had been admitted to so many secrets, and had seen so many wonders, how was it to be expected that men, but newly dragged away from altars, and idols, and sacrifices, and cats, and crocodiles (for such did the Gentiles worship), and from the rest of their evil ways, should all at once receive the more sublime matters of doctrine? And how

in particular should Jews, hearing as they did every day of their lives, and having it ever sounded in their ears, “The Lord thy God is one Lord, and beside Him is none other” (Deuteronomy 6:4): who also had seen Him hanging nailed on the Cross, nay, had themselves crucified and buried Him, and not seen Him even risen: when they were told that this same person was God and equal with the Father, how should they, of all men, be otherwise than shocked and revolted? Therefore it is that gently and little by little they carry them on, with much consideration and forbearance letting themselves down to their low attainments, themselves the While enjoying in more plentiful measure the grace of the Spirit, and doing greater works in Christ’s name than Christ Himself did, that they may at once raise them up from their groveling apprehensions, and confirm the saying, that Christ was raised from the dead. For this, in fact, is just what this Book is: a Demonstration of the Resurrection: this being once believed the rest would come in due course. The subject then and entire scope of this Book, in the main, is just what I have said. And now let us hear the Preface itself.

“The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach.” (v. 1.) Why does he put him in mind of the Gospel? To intimate how strictly he may be depended upon. For at the outset of the former work he says, “It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order.” (Luke 1:3.) Neither is he content with his own testimony-but refers the whole matter to the Apostles. saying, “Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word.” (Luke 1:2.) Having then accredited his account in the former instance, he has no need to put forth his credentials afresh for this treatise, seeing his disciple has been once for all satisfied, and by the mention of that former work he has reminded him of the strict reliance to be placed in him for the truth. For if a person has shown himself competent and trustworthy to write of things which he has heard, and moreover has obtained our confidence, much more will he have a right to our confidence when he has composed an account, not of things which he has received from others, but of things which he has seen and heard. For thou didst receive what relates to Christ; much more wilt thou receive what concerns the Apostles.

What then, (it may be asked), is it a question only of history, with which the Holy Spirit has nothing to do? Not so. For, if “those delivered it unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of ‘the word;’” then, what he says, is theirs. And why did he not say, ‘As they who were counted worthy of the Holy Spirit delivered them unto us;’ but “Those who were eyewitnesses?” Because, in matter of belief, the very thing that gives one a right to be believed, is the having learned from eyewitnesses: whereas the other appears to foolish persons mere parade and pretension. And therefore John also speaks thus: “I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.” (John. 1:34.) And Christ expresses Himself in the same way to Nicodemus, while he was dull of apprehension, “We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and no one receiveth our witness,” (Ib. 3:11.) Accordingly, He gave them leave to rest their testimony in many particulars on the fact of their having seen them, when He said, “And do ye bear witness concerning Me, because ye have been with Me from the beginning.” (John 15:27.) The Apostles themselves also often speak in a similar manner; “We are witnesses, and the Holy Spirit which God hath given to those that obey Him.” (Acts 2:32); and on a subsequent occasion, Peter, still giving assurance of the Resurrection, said, “Seeing we did eat and drink with Him.” (Acts 10:41.) For they more readily received the testimony of persons who had been His companions, because the notion of the Spirit was as yet very much beyond them. Therefore John also at that time, in his Gospel, speaking of the blood and water, said, he himself *saw it*, making the fact of his having seen it equivalent, for them, to the highest testimony, although the witness of the Spirit is more certain than the evidence of sight, but not so with unbelievers. Now that Luke was a partaker of the Spirit, is abundantly clear, both from the miracles which even now take place; and from the fact that in those times even ordinary persons were gifted with the Holy Ghost; and again from the testimony of Paul, in these words, “Whose praise is in the Gospel” (2 Corinthians 8:18); and from the appointment to which he was chosen: for having said this, the Apostle adds, “But also appointed of the Churches to travel with us with this grace which is administered by us.”

Now mark how unassuming he is. He does not say, The former Gospel which I preached, but, “The former treatise have I made;” accounting the

title of Gospel to be too great for him; although it is on the score of this that the Apostle dignifies him: “Whose praise,” he says, “is in the Gospel.” But he himself modestly says, “The former treatise have I made — O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach:” not simply “of all,” but from the beginning to the end; “until the day,” he says, “in which He was taken up.” And yet John says, that it was not possible to write all: for “were they written, I suppose,” says he, “that even the world itself could not contain the books written.” (John 21:25.) How then does the Evangelist here say, “Of all?” He does not say “all,” but “of all,” as much as to say, “in a summary way, and in the gross;” and “of all that is mainly and pressingly important.” Then he tells us in what sense he says *all*, when he adds, “Which Jesus began both to do and to teach;” meaning His miracles and teaching; and not only so, but implying that His doing was also a teaching.

But now consider the benevolent and Apostolic feelings of the writer: that for the sake of a single individual he took such pains as to write for him an entire Gospel. “That thou mightest have,” he says, “the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.” (Luke 1:4.) In truth, he had heard Christ say, “It is not the will of My Father that one of these little ones should perish.” (Matthew 18:14.) And why did he not make one book of it, to send to one man Theophilus, but has divided it into two subjects? For clearness, and to give the brother a pause for rest. Besides, the two treatises are distinct in their subject-matter.

But consider how Christ accredited his words by His deeds. Thus He saith, “Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.” (Ib. 11:29.) He taught men to be poor, and exhibited this by His actions: “For the Son of Man,” He says, “hath not where to lay His head.” (Ib. 8:20.) Again, He charged men to love their enemies; and He taught the same lesson on the Cross, when He prayed for those who were crucifying Him. He said, “If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also” (Ib. 5:40): now *He* not only gave His garments, but even His blood. In this way He bade others teach. Wherefore Paul also said, “So as ye have us for an example.” (Philippians 3:17.) For nothing is more frigid than a teacher who shows his philosophy only in words: this is to act the part not of a teacher, but of a hypocrite. Therefore the Apostles first taught by their conduct, and then by their words; nay rather they had no

need of words, when their deeds spoke so loud. Nor is it wrong to speak of Christ's Passion as action, for in suffering all He performed that great and wonderful act, by which He destroyed death, and effected all else that He did for us.

“Until the day in which He was taken up, after that He, through the Holy Spirit, had given commandments unto the Apostles whom He had chosen. After He had given commandments through the Spirit” (v. 2); i.e. they were spiritual words that He spake unto them, nothing human; either this is the meaning, or, that it was by the Spirit that He gave them commandments. Do you observe in what low terms he still speaks of Christ, as in fact Christ had spoken of Himself? “But if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils” (Matthew 12:28); for indeed the Holy Ghost wrought in that Temple. Well, what did He command? “Go ye therefore,” He says, “make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” (Ib. 28:19, 20.) A high encomium this for the Apostles; to have such a charge entrusted to them, I mean, the salvation of the world! words full of the Spirit! And this the writer hints at in the expression, “through the Holy Ghost” (and, “the words which I spake unto you,” saith the Lord, “are Spirit”) (John 6:63); thus leading the hearer on to a desire of learning what the commands were, and establishing the authority of the Apostles, seeing it is the words of the Spirit they are about to speak, and the commandments of Christ. “After He had given commandments,” he says, “He was taken up.” He does not say, ‘ascended;’ he still speaks as concerning a man. It appears then that He also taught the Disciples after His resurrection, but of this space of time no one has related to us the whole in detail. St. John indeed, as also does the present writer, dwells at greater length on this subject than the others; but none has clearly related every thing (for they hastened to something else); however, we have learnt these things through the Apostles, for what they heard, that did they tell. “To whom also He shewed Himself alive.” Having first spoken of the Ascension, he adverts to the Resurrection; for since thou hast been told that “He was taken up,” therefore, test thou shouldest suppose Him to have been taken up by others, he adds, “To whom He shewed Himself alive.” For if He shewed Himself in the greater, surely He did in the minor circumstance. Seest thou,

how casually and unperceived he drops by the way the seeds of these great doctrines?

“Being seen of them during forty days.” He was not always with them now, as He was before the Resurrection. For the writer does not say “forty days,” but, “during forty days.” He came, and again disappeared; by this leading them on to higher conceptions, and no longer permitting them to stand affected towards Him in the same way as before, but taking effectual measures to secure both these objects, that the fact of His Resurrection should be believed, and that He Himself should be ever after apprehended to be greater than man. At the same time, these were two opposite things; for in order to the belief in His Resurrection, much was to be done of a human character, and for the other: object, just the reverse. Nevertheless, both results have been effected, each when the fitting time arrived.

But why did He appear not to all, but to the Apostles only? Because to the many it would have seemed a mere apparition, inasmuch as they understood not the secret of the mystery. For if the disciples themselves were at first incredulous and were troubled, and needed the evidence of actual touch with the hand, and of His eating with them, how would it have fared in all likelihood with the multitude? For this reason therefore by the miracles [wrought by the Apostles] He renders the evidence of His Resurrection unequivocal, so that not only the men of those times — this is what would come of the ocular proof — but also all men thereafter, should be certain of the fact, that He was risen. Upon this ground also we argue with unbelievers. For if He did not rise again, but remains dead, how did the Apostles perform miracles in His name? But they did not, say you, perform miracles? How then was our religion (ἔθνος) instituted? For this certainly they will not controvert nor impugn what we see with our eyes: so that when they say that no miracles took place, they inflict a worse stab upon themselves. For this would be the greatest of miracles, that without any miracles, the whole world should have eagerly come to be taken in the nets of twelve poor and illiterate men. For not by wealth of money, not by wisdom of words, not by any thing else of this kind, did the fishermen prevail; so that objectors must even against their will acknowledge that there was in these men a Divine power, for no human strength could ever possibly effect such great results. For this He then

remained forty days on earth, furnishing in this length of time the sure evidence of their seeing Him in His own proper Person, that they might not suppose that what they saw was a phantom. And not content with this, He added also the evidence of eating with them at their board: as to signify this, the writer adds, “And being at, table a with them, He commanded.” (v. 4.) And this circumstance the Apostles themselves always put forth as an fallible token of the Resurrection; as where they say, “Who did eat and drink with Him.” (Acts 10:41.)

And what did He, when appearing unto them those forty days? Why, He conversed with them, says the writer, “concerning the kingdom of God.” (v. 3.) For, since the disciples both had been distressed and troubled at the things which already had taken place, and were about to go forth to encounter great difficulties, He recovered them by His discourses concerning the future. “He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father.” (v. 4.) First, He led them out to Galilee, afraid and trembling, in order that they might listen to His words in security. Afterwards, when they had heard, and had passed forty days with Him, “He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem.” Wherefore? Just as when soldiers are to charge a multitude, no one thinks of letting them issue forth until they have armed themselves, or as horses are not suffered to start from the barriers until they have got their charioteer; so Christ did not suffer these to appear in the field before the descent of the Spirit, that they might not be in a condition to be easily defeated and taken captive by the many. Nor was this the only reason, but also there were many in Jerusalem who should believe. And then again that it might not be said, that leaving their own acquaintance, they had gone to make a parade among strangers, therefore among those very men who had put Christ to death do they exhibit the proofs of His Resurrection, among those who had crucified and buried Him, in the very town in which the iniquitous deed had been perpetrated; thereby stopping the mouths of all foreign objectors. For when those even who had crucified Him appear as believers, clearly this proved both the fact of the crucifixion and the iniquity of the deed, and afforded a mighty evidence of the Resurrection. Furthermore, lest the Apostles should say, How shall it be possible for us to live among wicked and bloody men, they so many in number, we so few and contemptible, observe how He does

away their fear and distress, by these words, “But wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of Me.” (v. 4.) You will say, When had they heard this? When He said, “It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.” (John 16:7.) And again, “I will pray the Father, and He shall send you another Comforter, that He may abide with you.” (ib. 14:16.)

But why did the Holy Ghost come to them, not while Christ was present, nor even immediately after his departure, but, whereas Christ ascended on the fortieth day, the Spirit descended “when the day of Pentecost,” that is, the fiftieth, “was fully come?” (Acts 2:1.) And how was it, if the Spirit had not yet come, that He said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost?” (John 20:22.) In order to render them capable and meet for the reception of Him. For if Daniel fainted at the sight of an Angel (Daniel 8:17), much more would these when about to receive so great a grace. Either this then is to be said, or else that Christ spoke of what was to come, as if come already; as when He said, “Tread ye upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the devil.” (Luke 10:19.) But why had the Holy Ghost not yet come? It was fit that they should first be brought to have a longing desire for that event, and so receive the grace. For this reason Christ Himself departed, and then the Spirit descended. For had He Himself been there, they would not have expected the Spirit so earnestly as they did. On this account neither did He come immediately after Christ’s Ascension, but after eight or nine days. It is the same with us also; for our desires towards God are then most raised, when we stand in need: Accordingly, John chose that time to send his disciples to Christ when they were likely to feel their need of Jesus, during his own imprisonment. Besides, it was fit that our nature should be seen in heaven, and that the reconciliation should be perfected, and then the Spirit should come, and the joy should be unalloyed. For, if the Spirit being already come, Christ had then departed, and the Spirit remained; the consolation would not have been so great as it was. For in fact they clung to Him, and could not bear to part with Him; wherefore also to comfort them He said, “It is expedient for you that I go away.” (John 16:7.) On this account He also waits during those intermediate days, that they might first despond for awhile, and be made, as I said, to feel their need of Him. and then reap a full and unalloyed delight. But if the Spirit were inferior to the Son, the consolation would

not have been adequate; and how could He have said, "It is expedient for you?" For this reason the greater matters of teaching were reserved for the Spirit, that the disciples might not imagine Him inferior.

Consider also how necessary He made it for them to abide in Jerusalem, by promising that the Spirit should be granted them. For lest they should again flee away after His Ascension, by this expectation, as by a bond, He keeps them to that spot. But having said, "Wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of Me," He then adds, "For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." (v. 4, 5.) For now indeed He gives them to see the difference there was betwixt Him and John, plainly, and not as heretofore in obscure hints; for in fact He had spoken very obscurely, when He said, "Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he:" but now He says plainly, "John baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." (Matthew 11:11.) And he no longer uses the testimony, but merely adverts to the person of John, reminding the disciples of what he had said, and shows them that they are now become greater than John; seeing they too are to baptize with the Spirit. Again, He did not say, I baptize you with the Holy Ghost, but, "Ye shall be baptized:" teaching us humility. For this was plain enough from the testimony of John, that it was Christ Himself Who should baptize: "He it is that shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire" (Luke 3:16.); wherefore also He made mention of John.

The Gospels, then, are a history of what Christ did and said; but the Acts, of what that "other Comforter" said and did. Not but that the Spirit did many things in the Gospels also; even as Christ here in the Acts still works in men as He did in the Gospels only then the Spirit wrought through the Temple, now through the Apostles: then, He came into the Virgin's womb, and fashioned the Temple; now, into Apostolic souls: then in the likeness of a dove; now, in the likeness of fire. And wherefore? Showing there the gentleness of the Lord, but here His taking vengeance also, He now puts them in mind of the judgment likewise. For, when need was to forgive, need was there of much gentleness; but now we have obtained the gift, it is henceforth a time for judgment and examination.

But why does Christ say, “Ye shall be baptized,” when in fact there was no water in the upper room? Because the more essential part of Baptism is the Spirit, through Whom indeed the water has its operation; in the same manner our Lord also is said to be anointed, not that He had ever been anointed with oil, but because He had received the Spirit. Besides, we do in fact find them receiving a baptism with water [and a baptism with the Spirit], and these at different moments. In our case both take place under one act, but then they were divided. For in the beginning they were baptized by John; since, if harlots and publicans went to that baptism, much rather would they who thereafter were to be baptized by the Holy Ghost. Then, that the Apostles might not say, that they were always having it held out to them in promises (John 14:15, 16), (for indeed Christ had already discoursed much to them concerning the Spirit, that they should not imagine It to be an impersonal Energy or Operation, (ἐνέργειαν ἀνυπόστατον) that they might not say this, then, He adds, “not many days hence.” And He did not explain when, that they might always watch: but, that it would soon take place, He told, them, that they might not faint; yet the exact time He refrained from adding, that they might always be vigilant. Nor does He assure them by this alone; I mean, by the shortness of the time, but withal by saying, “The promise which ye have heard of Me.” For this is not, saith He, the only time I have told you, but already I have promised what I shall certainly perform. What wonder then that He does not signify the day of the final consummation, when this day which was so near He did not choose to reveal? And with good reason; to the end they may be ever wakeful, and in a state of expectation and earnest heed.

For it cannot, it cannot be, that a man should enjoy the benefit of grace except he watch. Seest thou not what Elias saith to his disciple? “If thou see me when I am taken up” (2 Kings 2:10), this that thou askest shall be done for thee. Christ also was ever wont to say unto those that came unto Him, “Believest thou?” For if we be not appropriated and made over to the thing given, neither do we greatly feel the benefit. So it was also in the case of Paul; grace did not come to him immediately, but three days intervened, during which he was blind; purified the while, and prepared by fear. For as those who dye the purple first season with other ingredients the cloth that is to receive the dye, that the bloom may not be fleeting’ so

in this instance God first takes order that the soul shall be thoroughly in earnest, and then pours forth His grace. On this account also, neither did He immediately send the Spirit, but on the fiftieth day. Now if any one ask, why we also do not baptize at that season of Pentecost? we may answer, that grace is the same now as then; but the mind becomes more elevated now, by being prepared through fasting. And the season too of Pentecost furnishes a not unlikely reason. What may that be? Our fathers held Baptism to be just the proper curb upon evil concupiscence, and a powerful lesson for teaching to be sober-minded even in a time of delights.

As if then we were banqueting with Christ Himself, and partaking of His table, let us do nothing at random, but let us pass our time in fastings, and prayers, and much sobriety of mind, For if a man who is destined to enter upon some temporal government, prepares himself all his life long, and that he may obtain some dignity, lays out his money, spends his time, and submits to endless troubles what shall we deserve, who draw near to the kingdom of heaven with such negligence, and both show no earnestness before we have received, and after having received are again negligent? Nay, this is the very reason why we are negligent after having received, that we did not watch before we had received. Therefore many, after they have received, immediately have returned to their former vomit, and have become more wicked, and drawn upon themselves a more severe punishment; when having been delivered from their former sins, herein they have more grievously provoked the Judge, that having been delivered from so great a disease, still they did not learn sobriety, but that has happened unto them, which Christ threatened to the paralytic man, saying, "Behold thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John 5:14): and which He also predicted of the Jews, that "the last state shall be worse than the first." (Matthew 12:45.) For *if*, saith He, showing that by their ingratitude they should bring upon them the worst of evils, "if I had not come, and spoken unto them, they had not had sin" (John 15:22); so that the guilt of sins committed after these benefits is doubled and quadrupled, in that, after the honor put upon us, we show ourselves ungrateful and wicked. And the Layer of Baptism helps not a whir to procure for us a milder punishment. And consider: a man has gotten grievous sins by committing murder or adultery, or some other crime: *these* were remitted through Baptism. For there is no sin, no

impiety, which does not yield and give place to this gift; for the Grace is Divine. A man has again committed adultery and murder; the former adultery is indeed done away, the murder forgiven, and not brought up again to his charge, “for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance” (Romans 11:29); but for those committed after Baptism he suffers a punishment as great as he would if both the former sins were brought up again, and many worse than these. For the guilt is no longer simply equal, but doubled and tripled. Look: in proof that the penalty of these sins is greater, hear what St. Paul says: “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses: 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 thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Hebrews 10:28, 29.)

Perhaps we have now deterred many from receiving baptism. Not however with this intention have we so spoken, but on purpose that having received it, they may continue in temperance and much moderation. ‘But I am afraid,’ says one. If thou wert afraid, thou wouldest have received and guarded it. ‘Nay,’ saith he, ‘but this is the very reason why I do not receive it, — that I am frightened.’ And art thou not afraid to depart thus? ‘God is merciful,’ saith he. Receive baptism then, because He is merciful and ready to help. But thou, where to be in earnest is the thing required, dost not allege this mercifulness; thou thinkest of this only where thou hast a mind to do so. And yet that was the time to resort to God’s mercy, and we shall then be surest of obtaining it, when we do our part. For he that has cast the whole matter upon God, and, after his baptism, sins, as being man it is likely, he may, and repents, shall obtain mercy; whereas he that prevaricates with God’s mercy, and departs this life with no portion in that grace, shall have his punishment without a word to be said for him. ‘But how if he depart,’ say you, ‘after having had the grace vouchsafed to him?’ He will depart empty again of all good works. For it is impossible, yes, it is in my opinion impossible, that the man who upon such hopes dallied with baptism should have effected ought generous and good. And why dost thou harbor such fear, and presume upon the uncertain chance of the future? Why not convert this fear into labor and earnestness, and thou shalt be great and admirable? Which is best, to fear or to labor? Suppose

some one to have placed thee, having nothing to do, in a tottering house, saying, Look for the decaying roof to fall upon thy head: for perhaps it will fall perhaps not; but if thou hadst rather it should not, then work and inhabit the more secure apartment: which wouldest thou have rather chosen, that idle condition accompanied with fear, or this labor with confidence? Why then, act now in the same way. For the uncertain future is like a decayed house, ever threatening to fall; but this work, laborious though it be, ensures safety.

Now God forbid that it should happen to us to fall into so great straits as to sin after baptism. However, even if aught such should happen, God is merciful, and has given us many ways of obtaining remission even after this. But just as those who sin after baptism are punished for this reason more severely than the Catechumens, so again, those who know that there are medicines in repentance, and yet will not make use of them, will undergo a more grievous chastisement. For by how much the mercy of God is enlarged, by so much does the punishment increase, if we do not duly profit by that mercy. What sayest thou, O man? When thou wast full of such grievous evils, and given over, suddenly thou becamest a friend, and wast exalted to the highest honor, not by labors of thine own, but by the gift of God: thou didst again return to thy former misconduct; and though thou didst deserve to be sorely punished, nevertheless, God did not turn away, but gave unnumbered opportunities of salvation, whereby thou mayest yet become a friend: yet for all this, thou hast not the will to labor. What forgiveness canst thou deserve henceforth? Will not the Gentiles with good reason deride thee as a worthless drone? For if there be power in that doctrine of yours, say they, what means this multitude of uninitiated persons? If the mysteries be excellent and desirable, let none receive baptism at his last gasp. For that is not the time for giving of mysteries but for making of wills; the time for mysteries is in health of mind and soundness of soul. For, if a man would not prefer to make his will in such a condition; and if he does so make it, he gives a handle for subsequent litigation (and this is the reason why testators premise these words: "Alive, in my senses, and in health, I make this disposal of my property:"), how should it be possible for a person who is no longer master of his senses to go through the right course of preparation for the sacred mysteries? For if in the affairs of this life, the laws of the world

would not permit a man who was not perfectly sound in mind to make a will, although it be in his own affairs that he would lay down the law; how, when thou art receiving instruction concerning the kingdom of heaven, and the unspeakable riches of that world, shall it be possible for thee to learn all clearly, when very likely too thou art beside thyself through the violence of thy malady? And when wilt thou say those words to Christ, in the act of being buried with Him when at the point to depart hence? For indeed both by works and by words must we show our good will towards Him. (Romans 6:4.) Now what thou art doing is all one, as if a man should want to be enlisted as a soldier, when the war is just about to break up; or to strip for the contest in the arena, just when the spectators have risen from their seats. For thou hast thine arms given thee, not that thou shouldest straightway depart hence, but that being equipped therewith, thou mayest raise a trophy over the enemy. Let no one think that it is out of season to discourse on this subject, because it is not Lent now. Nay, this it is that vexes me, that ye look to a set time in such matters. Whereas that Eunuch, barbarian as he was and on a journey, yea on the very highway, he did not seek for a set time (Acts 8:27); no, nor the jailer, though he was in the midst of a set of prisoners, and the teacher he saw before him was a man scourged and in chains, and whom he was still to have in his custody. (ib. 16:29.) But here, not being inmates of a jail, nor out on a journey, many are putting off their baptism even to their last breath.

Now if thou still questionest that Christ is God, stand away from the Church: be not here, even as a hearer of the Divine Word, and as one of the catechumens: but if thou art sure of this, and knowest clearly this truth, why delay? Why shrink back and hesitate? For fear, say you, lest I should sin. But dost thou not fear what is worse, to depart for the next world with such a heavy burden? For it is not equally excusable, not to have gotten a grace set before you, and to have failed in attempting to live uprightly. If thou be called to account, Why didst thou not come for it? what wilt thou answer? In the other case thou mayest allege the burden of thy passions, and the difficulty of a virtuous life: but nothing of the kind here. For here is grace, freely conveying liberty. But thou fearest lest thou shouldest sin? Let this be thy language after Baptism: and then entertain this fear, in order to hold fast the liberty thou hast received; not now, to

prevent thy receiving such a gift. Whereas now thou art wary before baptism, and negligent after it. But thou art waiting for Lent: and why? Has that season any advantage? Nay, it was not at the Passover that the Apostles received the grace, but at another season; and then three thousand (Luke says,) and five thousand were baptized: (ch. 2:41; 4:4, and ch. 10) and again Cornelius. Let us then not wait for a set time, lest by hesitating and putting off we depart empty, and destitute of so great gifts. What do you suppose is my anguish when I hear that any person has been taken away unbaptized, while I reflect upon the intolerable punishments of that life, the inexorable doom! Again, how I am grieved to behold others drawing near to their last gasp, and not brought to their right mind even then. Hence too it is that scenes take place quite unworthy of this gift. For whereas there ought to be joy, and dancing, and exultation, and wearing of garlands, when another is christened; the wife of the sick man has no sooner heard that the physician has ordered this, than she is overcome with grief, as if it were some dire calamity; she sets up the greatest lamentation, and nothing is heard all over the house but crying and wailing, just as it is when condemned criminals are led away to their doom. The sick man again is then more sorely grieved; and if he recovers from his illness, is as vexed as if some great harm had been done to him. For since he had not been prepared for a virtuous life, he has no heart for the conflicts which are to follow, and shrinks at the thought of them. Do you see what devices the devil contrives, what shame, what ridicule? Let us rid ourselves of this disgrace; let us live as Christ has enjoined. He gave us Baptism, not that we should receive and depart, but that we should show the fruits of it in our after life. How can one say to him who is departing and broken down, Bear fruit? Hast thou not heard that “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace?” (Galatians 5:22.) How comes it then that the very contrary takes place here? For the wife stands there mourning, when she ought to rejoice; the children weeping, when they ought to be glad together; the sick man himself lies there in darkness, and surrounded by noise and tumult, when he ought to be keeping high festival; full of exceeding despondency at the thought of leaving his children orphans, his wife a widow, his house desolate. Is this a state in which to draw near unto mysteries? answer me; is this a state in which to approach the sacred table? Are such scenes to be tolerated? Should the Emperor send letters and release the prisoners in the jails, there is joy and gladness: God sends

down the Holy Ghost from Heaven to remit not arrears of money, but a whole mass of sins, and do ye all bewail and lament? Why, how grossly unsuitable is this! Not to mention that sometimes it is upon the dead that the water has been poured, and holy mysteries flung upon the ground. However, not we are to blame for this, but men who are so perverse. I exhort you then to leave all, and turn and draw near to Baptism with all alacrity, that having given proof of great earnestness at this present time, we may obtain confidence for that which is to come; whereunto that we may attain, may it be granted unto us all by the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY 2

ACTS 1:6

“When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”

WHEN the disciples intend to ask anything, they approach Him together, that by dint of numbers they may abash Him into compliance. They well knew that in what He had said previously, “Of that day knoweth no man” (Matthew 24:36), He had merely declined telling them: therefore they again drew near, and put the question. They would not have put it had they been truly satisfied with that answer. For having heard that they were about to receive the Holy Ghost, they, as being now worthy of instruction, desired to learn. Also they were quite ready for freedom: for they had no mind to address themselves to danger; what they wished was to breathe freely again; for they were no light matters that had happened to them, but the utmost peril had impended over them. And without saying any thing to Him of the Holy Ghost, they put this question: “Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” They did not ask, when? but whether “at this time.” So eager were they for that day. Indeed, to me it appears that they had not any clear notion of the nature of that kingdom; for the Spirit had not yet instructed them. And they do not say, When shall these things be? but they approach Him with greater honor, saying, “Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom,” as being now already fallen. For there they were still affected towards sensible objects, seeing they were not yet become better than those who were before them; here they have henceforth high conceptions concerning Christ. Since then their minds are elevated, He also speaks to them in a higher strain. For He no longer tells them, “Of that day not even the Son of Man knoweth” (Mark 13:32); but He says, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power” (Acts 1:7.) Ye ask things greater than your capacity, He would say. And yet even now they learned things that were much greater than this. And that you may see that this is strictly the case, look how many things I shall enumerate. What, I pray you, was greater than their having learned what they did learn? Thus, they learned that there is a Son of God, and that God has a Son equal with

Himself in dignity (John 5:17-20); they learned that there will be a resurrection (Matthew 17:9); that when He ascended He sat on the right hand of God (Luke 22:69); and what is still more stupendous, that Flesh is seated in heaven, and adored by Angels, and that He will come again (Mark 16:19); they learned what is to take place in the judgment (Matthew 16:27); learned that they shall then sit and judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 21:27); learned that the Jews would be cast out, and in their stead the Gentiles should come in (Matthew 19:28). For, tell me, which is greater? to learn that a person will reign, or to learn the time when? (Luke 21:24). Paul learned “things which it is not lawful for a man to utter” (2 Corinthians 12:4); things that were before the world was made, he learned them all. Which is the more difficult, the beginning or the end? Clearly to learn the beginning. This, Moses learned, and the time when, and how long ago: and he enumerates the years. And the wise Solomon saith, “I will make mention of things from the beginning of the world.” And that the time is at hand, they do know: as Paul saith, “The Lord is at hand, be careful for nothing.” (Philippians 4:5). These things they knew not [then], and yet He mentions many signs (Matthew ch. 24). But, as He has just said, “Not many days hence,” wishing them to be vigilant, and did not openly declare the precise moment, so is it here also. However, it is not about the general Consummation that they now ask Him, but, “Wilt Thou at this time,” say they, “restore the kingdom to Israel?” And not even this did He reveal to them. They also asked this [about the end of the world] before: and as on that occasion He answered by leading them away from thinking that their deliverance was near and, on the contrary, cast them into the midst of perils, so likewise on this occasion but more mildly. For, that they may not imagine themselves to be wronged, and these things to be mere pretenses, hear what He says: He immediately gives them that at which they rejoiced: for He adds: “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8.) Then, that they may make no more enquiries, straightway He was received up. Thus, just as on the former occasion He had darkened their minds by awe, and by saying, “I know not;” here also He does so by being taken up. For great was their eagerness on the subject, and they would not have desisted; and yet it was very necessary that they should not learn this. For tell me, which do the

Gentiles most disbelieve? that there will be a consummation of the world, or that God is become man, and issued from the Virgin? But I am ashamed of dwelling on this point, as if it were about some difficult matter. Then again, that the disciples might not say, Why dost thou leave the matter in suspense? He adds, "Which the Father hath put in His own power." And yet He declared the Father's power and His to be one: as in the saying, "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will." (John 5:21.) If where need is to work, Thou actest with the same power as the Father; where it behooves to know, dost Thou not know with the same power? Yet certainly to raise up the dead is much greater than to learn the day. If the greater be with power, much more the other.

But just as when we see a child crying, and pertinaciously wishing to get something from us that is not expedient for him, we hide the thing, and show him our empty hands, and say, "See, we have it not:" the like has Christ here done with the Apostles. But as the child, even when we show a him [our empty hands], persists with his crying, conscious he has been deceived, and then we leave him, and depart, saying, "Such an one calls me:" and we give him something else instead, in order to divert him from his desire, telling him it is a much liner thing than the other, and then hasten away; in like manner Christ acted. The disciples asked to have something, and He said He had it not. And on the first occasion he frightened them. Then again they asked to have it now: He said He had it not; and He did not frighten them now, but after having shown [the empty hands], He has done this, and gives them a plausible reason: "Which the Father," He says, "hath put in his own power." What? Thou not know the things of the Father! Thou knowest Him, and not what belongs to Him! And yet Thou hast said, "None knoweth the Father but the Son" (Luke 10:25); and, "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10); and Thou not know this! But they feared to ask Him again, test they should hear Him say, "Are ye also without understanding?" (Matthew 15:26.) For they feared Him now much more than before. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." As in the former instance He had not answered their question (for it is the part of a teacher to teach not what the disciple chooses, but what is expedient for him to learn), so in this, He tells them

beforehand, for this reason, what they ought to know, that they may not be troubled. In truth, they were yet weak. But to inspire them with confidence, He raised up their souls, and concealed what was grievous. Since he was about to leave them very shortly, therefore in this discourse He says nothing painful. But how? He extols as great the things which would be painful: all but saying, “Fear not”: for ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria.” For since he had said, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not” (Matthew 10:5), what there He left unsaid, He here adds “And to the uttermost part of the earth;” and having spoken this, which was more fearful than all the rest, then that they may not again question Him, He held His peace. “And having this said, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight” (v. 9). Seest thou that they did preach and fulfill the Gospel? For great was the gift He had bestowed on them. In the very place, He says, where ye are afraid, that is, in Jerusalem, there preach ye first, and afterwards unto the uttermost part of the earth. Then for assurance of what He had said, “While they beheld, He was taken up.” Not “while they beheld” did He rise from the dead, but “while they beheld, He was taken up.” Inasmuch, however, as the sight of their eyes even here was not all-sufficient; for in the Resurrection they saw the end, but not the beginning, and in the Ascension they saw the beginning, but not the end: because in the former it had been superfluous to have seen the beginning, the Lord Himself Who spake these things being present, and the sepulcher showing clearly that He is not there; but in the latter, they needed to be informed of the sequel by word of others: inasmuch then as their eyes do not suffice to show them the height above, nor to inform them whether He is actually gone up into heaven, or only seemingly into heaven, see then what follows. That it was Jesus Himself they knew from the fact that He had been conversing with them (for had they seen only from a distance, they could not have recognized Him by sight), but that He is taken up into Heaven the Angels themselves inform them. Observe how it is ordered, that not all is done by the Spirit, but the eyes also do their part. But why did “a cloud receive Him?” This too was a sure sign that He went up to Heaven. Not fire, as in the case of Elijah, nor fiery chariot but “a cloud received Him;” which was a symbol of Heaven, as the Prophet says; “Who maketh the clouds His

chariot" (Psalm 104:3); it is of the Father Himself that this is said. Therefore he says, "on a cloud;" in the symbol, he would say, of the Divine power, for no other Power is seen to appear on a cloud. For hear again what another Prophet says: "The Lord sitteth upon a light cloud" (Isaiah 19:1). For it was while they were listening with great attention to what He was saying, and this in answer to a very interesting question, and with their minds fully aroused and quite awake, that this thing took place. Also on the mount [Sinai] the cloud was because of Him: since Moses also entered into the darkness, but the cloud there was not because of Moses. And He did not merely say, "I go," lest they should again grieve, but He said, "I send the Spirit" (John 16:5, 7); and that He was going away into heaven they saw with their eyes. O what a sight they were granted! "And while they looked steadfastly," it is said, "toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven" — they used the expression "This" demonstratively, saying, "this Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall thus" — demonstratively, "in this way" — "come in like manner as ye have seen Him going into heaven." (v. 10, 11.) Again, the outward appearance is cheering ["in white apparel"]. They were Angels, in the form of men. And they say, "Ye men of Galilee:" they showed themselves to be trusted by the disciples, by saying, "Ye men of Galilee." For this was the meaning: else, what needed they to be told of their country, who knew it well enough? By their appearance also they attracted their regard, and shewed that they were from heaven. But wherefore does not Christ Himself tell them these things, instead of the Angels? He had beforehand told them all things; ["What if ye shall see the Son of Man] going up where He was before?" (John 6:62).

Moreover the Angels did not say, 'whom you have seen taken up,' but, "going into heaven:" ascension is the word, not assumption; the expression "taken up," belongs to the flesh. For the same reason they say, "He which is taken up from you shall thus come," not, "shall be sent," but, "shall come. He that ascended, the same is he also that descended" (Ephesians 4:10). So again the expression, "a cloud received Him:" for He Himself mounted upon the cloud. Of the expressions, some are adapted to the conceptions of the disciples, some agreeable with the Divine Majesty.

Now, as they behold, their conceptions are elevated: He has given them no slight hint of the nature of His second coming. For this, "Shall *thus* come," means, with the body; which thing they desired to hear; and, that he shall come again to judgment "thus" upon a cloud. "And, behold, two men stood by them." Why is it said, "men?" Because they had fashioned themselves completely as such, that the beholders might not be overpowered. "Which also said:" their words moreover were calculated for soothing: "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" They would not let them any longer wait there for Him. Here again, these tell what is greater, and leave the less unsaid. That "He will thus come," they say, and that "ye must look for Him from heaven." For the rest, they called them off from that spectacle to their saying, that they might not, because they could not see Him, imagine that He was not ascended, but even while they are conversing, would be present ere they were aware. For if they said on a former occasion, "Whither goest Thou?" (John 13:36) much more would they have said it now.

"Wilt Thou at this time," say they, "restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Recapitulation). They so well knew his mildness, that after His Passion also they ask Him, "Wilt thou restore?" And yet He had before said to them, "Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, but the end is not yet," nor shall Jerusalem be taken. But now they ask Him about the kingdom, not about the end. And besides, He does not speak at great length with them after the Resurrection. They address then this question, as thinking that they themselves would be in high honor, if this should come to pass. But He (for as touching this restoration, that it was not to be, He did not openly declare; for what needed they to learn this? hence they do not again ask, "What is the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" for they are afraid to say that: but, "Wilt Thou restore the kingdom to Israel?" for they thought there was such a kingdom), but He, I say, both in parables had shown that the time was not near, and here where they asked, and He answered thereto, "Ye shall receive power," says He, "when the Holy Ghost is come upon you. Is come upon you," not, "is sent," [to shew the Spirit's coequal Majesty. How then darest thou, O opponent of the Spirit, to call Him a creature?]. "And ye shall be witnesses to Me." He hinted at the Ascension. ["And when he had spoken these things.] Which they had heard before, and He now reminds them of. ["He was taken up."]

Already it has been shown, that He went up into heaven. [“And a cloud, etc.”] “Clouds and darkness are under His feet,” (Psalm 18:9; 97:2) saith the Scripture: for this is declared by the expression, “And a cloud received Him:” the Lord of heaven, it means. For as a king is shown by the royal chariot, so was the royal chariot sent for Him. [“Behold, two men, etc.] That they may vent no sorrowful exclamations, and that it might not be with them as it was with Elisha, (2 Kings 2:12) who, when his master was taken up, rent his mantle. And what say they? “This Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall thus come.” And, “Behold, two men stood by them.” (Matthew 18:16.) With good reason: for “in the mouth of two witnesses shall every word be established” (Deuteronomy 17:6): and these utter the same things. And it is said, that they were “in white apparel.” In the same manner as they had already seen an Angel at the sepulcher, who had even told them their own thoughts; so here also an Angel is the preacher of His Ascension; although indeed the Prophets had frequently foretold it, as well as the Resurrection. Everywhere it is Angels as at the Nativity, “for that which is conceived in her,” saith one, “is by the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 1:20): and again to Mary, “Fear not, Mary.” (Luke 1:30.) And at the Resurrection: “He is not here; He is risen, and goeth before you.” (ib. 24:6.) “Come, and see!” (Matthew 28:6.) And at the Second Coming. For that they may not be utterly in amaze, therefore it is added, “Shall thus come.” (ib. 25:31.) They recover their breath a little; if indeed He shall come again, if also thus come, and not be unapproachable! And that expression also, that it is “from them” He is taken up, is not idly added. And of the Resurrection indeed Christ Himself bears witness (because of all things this is, next to the Nativity, nay even above the Nativity, the most wonderful: His raising Himself to life again): for, “Destroy,” He says, “this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” (John 2:19.) “Shall thus come,” say they. If any therefore desires to see Christ; if any grieves that he has not seen Him: having this heard, let him show forth an admirable life, and certainly he shall see Him, and shall not be disappointed. For Christ will come with greater glory, though “thus,” in this manner, with a body; and much more wondrous will it be, to see Him descending from heaven. But for what He will come, they do not add.

[“Shall thus come,” etc.] This is a confirmation of the Resurrection; for if he was taken up with a body, much rather must He have risen again with a

body. Where are those who disbelieve the Resurrection? Who are they, I pray? Are they Gentiles, or Christians? for I am ignorant. But no, I know well: they are Gentiles, who also disbelieve the work of Creation. For the two denials go together: the denial that God creates any thing from nothing, and the denial that He raises up what has been buried. But then, being ashamed to be thought such as “know not the power of God” (Matthew 22:29), that we may not impute this to them, they allege: We do not say it with this meaning, but because there is no need of the body. Truly it may be seasonably said, “The fool will speak foolishness.” (Isaiah 32:6.) Are you not ashamed not to grant, that God can create from nothing? If he creates from matter already existing, wherein does He differ from men? But whence, you demand, are evils? Though you should not know whence, ought you for that to introduce another evil in the knowledge of evils? Hereupon two absurdities follow. For if you do not grant, that from things which are not, God made the things which are, much more shall you be ignorant whence are evils: and then, again, you introduce another evil, the affirming that Evil (τὴν κακίαν) is uncreated. Consider now what a thing it is, when you wish to find the source of evils, to be both ignorant of it, and to add another to it. Search after the origin of evils, and do not blaspheme God. And how do I blaspheme? says he. When you make out that evils have a power equal to God’s; a power uncreated. For, observe what Paul says; “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.” (Romans 1:20.) But the devil would have both to be of matter, that there may be nothing left from which we may come to the knowledge of God. For tell me, whether is harder: to take that which is by nature evil (if indeed there be ought such; for I speak upon your principles, since there is no such thing as evil by nature), and make it either good, or even coefficient of good? or, to make of nothing? Whether is easier (I speak of quality); to induce the non-existent quality; or to take the existing quality, and change it into its contrary? where there is no house, to make the house; or where it is utterly destroyed, to make it identically exist again? Why, as this is impossible, so is that: to make a thing into its opposite. Tell me, whether is harder; to make a perfume, or to make filth have the effect of perfume? Say, whether of these is easier (since we subject God to our reasonings: nay, not we, but ye); to form eyes, or to make a blind man to see continuing blind, and yet more sharp-

sighted, than one who does see? To make blindness into sight, and deafness into hearing? To me the other seems easier. Say then do you grant God that which is harder, and not grant the easier? But souls also they affirm to be of His substance. Do you see what a number of impieties and absurdities are here! In the first place, wishing to show that evils are from God, they bring in another thing more impious than this, that they are equal with Him in majesty, and God prior in existence to none of them, assigning this great prerogative even to them! In the next place, they affirm evil to be indestructible: for if that which is uncreated can be destroyed, ye see the blasphemy! So that it comes to this, either that nothing is of God if not these; or that these are God! Thirdly, what I have before spoken of, in this point they defeat themselves, and prepare against themselves fresh indignation. Fourthly, they affirm unordered matter to possess such inherent (**ἐπιτηδειότητα**) power. Fifthly, that evil is the cause of the goodness of God, and that without this the Good had not been good. Sixthly, they bar against us the ways of attaining unto the knowledge of God. Seventhly, they bring God down into men, yea plants and logs. For if our soul be of the substance of God, but the process of its transmigration into new bodies brings it at last into cucumbers, and melons, and onions, why then the substance of God will pass into cucumbers! And if we say, that the Holy Ghost fashioned the Temple For our Lord's body] in the Virgin, they laugh us to scorn: and if, that He dwelt in that spiritual Temple, again they laugh; while they themselves are not ashamed to bring down God's substance into cucumbers, and melons, and flies, and caterpillars, and asses, thus excogitating a new fashion of idolatry: for let it not be as the Egyptians have it, "The onion is God;" but let it be, "God in the onion"! Why dost thou shrink from the notion of God's entering into a body? 'It is shocking,' says he. Why then this is much more shocking. But, a forsooth, it is not shocking — how should it be? — this same thing which is so, if it be into us! 'But thy notion is indeed shocking.' Do ye see the filthiness of their impiety? — But why do they not wish the body to be raised? And why do they say the body is evil? By what then, tell me, dost thou know God? by what hast thou the knowledge of existing things? The philosopher too: by means of what is he a philosopher, if the body does nothing towards it? Deaden the senses, and then learn something of the things one needs to know! What would be more foolish than a soul, if from the first it had the senses deadened? If the

deadening of but a single part, I mean of the brain, becomes a marring of it altogether; if all the rest should be deadened, what would it be good for? Show me a soul without a body. Do you not hear physicians say, The presence of disease sadly enfeebles the soul? How long will ye put off hanging yourselves? Is the body material? tell me. "To be sure, it is." Then you ought to hate it. Why do you feed, why cherish it? You ought to get quit of this prison. But besides: "God cannot overcome matter, unless he (*συμπλακῆ*) implicate himself with it: for he cannot issue orders to it (e feebleness!) until he close with it, and (*σταθῆ*) take his stand (say you) through the whole of it!" And a king indeed does all by commanding; but God, not by commanding the evil! In short, if it were unparticipant of all good, it could not subsist at all. For Evil cannot subsist, unless it lay hold upon somewhat of the accidents of Virtue: so that if it had been heretofore all unmixed with virtue, it would have perished long ago: for such is the condition of evils. Let there be a profligate man, let him put upon himself no restraint whatever, will he live ten days? Let there be a robber, and devoid of all conscience in his dealings with every one, let him be such even to his fellow-robbers, will he be able to live? Let there be a thief, void of all shame, who knows not what blushing is, but steals openly in public. It is not in the nature of evils to subsist, unless they get some small share at least in good. So that hereupon, according to these men, God gave them their subsistence. Let there be a city of wicked men; will it stand? But let them be wicked, not only with regard to the good, but towards each other. Why, it is impossible such a city should stand. Truly, "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." (Romans 1:22.) If bodily substance be evil, then all things visible exist idly, and in vain, both water and earth, and sun, and air; for air is also body, though not solid. It is in point then to say, "The wicked have told me foolish things." (Psalm 119:85.) But let not us endure them, let us block up our ears against them. For there is, yea, there is, a resurrection of bodies. This the sepulcher which is at Jerusalem declares, this the pillar to which He was bound, when He was scourged. For, "We did eat and drink with Him," it is said. Let us then believe in the Resurrection, and do things worthy of it, that we may attain to the good things which are to come, through Christ Jesus our Lord, with Whom to the Father, and the Holy Ghost together, be power, honor, now and for ever, world Without end. Amen.

HOMILY 3

ACTS 1:12

“Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey.”

“Then returned they,” it is said: namely, when they had heard. For they could not have born it, if the angel had not (ὕπερέθετο) referred them to another Coming. It seems to me, that it was also on a sabbath-day that these things took place; for he would not thus have specified the distance, saying, “from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey,” unless they were then going on the sabbath-day a certain definite distance. “And when they were come in,” it says, “they went up into an upper room, where they were making their abode:” so they then remained in Jerusalem after the Resurrection: “both Peter, and James, and John:” no longer is only the latter together with his brother mentioned, but together with Peter the two: “and Andrew, and Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, and James (the son) of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas, (the brother) of James.” (v. 13.) He has done well to mention the disciples: for since one had betrayed Christ, and another had been unbelieving, he thereby shows that, except the first, all of them were preserved.

“These were all continuing with one accord in prayer together with the women.” (v. 14.) For this is a powerful weapon in temptations; and to this they had been trained. [“Continuing with one accord.”] Good. (καλῶς). Besides, the present temptation directed them to this: for they exceedingly feared the Jews. “With the women,” it is said: for he had said that they had followed Him: “and with Mary the mother of Jesus.” (Luke 23:55.) How then [is it said, that “that disciple”] took her to his own home” (John 19:26), at that time? But then the Lord had brought them together again, and so returned. “And with His brethren.” (John 17:5.) These also were before unbelieving. “And in those days,” it says, “Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said.” (v. 15.) Both as being ardent, and as having been put in trust by Christ with the flock, and as having precedence in honor, he always begins the discourse. (“The number of the names

together were about an hundred and twenty.) Men and brethren,” he says, “this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spake before,” [etc.] (v. 16.) Why did he not ask Christ to give him some one in the room of Judas? It is better as it is. For in the first place, they were engaged in other things; secondly, of Christ’s presence with them, the greatest proof that could be given was this: as He had chosen when He was among them, so did He now being absent. Now this was no small matter for their consolation. But observe how Peter does everything with the common consent; nothing imperiously. And he does not speak thus without a meaning. But observe how he consoles them concerning what had passed. In fact, what had happened had caused them no small consternation. For if there are many now who canvass this circumstance, what may we suppose they had to say then?

“Men and brethren,” says Peter. For if the Lord called them brethren, much more may he. [“Men,” he says]: they all being present. See the dignity of the Church, the angelic condition! No distinction there, “neither male nor female.” I would that the Churches were such now! None there had his mind full of some worldly matter, none was anxiously thinking about household concerns. Such a benefit are temptations, such the advantage of afflictions!

“This Scripture,” says he, “must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spake before.” Always he comforts them by the prophecies. So does Christ on all occasions. In the very same way, he shows here that no strange thing had happened, but what had already been foretold. “This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled,” he says, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before.” He does not say, David, but the Spirit through him. See what kind of doctrine the writer has at the very outset of the book. Do you see, that it was not for nothing that I said in the beginning of this work, that this book is the Polity of the Holy Spirit? “Which the Holy Ghost spake before by the mouth of David.” Observe how he appropriates (οἰκειοῦται) him; and that it is an advantage to them, that this was spoken by David, and not by some other Prophet. “Concerning Judas,” he says, “which was guide.” Here again mark the philosophical temper of the man: how he does not mention him with scorn, nor say, “that wretch,” “that miscreant:” but simply states the fact; and does not even say, “who betrayed Him,” but does what he can to

transfer the guilt to others: nor does he animadvert severely even on these: “Which was guide,” he says, “to them that took Jesus.” Furthermore, before he declares where David had spoken, he relates what had been the case with Judas, that from the things present he may fetch assurance of the things future, and show that this man had already received his due. “For he was numbered,” says he, “with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man acquired a field out of the reward of iniquity.” (v. 17, 18.) He gives his discourse a moral turn, and covertly mentions the cause of the wickedness, because it carried reproof with it. And he does not say, The Jews, but, “this man, acquired” it. For since the minds of weak persons do not attend to things future, as they do to things present, he discourses of the immediate punishment inflicted. “And falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst.” He does well to dilate not upon the sin, but upon the punishment. “And,” he says, “all his bowels gushed out.” This brought them consolation. “And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue Aceldama, that is to say, the field of blood.” (v. 19). Now the Jews gave it this name, not on this account, but because of Judas; here, however, Peter makes it to have this reference, and when he brings forward the adversaries as witnesses, both by the fact that they named it, and by saying, “in their proper tongue,” this is what he means.

Then after the event, he appositely brings in the Prophet, saying, “For it is written in the Book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein” (v. 20) (Psalm 69:25): this is said of the field and the dwelling: “And his bishopric let another take; that is, his office, his priesthood. So that this, he says, is not my counsel, but His who hath foretold these things. For, that he may not seem to be undertaking a great thing, and just such as Christ had done, he adduces the Prophet as a witness. “Wherefore it behooves of these men which have companied with us all the time.” (v. 21.) Why does he make it their business too? That the matter might not become an object of strife, and they might not fall into contention about it. For if the Apostles themselves once did this, much more might those. This he ever avoids. Wherefore at the beginning he said, “Men and brethren. It behooves” to choose from among you. He defers the decision to the whole body, thereby both making the elected objects of reverence and himself keeping clear of all invidiousness with regard to the

rest. For such occasions always give rise to great evils. Now that some one must needs be appointed, he adduces the prophet as witness: but from among what persons: "Of these," he says, "which have companied with us all the time." To have said, the worthy must present themselves, would have been to insult the others; but now he refers the matter to length of time; for he says not simply, "These who have companied with us," but, "all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection" (v. 22): that their college (ὁ χορὸς) might not be left mutilated. Then why did it not rest with Peter to make the election himself: what was the motive? This; that he might not seem to bestow it of favor. And besides, he was not yet endowed with the spirit. "And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabus, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias." (v. 23.) Not he appointed them: but it was he that introduced the proposition to that effect, at the same time pointing out that even this was not his own, but from old time by prophecy; so that he acted as expositor, not as preceptor. "Joseph called Barsabus, who was surnamed Justus." Perhaps both names are given, because there were others of the same name, for among the Apostles also there were several names alike; as James, and James (the son) of Alphaeus; Simon Peter, and Simon Zelotes; Judas (the brother) of James, and Judas Iscariot. The appellation, however, may have arisen from a change of life, and very likely also of the moral character. "They appointed two," it is said, "Joseph called Barsabus, who was surnamed. Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said; Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and Apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." (v. 24, 25.) They do well to mention the sin of Judas, thereby showing that it is a witness they ask to have; not increasing the number, but not suffering it to be diminished. "And they gave forth their lots "(for the spirit was not yet sent), "and the lot fell upon Matthias: and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles." (v. 26.)

"Then," it says, "returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet (Recapitulation), ["which is nigh to Jerusalem, at the distance of a sabbath-day's journey:"] so that there was no long way to go, to be a

cause of alarm to them while yet trembling and fearful. “And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room.” They durst not appear in the town. They also did well to go up into an upper room, as it became less easy’ to arrest them at once. “And they continued,” it is said, “with one accord in prayer.” Do you see how watchful they were? “Continuing in prayer,” and “with one accord,” as it were with one soul, continuing therein: two things reported in their praise. [“Where they were abiding,” etc., to, “And Mary the Mother of Jesus and His brethren.”] Now Joseph perhaps was dead: for it is not to be supposed that when the brethren had become believers, Joseph believed not; he who in fact had believed before any. Certain it is that we nowhere find him looking upon Christ as man merely. As where His mother said, [“ Thy father and I did seek thee sorrowing.” (Luke 2:48.) And upon another occasion, it was said,] “Thy mother and thy brethren seek thee.” (Matthew 13:47.) So that Joseph knew this before all others. And to them [the brethren] Christ said, “The world cannot hate you, but Me it hateth. (John 7:7.)

Again, consider the moderation of James. He it was who received the Bishopric of Jerusalem, and here he says nothing. Mark also the great moderation of the other Apostles, how they concede the throne to him, and no longer dispute with each other. For that Church was as it were in heaven: having nothing to do with this world’s affairs: and resplendent not with wails, no, nor with numbers, but with the zeal of them that formed the assembly. They were “about an hundred and twenty,” it says. The seventy perhaps whom Christ Himself had chosen, and other of the more earnest-minded disciples, as Joseph and Matthias. (v. 14.) There were women, he says, many, who followed Him. (Mark 15:41.) [“The number of the names together.] Together” they were on all occasions.

[“ Men and brethren,” etc.] Here is forethought for providing a teacher; here was the first who ordained a teacher. He did not say, ‘We are sufficient.’ So far was he beyond all vain-glory, and he looked to one thing alone. And yet he had the same power to ordain as they all collectively. But well might these things be done in this fashion, through the noble spirit of the man, and because prelacy then was not an affair of dignity, but of provident care for the governed. This neither made the elected to become elated, for it was to dangers that they were called, nor those not elected to make a grievance of it, as if they were disgraced. But things are

not done in this fashion now; nay, quite the contrary. — For observe, they were an hundred and twenty, and he asks for one out of the whole body with good right, as having been put in charge of them: for to him had Christ said, “And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” (Luke 22:32, Ben.)

“For he was numbered with us,” (πρῶτος τοῦ πράγματος ἀύθεντεῖ absent from A.B.C.) says Peter. On this account it behooves to propose another; to be a witness in his place. And see how he imitates his Master, ever discoursing from the Scriptures, and saying nothing as yet concerning Christ; namely, that He had frequently predicted this Himself. Nor does he mention where the Scripture speaks of the treachery of Judas; for instance, “The mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me” (Psalm 109:1.); but where it speaks only of his punishment; for this was most to their advantage. It shows again the benevolence of the Lord: “For he was numbered with us” (τοῦτο γὰρ ἀυτοὺς μάλιστα ὠφέλει Δείκνυσι πάλιν A.B.C.), he says, “and obtained his lot of this ministry.” He calls it everywhere “lot,” showing that the whole is from God’s grace and election, and reminding them of the old times, inasmuch as God chose him into His own lot or portion, as of old He took the Levites. He also dwells upon the circumstances respecting Judas, showing that the reward of the treachery was made itself the herald of the punishment. For he “acquired.” he says, “a field out of the reward of the iniquity.” Observe the divine economy in the event. “Of the iniquity,” he says. For there are many iniquities, but never was anything more iniquitous than this: so that the affair was one of iniquity. Now not only to those who were present did the event become known, but to all thereafter, so that without meaning or knowing. what they were about, they gave it a name; just as Caiaphas had prophesied unconsciously. God compelled them to call the field in Hebrew “Aceldama.” (Matthew 26:24.) By this also the evils which were to come upon the Jews were declared: and Peter shows the prophecy to have been so far in part fulfilled, which says, “It had been good for that man if he had not been born.” We may with propriety apply this same to the Jews likewise; for if he who was guide suffered thus, much more they Thus far however Peter says nothing of this. Then, showing that the term, “Aceldama,” might well be applied to his fate, he introduces the prophet, saying, “Let his habitation be

desolate.” For what can be worse desolation than to become a place of burial? And the field may well be called *his*. For he who cast down the price, although others were the buyers, has a right to be himself reckoned owner of a great desolation. This desolation was the prelude to that of the Jews, as will appear on looking closely into the facts. For indeed they destroyed themselves by famine, and killed many, and the city became a burial-place of strangers, of soldiers, for as to those, they would not even have let them be buried, for in fact they were not deemed worthy of sepulture.

“Wherefore of these men which have companied with us,” continues Peter. Observe how desirous he is they should be eye-witnesses. It is true indeed that the Spirit would shortly come; and yet great care is shown with regard to this circumstance. “Of these men,” he says, “which have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us.” He shows that they had dwelt with Christ, not simply been present as disciples. In fact, from the very beginning there were many that then followed Him. Observe, for instance, how this appears in these words: “One of the two which heard John speak, and followed Jesus. — All the time,” he says, “that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John.” (John 1:40.) True! for no one knew what preceded that event, though they did learn it by the Spirit. “Unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection.” He said not, a witness of the rest of his actions, but a witness of the resurrection alone. For indeed that witness had a better right to be believed, who was able to declare, that He Who ate and drank, and was crucified, the same rose again. Wherefore it was needed that he should be a witness, not only of the time preceding this event, nor only of what followed it, and of the miracles; the thing required was, the resurrection. For the other matters were manifest and acknowledged, but the resurrection took place in secret, and was manifest to these only. And they do not say, Angels have told us; but, We have seen. For this it was that was most needful at that time: that they should be men having a right to be believed, because they had seen.

“And they appointed two,” it is said. Why not many? That the feeling of disappointment might not reach further, extending to many. Again, it is not without reason that he puts Matthias last; he would show, that

frequently he that is honorable among men, is inferior before God. And they all pray in common saying, “Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show. Thou,” not “We.” And very seasonably they use the epithet, “heart-knowing:” for by Him Who is this must the choice be made. So confident were they, that assuredly one of them must be appointed. They said not, Choose, but, “Show the chosen one;” knowing that all things were foreordained of God; “Whom Thou didst choose: one of these two,” say they, “to have his lot in this ministry and apostleship.” For there was besides another ministry (*διακονία*). “And they gave them their lots.” For they did not yet consider themselves to be worthy to be informed by some sign. And besides, if in a case where neither prayer was made, nor men of worth were the agents, the casting of lots so much availed, because it was done of a right intention, I mean in the case of Jonah (Jonah 1:7); much more did it here. Thus, did he, the designated, fill up the company, complete the order: but the other candidate was not annoyed; for the apostolic writers would not have concealed [that or any other] failings of their own, seeing they have told of the very chief Apostles, that on other occasions they *had indignation*(Matthew 20:24; 26:8), and this not once only, but again and again.

Let us then also imitate them. And now I address no longer every one, but those who aim at preferment. If thou believest that the election is with God, be not displeased. (Mark 10:14, 21; 14:4.) For it is with Him thou art displeased, and with Him thou art exasperated: it is He who has made the choice; thou doest the very thing that Cain did; because, forsooth, his brother’s, sacrifice was preferred, he was indignant, when he ought to have felt compunction. However, that is not what I mean here; but this, that God knows how to dispense things for the best. In many cases, thou art in point of disposition more estimable than the other but not the fit person. Besides, on the other hand, thy life is irreproachable, and thy habits those of a well-nurtured man, but in the Church this is not all that is wanted. Moreover, one man is adapted for one thing, another for another. Do you not observe, how much discourse the holy Scripture has made on this matter? But let me say why it is that the thing has become a subject of competition: it is because we come to the Episcopate not as unto a work of governing and superintending the brethren, but as to a post of dignity and repose. Did you but know that a Bishop is bound to belong to all, to

bear the burden of all; that others, if they are angry, are pardoned, but he never; that others, if they sin, have excuses made for them, he has none; you would not be eager for the dignity, would not run after it. So it is, the Bishop is exposed to the tongues of all, to the criticism of all, whether they be wise or fools. He is harassed with cares every day, nay, every night. He has many to hate him, many to envy him. Talk not to me of those who curry favor with all, of those who desire to sleep, of those who advance to this office as for repose. We have nothing to do with these; we speak of those who watch for your souls, who consider the safety and welfare of those under them before their own. Tell me now: suppose a man has ten children, always living with him, and constantly under his control; yet is he solicitous about them; and a bishop, who has such numbers, not living under the same roof with him, but owing obedience to his authority — what does he not need to be! But he is honored, you will say. With what sort of honor, indeed! Why, the paupers and beggars abuse him openly in the market-place. And why does he not stop their mouths then? Yes, very proper work, this, for a bishop, is it not? Then again, if he do not give to all, the idle and the industrious alike, lo! a thousand complaints on all sides. None is afraid to accuse him, and speak evil of him. In the case of civil governors, fear steps in; with bishops, nothing of the kind. As for the fear of God, it does not influence people, as regards them, in the least degree. Why speak of the anxiety connected with the word and doctrine? the painful work in Ordinations? Either, perhaps, I am a poor wretched incompetent creature, or else, the case is as I say. The soul of a Bishop is for all the world like a vessel in a storm: lashed from every side, by friends, by foes, by one's own people, by strangers. Does not the Emperor rule the whole world, the Bishop a single city? Yet a Bishop's anxieties are as much beyond those of the emperor, as the waters of a river simply moved, by the wind are surpassed in agitation by the swelling and raging sea. And why? because in the one case there are many to lend a hand, for all goes on by law and by rule; but in the other there is none of this, nor is there authority to command; but if one be greatly moved, then he is harsh; if the contrary, then he is cold! And in him these opposites must meet, that he may neither be despised, nor be hated. Besides, the very demands of business preoccupy him: how many is he obliged to offend, whether he will or not! How many to be severe with! I speak not otherwise than it is, but as I find it in my own actual experience.

I do not think there are many among Bishops that will be saved, but many more that perish: and the reason is, that it is an affair that requires a great mind. Many are the exigencies which throw a man out of his natural temper; and he had need have a thousand eyes on all sides. Do you not see what a number of qualifications the Bishop must have? to be apt to teach, patient, holding fast the faithful word in doctrine (see 1 Timothy 3:2-9. Titus 1:7-9). What trouble and pains does this require! And then, others do wrong, and he bears all the blame. To pass over every thing else: if one soul depart unbaptized, does not this subvert all his own prospect of salvation? The loss of one soul carries with it a penalty which no language can represent. For if the salvation of that soul was of such value, that the Son of God became man, and suffered so much, think how sore a punishment must the losing of it bring! And if in this present life he who is cause of another's destruction is worthy of death, much more in the next world. Do not tell me, that the presbyter is in fault, or the deacon. The guilt of all these comes perforce upon the head of those who ordained them. Let me mention another instance. It chances, that a bishop has inherited from his predecessor a set of persons of indifferent character. What measures is it proper to take in respect of bygone transgressions (for here are two precipices) so as not to let the offender go unpunished, and not to cause scandal to the rest? Must one's first step be to cut him off? There is no actual present ground for that. But is it right to let him go unmarked? Yes, say you; for the fault rests with the bishop Who ordained him. Well then? must one refuse to ordain him again, and to raise him to a higher degree of the ministry? That would be to publish it to all men, that he is a person of indifferent character, and so again one would cause scandal in a different way. But is one to promote him to a higher degree? That is much worse.

If then there were only the responsibility of the office itself for people to run after in the episcopate, none would be so quick to accept it. But as things go, we run after this, just as we do after the dignities of the world. That we may have glory with men, we lose ourselves with God. What profit in such honor? How self-evident its nothingness is! When you covet the episcopal rank, put in the other scale, the account to be rendered after this life. Weigh against it, the happiness of a life free from toil, take into account the different measure of the punishment. I mean, that even if you

have sinned, but in your own person merely, you will have no such great punishment, nothing like it: but if you have sinned as bishop, you are lost. Remember what Moses endured, what wisdom he displayed, what good deeds he exhibited: but, for committing one sin only, he was bitterly punished; and with good reason; for this fault was attended with injury to the rest. Not in regard that the sin was public, but because it was the sin of a spiritual Ruler (ἱερέως) cf. S.); for in truth we do not pay the same penalty for public and for hidden faults. (Aug in Psalm 99:6.) The sin may be the same, but not the (ζημία) harm of it; nay, not the sin itself; for it is not the same thing to sin in secret and unseen, and to sin openly. But the bishop cannot sin unobserved. Well for him if he escape reproach, though he sin not; much less can he think to escape notice, if he do sin. Let him be angry, let him laugh, or let him but dream of a moment's relaxation, many are they that scoff, many that are offended, many that lay down the law, many that bring to mind the former bishops, and abuse the, present one; not that they wish to sound the praise of those; no, it is only to carp at him that they bring up the mention of fellow-bishops, of presbyters. Sweet, says the proverb, is war to the inexperienced; but it may rather be said now, that even after one has come out of it, people in general have seen nothing of it: for in their eyes it is not war, but like those shepherds in Ezekiel, we slay and devour. (Ezekiel 34:2.) Which of us has it in his power to show that he has taken as much care for the flocks of Christ, as Jacob did for Laban's? (Genesis 31:40.) Which of us can tell of the frost of the night? For talk not to me of vigils, and all that parade. The contrary plainly is the fact. Prefects, and governors (ὑπαρχοὶ καὶ τοπάρχαι) Of provinces, do not enjoy such honor as he that governs the Church. If he enter the palace, who but he is first? If he go to see ladies, or visit the houses of the great, none is preferred to him. The whole state of things is ruined and corrupt. I do not speak thus as wishing to put us bishops to shame, but to repress your hankering after the office. For with what conscience, (even should you succeed in becoming a bishop, having made interest for it either in person or by another), with what eyes will you look the man in the face who worked with you to that end? What will you have to plead for your excuse? For he that unwillingly, by compulsion and not with his own consent, was raised to the office, may have something to say for himself, though for the most part even such an one has no pardon to expect, and yet truly he so far has something to plead in excuse. Think

how it fared with Simon Magus. What signifies it that you give not money, if, in place of money, you pay court, you lay many plans, you set engines to work? “Thy money perish with thee!” (Acts 8:20.) Thus was it said to him, and thus will it be said to these: your canvassing perish with you, because you have thought to purchase the gift of God by human intrigue! But there is none such here? And God forbid there should be! For it is not that I wish any thing of what I have been saying to be applicable to you: but just now the connection has led us on to these topics. In like manner when we talk against covetousness, we are not preaching at you, no, nor against any one man personally. God grant it may be the case, that these remedies were prepared by us without necessity. The wish of the physician is, that after all his pains, his drugs may be thrown away because not wanted: and this is just what we desire, that our words may not have been needed, and so have been spoken to the wind, so as to be but words. I am ready to submit to anything, rather than be reduced to the necessity of using this language. But if you like, we are ready to leave off; only let our silence be without bad effects. No one, I imagine, though he were ever so vainglorious, would wish to make a display of severity, when there is nothing to call for it. I will leave the teaching to you: for that is the best teaching, which teaches by actions. For indeed the best physicians, although the sickness of their patients brings them in fees, would rather their friends were well. And so we too wish all to be well. (2 Corinthians 13:7.) It is not that we desire to be approved, and you reproved. I would gladly manifest, if it were possible, with my very eyes, the love which I bear to you: for then no one would be able to reproach me, though my language were ever so rough. “For speech of friends, yea, were it insult, can be born;” more “faithful are the wounds of a friend, rather than the ready kisses of an enemy. (Proverbs 27:6.) There nothing I love more than you, no, not even light itself. I would gladly have my eyes put out ten thousand times over, if it were possible by this means to convert your souls; so much is your salvation dearer to me than light itself. For what profit to me in the rays of the sun, when despondency on your account makes it all thick darkness before my eyes? Light is good when it shines in cheerfulness, to a sorrowful heart it seems even to be a trouble. How true this is, may you never learn by experience! However, if it happen to any of you to fall into sin, just stand by my bedside, when I am laid down to rest and should be asleep; see whether I am not like a palsied man, like one

beside himself, and, in the language of the prophet, “the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me. (Psalm 38:10.) For where is our hope, if you do not make progress? where our despondency, if you do excellently? I seem to have wings, when I hear any thing good of you. “Fulfill ye my joy.” (Philippians 2:2.) This one thing is the burden of my prayers, that I long for your advancement. But that in which I strive with all is this, that I love you, that I am wrapped up in you, that you are my all, father, mother, brethren, children. Think not then that any thing that has been said was said in a hostile spirit, nay, it is for your amendment. It is written “A brother assisted by his brother is as a strong city.” (Proverbs 18:19.) Then do not take it in disdain: for neither do I undervalue what you have to say. I should wish even to be set right by you. For all (Edd. ‘all we’) ye are brethren, and One is our Master: yet even among brothers it is for one to direct, while the others obey. Then disdain it not, but let us do all to the glory of God, for to Him belongs glory for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY 4

ACTS 2:1, 2

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven.”

DOST thou perceive the type? What is this Pentecost? The time when the sickle was to be put to the harvest, and the ingathering was made. See now the reality, when the time was come to put in the sickle of the word: for here, as the sickle, keen-edged, came the Spirit down. For hear the words of Christ: “Lift up your eyes,” He said, “and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest.” (John 4:35.) And again, “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few.” (Matthew 9:38.) But as the first-fruits of this harvest, He himself took [our nature], and bore it up on high. Himself first put in the sickle. Therefore also He calls the Word the Seed. “When,” it says, “the day of Pentecost was fully come” (Luke 8:5, 11): that is, when at the Pentecost, while about it, in short. For it was essential that the present events likewise should take place during the feast, that those who had witnessed the crucifixion of Christ, might also behold these. “And suddenly there came a sound from heaven.” (v. 2.) Why did this not come to pass without sensible tokens? For this reason. If even when the fact was such, men said, “They are full of new wine,” what would they not have said, had it been otherwise? And it is not merely, “there came a sound,” but, “from heaven.” And the suddenness also startled them, and brought all together to the spot. “As of a rushing mighty wind:” this betokens the exceeding vehemence of the Spirit. “And it filled all the house:” insomuch that those present both believed, and (Edd. τούτους) in this manner were shown to be worthy. Nor is this all; but what is more awful still, “And there appeared unto them,” it says, “cloven tongues like as of fire.” (v. 3.) Observe how it is always, “like as;” and rightly: that you may have no gross sensible notions of the Spirit. Also, “as it were of a blast:” therefore it was not a wind. “Like as of fire.” For when the Spirit was to be made known to John, then it came upon the head of Christ as in the form of a dove: but now, when a whole multitude was to be converted, it is “like as of fire. And it sat upon each of them.” This means, that it

remained and rested upon them.” For the sitting is significant of settledness and continuance.

Was it upon the twelve that it came? Not so; but upon the hundred and twenty. For Peter would not have quoted to no purpose the testimony of the prophet, saying, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith the Lord God, I will pour out of My spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” (Joel 2:28.) “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” (v. 4.) For, that the effect may not be to frighten only, therefore is it both “with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. And began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Matthew 3:11.) They receive no other sign, but this first; for it was new to them, and there was no need of any other sign. “And it sat upon each of them,” says the writer. Observe now, how there is no longer any occasion for that person to grieve, who was not elected as was Matthias, “And they were all filled,” he says; not merely received the grace of the Spirit, but “were filled. And began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” It would not have been said, *All*, the Apostles also being there present, unless the rest also were partakers. For were it not so having above made mention of the Apostles distinctively and by name, he would not now have put them all in one with the rest. For if, where it was only to be mentioned that they were present, he makes mention of the Apostles apart, much more would he have done so in the case here supposed. Observe, how when one is *continuing in prayer*, when one is in charity, then it is that the Spirit draws near. It put them in mind also of another vision: for as fire did He appear also in the bush. “As the Spirit gave them utterance, **ἀποφθέγγεσθαι**” (Exodus 2:2.) For the things spoken by them were **ἀποφθέγματα**, profound utterances. “And,” it says, “there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men.” (v. 5.) The fact of their dwelling there was a sign of piety: that being of so many nations they should have left country, and home, and relations, and be abiding there. For, it says, “There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded. (v. 6.) Since the event had taken place in a house, of course they came together from without. The multitude *was confounded*: was all in commotion. They marveled;

“Because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were amazed,” it says, “and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?” (v. 7-13.) They immediately turned their eyes towards the Apostles. “And how” (it follows) “hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene:” mark how they run from east to west: “and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And, they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.” O the excessive folly! O the excessive malignity! Why it was not even the season for that; for it was Pentecost. For this was what made it worse: that when those were confessing — men that were Jews, that were Romans, that were proselytes, yea perhaps that had crucified Him — yet these, after so great signs, say, “They are full of new wine!”

But let us look over what has been said from the beginning.

(Recapitulation.) “And when the day of Pentecost,” etc. “It filled,” he says, “the house.” That wind $\pi\nu\omicron\eta$ a very pool of water. This betokened the copiousness, as the fire did the vehemence. This nowhere happened in the case of the Prophets: for to uninebriated souls such accesses are not attended with much disturbance; but “when they have well drunken,” then indeed it is as here, but with the Prophets it is otherwise. (Ezekiel 3:3.) The roll of a book is given him, and Ezekiel ate what he was about to utter. “And it became in his mouth,” is said, “as honey for sweetness.” (And again the hand of God touches the tongue of another Prophet; but here it is the Holy Ghost Himself: (Jeremiah 1:9) so equal is He in honor with the Father and the Son.) And again, on the other hand, Ezekiel calls it “Lamentations, and mourning, and woe.” (Ezekiel 2:10.) To them it might well be in the form of a book; for they still needed similitudes. Those had to deal with only one nation, and with their own people; but these with the whole world, and with men whom they never knew. Also Elisha receives the grace through the medium of a mantle (2 Kings 13); another by oil, as David (2 Samuel 16:13); and Moses by fire, as we read of him at the bush. (Exodus 3:2.) But in the present case it is not so; for the fire itself

sat upon them. (But wherefore did the fire not appear so as to fill the house? Because they would have been terrified.) But the story shows, that it is the same here as there. For you are not to stop at this, that “there appeared unto them cloven tongues” but note that they were “of fire.” Such a fire as this is able to kindle infinite fuel. Also, it is well said, *Cloven*, for they were from one root; that you may learn, that it was an operation sent from the Comforter.

But observe how those men also were first shown to be worthy, and then received the Spirit as worthy. Thus, for instance, David: what he did among the sheepfolds, the same he did after his victory and trophy; that it might be shown how simple and absolute was his faith. Again, see Moses despising royalty, and forsaking all, and after forty years taking the lead of the people (Exodus 2:11); and Samuel occupied there in the temple (1 Samuel 3:3); Elisha leaving all (1 Kings 19:21); Ezekiel again, made manifest by what happened thereafter. In this manner, you see, did these also leave all that they had. They learnt also what human infirmity is, by what they suffered; they learnt that it was not in vain they had done these good works. (1 Samuel 9: and 11:6.) Even Saul, having first obtained witness that he was good, thereafter received the Spirit. But in the same manner as here did none of them receive. Thus Moses was the greatest of the Prophets, yet he, when others were to receive the Spirit, himself suffered diminution. But here it is not so; but just as fire kindles as many flames as it will, so here the largeness of the Spirit was shown, in that each one received a fountain of the Spirit; as indeed He Himself had foretold, that those who believe in Him, should have “a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” (John 4:14.) And good reason that it should be so. For they did not go forth to argue with Pharaoh, but to wrestle with the devil. But the wonder is this, that when sent they made no objections; they said not, they were “weak in voice, and of a slow tongue.” (Exodus 4:10.) For Moses had taught them better. They said not, they were too young. (Jeremiah 1:6.) Jeremiah had made them wise. And yet they had heard of many fearful things, and much greater than were theirs of old time; but they feared to object. — And because they were angels of light, and ministers of things above [“Suddenly there came from heaven,” etc.] To them of old, no one “from heaven” appears, while they as yet follow after a vocation on earth; but now that Man has gone up on high, the

Spirit also descends mightily from on high. "As it were a rushing mighty wind;" making it manifest by this, that nothing shall be able to withstand them, but they shall blow away all adversaries like a heap of dust. "And it filled all the house." The house also was a symbol of the world. "And it sat upon each of them," [etc.] and "the multitude came together, and were confounded." Observe their piety; they pronounce no hasty judgment, but are perplexed: whereas those reckless ones pronounce at once, saying, "These men are full of new wine." Now it was in order that they might have it in their power, in compliance with the Law, to appear thrice in the year in the Temple, that they dwelt there, these "devout men from all nations." Observe here, the writer has no intention of flattering them. For he does not say that they pronounced any opinion: but what? "Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded." And well they might be; for they supposed the matter was now coming to an issue against them, on account of the outrage committed against Christ. Conscience also agitated their souls, the very blood being yet upon their hands, and every thing alarmed them. "Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?" For indeed this was confessed. ["And how hear we"] so much did the sound alarm them. ["Every man in our own tongue," etc.] for it found the greater part of the world assembled there. ["Parthians and Medes," etc.] This nerved the Apostles: for, what it was to speak in the Parthian tongue, they knew not but now learnt from what those said. Here is mention made of nations that were hostile to them, Cretans, Arabians, Egyptians, Persians: and that they would conquer them all was here made manifest. But as to their being in those countries, they were there in captivity, many of them: or else, the doctrines of the Law had become disseminated [among] the Gentiles in those countries. So then the testimony comes from all quarters: from citizens, from foreigners, from proselytes. "We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." For it was not only that they spoke (in their tongues), but the things they spoke were wonderful. Well then might they be in doubt: for never had the like occurred. Observe the ingenuousness of these men. They were amazed and were in doubt, saying, "What meaneth this?" But "others mocking said, 'These men are full of new wine'" (John 8:48), and therefore mocked. O the effrontery! And what wonder is it? Since even of the Lord Himself, when casting out devils, they said that He had a devil! For so it is; wherever impudent assurance exists, it has but one object in

view, to speak at all hazards, it cares not what; not that the man should say something real and relevant to the matter of discourse, but that he should speak no matter what. ["They are full of new wine."] Quite a thing of course (is no, it?), a that men in the midst of such dangers, and dreading the worst, and in such despondency, have the courage to utter such things! And observe: since this was unlikely; because they Would not have been drinking much [at that early hour], they ascribe the whole matter to the quality (of the wine), and say, "They are full" of it. "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them." In a former place you saw his provident forethought, here you see his manly courage. For if they were astonished and amazed, was it not as wonderful that he should be able in the midst of such a multitude to find language, he, an unlettered and ignorant man? If a man is troubled when he speaks among friends, much more might he be troubled among enemies and bloodthirsty men. That they are not drunken, he shows immediately by his very voice, that they are not beside themselves, as the soothsayers: and this too, that they were not constrained by some compulsory force. What is meant by, "with the eleven?" They expressed themselves through one common voice, and he was the mouth of all. The eleven stood by as witnesses to what he said. "He lifted up his voice," it is said. That is, he spoke with great confidence, that they might perceive the grace of the Spirit. He who had not endured the questioning of a poor girl, now in the midst of the people, all breathing murder, discourses with such confidence, that this very thing becomes an unquestionable proof of the Resurrection: in the midst of men who could deride and make a joke of such things as these! What effrontery, think you, must go to that! what impiety, what shamelessness! For wherever the Holy Spirit is present, He makes' men of gold out of men of clay. Look, I pray you, at Peter now examine well that timid one, and devoid of understanding; as Christ said, "Are ye also yet without understanding?" (Matthew 15:16) the man, who after that marvelous confession was called "Satan." (Ib. 16:23.) Consider also the unanimity of the Apostles. They themselves ceded to him the office of speaking; for it was not necessary that all should speak. "And he lifted up his voice," and spoke out to them with great boldness. Such a thing it is to be a spiritual man I Only let us also bring ourselves into a state meet for the grace from above, and all becomes easy. For as a man of fire falling into the midst of straw would take no harm, but do it to others: not he could take any harm,

but they, in assailing him, destroy themselves. For the case here was just as if one carrying hay should attack one bearing fire: even so did the Apostles encounter these their adversaries with great boldness.

For what did it harm them, though they were so great a multitude? Did they not spend all their rage? did they not turn the distress upon themselves? Of all mankind were ever any so possessed with both rage and terror, as those became possessed? Were they not in an agony, and were dismayed, and trembled? For hear what they say, “Do ye wish to bring this man’s blood upon us?” (Acts 5:28.) Did they (the Apostles) not fight against poverty and hunger: against ignominy and infamy (for they were accounted deceivers): did they not fight against ridicule and wrath and mockery? — for in their case the contraries met: some laughed at them, others punished them; — were they not made a mark for the wrathful passions, and for the merriment, of whole cities? exposed to factions and conspiracies: to fire, and sword, and wild beasts? Did not war beset them from every quarter, in ten thousand forms? And were they any more affected in their minds by all these things, than they would have been at seeing them in a dream or in a picture? With bare body they took the field against all the armed, though against them all men had arbitrary power [against them, were]: terrors of rulers, force of arms, in cities and strong walls: without experience, without skill of the tongue, and in the condition of quite ordinary men, matched against juggling conjurers, against impostors, against the whole throng of sophists, of rhetoricians, of philosophers grown moldy in the Academy and the walks of the Peripatetics, against all these they fought the battle out. And the man whose occupation had been about lakes, so mastered them, as if it cost him not so much ado as even a contest with dumb fishes: for just as if the opponents he had to outwit were indeed more mute than fishes, so easily did he get the better of them! And Plato, that talked a deal of nonsense in his day, is silent now, while this man utters his voice everywhere; not among his own countrymen alone, but also among Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and in India, and in every part of the earth, and to the extremities of the world. Where now is Greece, with her big pretensions? Where the name of Athens? Where the ravings of the philosophers? He of Galilee, he of Bethsaida, he, the uncouth rustic, has overcome them all. Are you not ashamed — confess it — at the very name of the country of him

who has defeated you? But if you hear his own name too, and learn that he was called Cephas, much more will you hide your faces. This, this has undone you quite; because you esteem this a reproach, and account glibness of tongue a praise, and want of glibness a disgrace. You have not followed the road you ought to have chosen, but leaving the royal road, so easy, so smooth, you have trodden one rough, and steep, and laborious. And therefore you have not attained unto the kingdom of heaven.

Why then, it is asked, did not Christ exercise His influence upon Plato, and upon Pythagoras? Because the mind of Peter was much more philosophical than their minds. They were in truth children shifted about on all sides by vain glory'; but this man was a philosopher, one apt to receive grace. If you laugh at these words, it is no wonder; for those aforetime laughed, and said, the men were full of new wine. But afterwards, when they suffered those bitter Calamities, exceeding all others in misery; when they saw their city falling in ruins, and the fire blazing, and the walls hurled to the ground, and those manifold frantic horrors, which no one can find words to express, they did not laugh then. And you will laugh then, if you have the mind to laugh, when the time of hell is close at hand, when the fire is kindled for your souls. But why do I speak of the future? Shall I show you. what Peter is, and what Plato, the philosopher? Let us for the present examine their respective habits, let us see what were the pursuits of each. The one wasted his time about a set of idle and useless dogmas, and philosophical, as he says, that we may learn that the soul of our philosopher becomes a fly. Most truly said, a fly! not indeed changed into one, Gut a fly must have entered upon possession of the soul which dwelt in Plato; for what but a fly is worthy of such ideas! The man was full of irony, and of jealous feelings against every one else, as if he made it his ambition to introduce nothing useful, either out of his own head or other people's. Thus he adopted the metempsychosis from another, and from himself produced the Republic, in which he enacted those laws full of gross turpitude. Let the women, he says, be in common, and let the virgins go naked, and let them wrestle before the eyes of their lovers, and let there also be common fathers, and let the children begotten be common. But with us, not nature makes common fathers, but the philosophy of Peter does this; as for that other, it made away with all paternity. For Plato's system only tended to make the real father next to

unknown, while the false one was introduced. It plunged the soul into a kind of intoxication and filthy wallowing. Let all, he says, have intercourse with the women without fear. The reason why I do not examine the maxims of poets, is, that I may not be charged with ripping up fables. And yet I am speaking of fables much more ridiculous than even those. Where have the poets devised aught so portentous as this? But (not to enter into the discussion of his other maxims), what say you to these — when he equips the females with arms, and helmets, and greaves, and says that the human race has no occasion to differ from the canine! Since dogs, he says, the female and the male, do just the same things in common, so let the women do the same works as the men, and let all be turned upside down. For the devil has always endeavored by their means to show that our race is not more honorable than that of brutes; and, in fact, some have gone to such a pitch of (κενοδοξίας) absurdity, as to affirm that the irrational creatures are endued with reason. And see in how many various ways he has run riot in the minds of those men! For whereas their leading men affirmed that our soul passes into flies, and dogs, and brute creatures; those who came after them, being ashamed of this, fell into another kind of turpitude, and invested the brute creatures with all rational science, and made out that the creatures — which were called into existence on our account — are in all respects more honorable than we! They even attribute to them foreknowledge and piety. The crow, they say, knows God, and the raven likewise, and they possess gifts of prophecy, and foretell the future; there is justice among them, and polity, and laws. Perhaps you do not credit the things I am telling you. And well may you not, nurtured as you have been with sound doctrine; since also, if a man were fed with this fare, he would never believe that there exists a human being who finds pleasure in eating dung. The dog also among them is jealous, according to Plato. But when we tell them that these things are fables, and are full of absurdity, ‘You do not enter (ἐνοήσατε) into the higher meaning,’ say they. No, we do not enter into this your surpassing nonsense, and may we never do so: for it requires (of course!) an excessively profound mind, to inform me, what all this impiety and confusion would be at. Are you talking, senseless men, in the language of crows, as the children are wont (in play)? For you are in very deed children, even as they. But Peter never thought of saying any of these things: he uttered a voice, like a great light shining out in the dark, a voice which scattered the mist and darkness of

the whole world. Again, his deportment, how gentle it was, how considerate (ἐπεικὲς); how far above all vainglory; how he looked towards heaven without all self-elation, and this, even when raising up the dead! But if it had come to be in the power of any one of those senseless people (in mere fantasy of course) to do anything like it, would he not straightway have looked for an altar and a temple to be reared to him, and have wanted to be equal with the gods? since in fact when no such sign is forthcoming, they are forever indulging such fantastic conceits. And what, pray you, is that Minerva of theirs, and Apollo, and Juno? They are different kinds of demons among them. And there is a king of theirs, who thinks fit to die for the mere purpose of being accounted equal with the gods. But not so the men here: no, just the contrary. Hear how they speak on the occasion of the lame man's cure. "Ye men of Israel, why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made him to walk? (ch. 3:12.) We also are men of like passions with you. (Ibid. 14:14.) But with those, great is the self-elation, great the bragging; all for the sake of men's honors, nothing for the pure love of truth and virtue. (φιλοσοφίας ἔνεκεν) For where an action is done for glory, all is worthless. For though a man possess all, yet if he have not the mastery over this (lust), he forfeits all claim to true philosophy, he is in bondage to the more tyrannical and shameful passion. Contempt of glory; this it is that is sufficient to teach all that is good, and to banish from the soul every pernicious passion. I exhort you therefore to use the most strenuous endeavors to pluck out this passion by the very roots; by no other means can you have good esteem with God, and draw down upon you the benevolent regard of that Eye which never sleepeth. Wherefore, let us use all earnestness to obtain the enjoyment of that heavenly influence, and thus both escape the trial of present evils, and attain unto the future blessings, through the grace and lovingkindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory, power, honor, now and ever, and to all ages. Amen.

HOMILY 5

ACTS 2:14

*“Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem,
be this known unto you, and hearken to my words.”*

[“Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem,”] whom the writer above described as strangers. Here he directs his discourse to those others, the mockers, and while he seems to reason with those, he sets these right. For indeed it was divinely ordered that “some mocked,” that he might have a starting-point for his defense, and by means of that defense, might teach. [“And all ye that dwell in Jerusalem.”] It seems they accounted it a high encomium to dwell in Jerusalem too. “Be this,” says he, “known unto you, and hearken unto my words.” In the first instance he made them more disposed to attend to him. “For not as ye suppose,” says he, “are these drunken.” Do you observe the mildness of his defense? (v. 15.) Although having the greater part of the people on his side, he reasons with those others gently; first he removes the evil surmise, and then he establishes his apology. On this account, therefore, he does not say, “as ye mock,” or, “as ye deride,” but, “as ye suppose;” wishing to make it appear that they had not said this in earnest, and for the present taxing them with ignorance rather than with malice. “For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.” And why this? Is it not possible at the third hour to be drunken? But he did not insist upon this to the letter; for there was nothing of the kind about them; the others said it only in mockery. Hence we learn that on unessential points one must not spend many words. And besides, the sequel is enough to bear him out on this point: so now the discourse is for all in common. “But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith the Lord God. (v. 16. 17. Joel 2:28.) Nowhere as yet the name of Christ, nor His promises but the promise is that of the Father. Observe the wisdom: observe the considerate forbearance. (συγκατάβασιν.) He did not pass on to speak at once of the things relating to Christ; that He had promised this after His Crucifixion; truly that would have been to upset all. And yet, you will say, here was sufficient to prove His divinity. True, it was, if believed (and the very point was that it should be

believed); but if not believed, it would have caused them to be stoned. “And I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh.” He offers even to them excellent hopes, if they would have them. And so far, he does not leave it to be regarded as the exclusive advantage of himself and his company; which would have made them be looked upon with an evil eye; thus cutting off all envious feeling. “And your sons shall prophesy.” And yet, he says, not yours this achievement, this distinction; the gift has passed over to your children. Himself and his company he calls their sons, and those [whom he is addressing] he calls his and their fathers. “And your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy.” So far he shows that he and his have found favor, in that they had received (καταξιοθέντας) [the Spirit]; not so they whom he is addressing; for that they had crucified [the Lord]. So Christ also, willing to mitigate their wrath, said, “By whom do your sons cast out devils?” (Matthew 12:27.) He did not say, My disciples; for indeed it seemed a flattering mode of expression. And so Peter also did not say, ‘They are not drunk, but speak by the Spirit:’ but he takes refuge with the prophet, and under shelter of him, so speaks. As for the accusation [of drunkenness], he cleared himself of that by his own assertion; but for the grace, he fetches the prophet as witness. “I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh.” [“And your sons,” etc.] To some the grace was imparted through dreams, to others it was openly poured forth. For indeed by dreams the prophets saw, and received revelations.

Then he goes on with the prophecy, which has in it also something terrible. “And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs” [“in the earth beneath”]. (v. 19.) In these words he speaks both of the judgment to come, and of the taking of Jerusalem. “Blood and fire, and vapor of smoke.” Observe how he describes the capture. “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood.” (v. 20.) This results from the (διαθέσεως) internal affection of the sufferers. It is said, indeed, that many such phenomena actually did occur in the sky, as Josephus attests. At the same time the Apostle strikes fear into them, by reminding them of the darkness which had lately occurred, and leading them to expect things to come. “Before that great and notable day of the Lord come.” For be not confident, he means to say, because at present you sin with impunity. For

these things are the prelude of a certain great and dreadful day. Do you see how he made their souls to quake and melt within them, and turned their laughter into pleading for acquittal? For if these things are the prelude of that day, it follows that the extreme of danger is impending. But what next? He again lets them take breath, adding, “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.” (Romans 10:13.) This is said concerning Christ, as Paul affirms, but Peter does not venture as yet to reveal this.

Well, let us look over again what has been said. It is well managed, that as against men laughing and mocking, he starts up and begins with, “Be this known unto you all and hearken unto my words.” But he begins by saying, “Ye men of Judea.” By the expression **Ἰουδαῖοι**, I take him to mean those that lived in Judea. — And, if you please, let us compare those expressions in the Gospel, that you may learn what a sudden change has taken place in Peter. “A damsel,” it is written, “came out unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.” And, says he, “I know not the Man.” And being again questioned, “he began to curse and to swear.” (Matthew 26:69-72.) But see here his boldness, and his great freedom of speech. — He did not praise those who had said, “We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God;” but by his severity towards those others, he made these more earnest, and at the same time his address is clear from all appearance of adulation. And it is well to remark, on all occasions, however the Apostles may condescend to the level of their hearers (**συγκατάβασις**), their language is clear from all appearance both of adulation and of insolence: which is a difficult point to manage.

Now that these things should have occurred at “the third hour,” was not without cause. For the brightness of this fire is shown at the very time when people are not engaged in their works, nor at dinner; when it is bright day, when all are in the market-place. Do you observe also the freedom which fills his speech? “And hearken to my words.” And he added nothing, but, “This,” says he, “is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days.” He shows, in fact, that the consummation is nigh at hand, and the words, “In the last days,” have a kind of emphasis. [“I will pour out,” etc.] And then, that he may not seem to limit the privilege to the sons only, he subjoins, “And your old men shall dream dreams.” Mark the sequence. First sons; just as David

said, "Instead of thy fathers, were begotten thy sons." (Psalm 45:17.) And again Malachi; "They shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children. And on my handmaidens, and on my servants." (Malachi 4:6.) This also is a token of excellence, for we have become His servants, by being freed from sin. And great is the gift, since the grace passes over to the other sex also, not as of old, it was limited to just one or two individuals, as Deborah and Huldah. He did not say that it was the Holy Ghost, neither did he expound the words of the prophet; but he merely brings in the prophecy to fight its own battle. As yet also he has said nothing about Judas; and yet it was known to all what a doom and punishment he had undergone; for nothing was more forcible than to argue with them from prophecy: this was more forcible even than facts. For when Christ performed miracles, they often contradicted Him. But when Christ brought forward the prophet, saying, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on my right hand," they were silent, and "no man," we read, "was able to answer Him a word." (Psalm 90:1.) And on all occasions He Himself also appealed to the Scriptures; for instance, "If he called them gods to whom the word of God came." (John 10:35.) And in many places one may find this. On this account here also Peter says, "I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh;" that is, upon the Gentiles also. But he does not yet reveal this, nor give interpretations; indeed, it was better not to do so (as also this obscure saying, "I will show wonders in heaven above," put them the more in fear because it was obscure.) And it would have been more an offense, had it been interpreted from the very first. Then besides, even as plain, he passes over it, wishing to make them regard it as such. But after all, he does interpret to them anon, when he discourses to them upon the resurrection, and after he has paved the way by his discourse. (*infra* 5:39.) For since the good things were not sufficient to allure them, [it is added, "And I will show wonders, etc."]. Yet this has never been fulfilled. For none escaped then [in that former judgment], but now the faithful did escape, in Vespasian's time. And this it is that the Lord speaks of, "Except those days had been shortened, not all flesh should be saved." — ["Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke."] (Matthew 24:22.) The worst to come first; namely, the inhabitants to be taken, and then the city to be razed and burnt. Then he dwelt upon the metaphor, bringing before the eyes of the hearers the overthrow and the taking. "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood." What means, the moon turned

into blood? It denotes the excess of the slaughter. The language is fraught with helpless dismay. (*supra* p. 32.) “And it shall come to pass, every one who shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Every one,” he says: though he be priest (but he does not yet reveal the meaning), though bond, though free. For there is no male nor female in Christ Jesus, no bond, no free. (Galatians 3:28.) Well may it be so, for all these are but shadow. For if in king’s palaces there is no high-born nor low-born, but each appears according to his deeds; and in art, each is shown by his works; much more in that school of wisdom (φιλοσοφία). “Every one who shall invoke.” Invoke: not any how, for it is written, “Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord:” but with (διαθέσεως) inward earnest affection, with a life more than commonly good, with the confidence which is meet. Thus far, however, he makes the discourse light, by introducing that which relates to faith, and that terrible which relates to the punishment. For in the invocation is the salvation.

What, I pray you, is this you say? Do you talk of salvation for them after the Cross? Bear with me a little. Great is the mercy of God. And this very fact does, no less than the resurrection, prove him to be God, yea, no less than His miracles — the fact that He calls these to Him. For surpassing goodness is, above all things, peculiarly God’s own. Therefore also He says, “None is good save one, that is, God.” (Luke 18:19.) Only let us not take this goodness for an occasion of negligence. For He also punishes as God. In fact, the very punishments here spoken of, He brought them to pass, even He who said, “Every one who shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.” I speak of the fate of Jerusalem; that intolerable punishment: of which I will tell you some few of the particulars, useful to us in our contest, both with the Marcionites and many other heretics. For, since they distinguish between Christ a good God, and that evil God [of the Old Testament], let us see who it was that effected these things. The evil God, taking vengeance for Christ? or not so? How then alien to Him? But was it the good God? Nay, but it is demonstrated that both the Father and the Son did these things. The Father in many places; for instance, when He says in the parable of the vineyard, [“He will miserably destroy those wicked husbandmen” (Matthew 21:41); again in the parable of the marriage feast, the King is said] to send His armies (ib. 22:7): and the Son, when He says, “But those Mine enemies, which would not that I should

reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before Me.” (Luke 19:27.) And they sent, saying, We will not have Thee to reign over us. Would you like then to hear the things which actually came to pass? Moreover, Christ Himself also speaks of the future tribulations, than which never any thing more dreadful came to pass; never any thing more ruthless, my beloved, than the deeds then done! And He Himself declared it. For what could you wish to see more grievous than these? — probed them with their daggers! But shall I relate to you the shocking case of the woman, that tragic tale? (Joseph. B. J. 6:3. 4. Did not the actual events cast all misery into the shade? But shall I tell you of famines and pestilences? One might speak of horrors without number: nature was unknown; law unknown; they outdid wild beasts in ferocity. True, these miseries came by the fate of wars; but because God, because Christ so willed it to be. These facts will apply both against the Marcionites and against those who do not believe that there is a hell: for they are sufficient to silence their impudence. Are not these calamities more severe than the Babylonian? Are not these sufferings more grievous than the famines of that time? Yes, for [“never was the like from the beginning of the world”] “no, nor ever shall be such.” (Matthew 24:21.) And this was Christ’s own declaration. In what sense then, think ye, is it said that Christ remitted them their sin? Perhaps it seems a commonplace question: but do ye solve it. — It is not possible to show anywhere, even in fiction, any thing like what the reality was here. And had it been a Christian that wrote this history, the matter might be regarded with suspicion: but if he was a Jew, and a Jewish zealot, and after the Gospel, how can the meaning of the facts be otherwise than palpable to all men? For you will see the man, how, everywhere, he always extols the concerns of the Jews. — There is therefore a hell, O man! and God is good. — Aye, did you shudder at hearing these horrors? But these, which take place here, are nothing in comparison with what shall be in that world. Once more I am compelled to seem harsh, disagreeable, stern. But what can I do? I am set to this: just as a severe schoolmaster is set to be hated by his scholars: so are we. For would it not be strange indeed, that, while those who have a certain post assigned them by kings do that which is appointed them, however disagreeable the task may be, we, for fear of your censure, should leave our appointed task undone? Another has a different work. Of you, many have it for their work, to show mercy, to act humanely, to be pleasant and agreeable to the persons to whom you are

benefactors. But to those to whom we do good, we seem stern and severe, troublesome and disagreeable. For we do good, not by the pleasure we give, but by the pain we inflict. So it is also with the physician: though he indeed is not excessively disagreeable, for the benefit afforded by his art is had immediately; ours hereafter. So again the magistrate is odious to the disorderly and seditious; so the legislator is vexatious to them for whom he makes laws. But not so he that invites to enjoyment, not so he that prepares public festivities and entertainments, and puts all the people in garlands: no, these are men that win acceptance, feasting, as they do, whole cities with all sorts of spectacles; contributing largely, bearing all the cost. And therefore those whom they have treated, requite them for these enjoyments with words of welcome and benediction, with hanging (παραπετάσματα) of tapestries, and a blaze of lamps, and with wreaths, and boughs, and brilliant garments. Whereas, at the sight of the physician, the sick become sad and downcast: at sight of the magistrate, the rioters become subdued: no running riot then, no gamboling, except when he also goes over into their ranks. Let us see, then, which render the best service to their cities; those who provide these festivities, and banquetings, and expensive entertainments, and manifold rejoicings; or those who restrain all those doings, bearing before them stocks, scourges, executioners, dreaded soldiers, and a voice fraught with much terror: and issuing orders, and making men hang down their heads, and with the rod dispersing the idlers in the market-place. Let us see, I say; these are the disagreeable, those the beloved: let us see where the gain rests. (λήλει.) What comes then of your pleasure-givers? A kind of frigid enjoyment, lasting till the evening, and tomorrow vanished; mirth uncontrolled, words unseemly and dissolute. And what of these? Awe, sobriety, subdued thoughts; reasonableness of mind, an end of idleness; a curb on the passions within; a wall of defense, next to God, against assailants from without. It is by means of these we have each our property but by those ruinous festivities we dissipate it. Robbers indeed have not invaded it, but vainglory together with pleasure acts the part of robber. Each sees the robber carrying off everything before his eyes, and is delighted at it! A new fashion of robbery, this, to induce people to be glad when one is plundering them! On the other part, there is nothing of the kind: but God, as the common Father, has secured us as by a wall against all [depredators], both seen and unseen. For, "Take heed," saith He, "that ye do not your alms before men." (Matthew 6:1.) The soul

learns from the one, [excess; from the other] to flee injustice. For injustice consists not merely in grasping at more wealth than belongs to us, but in giving to the belly more than its needful sustenance, in carrying mirth beyond its proper bounds, and causing it to run into frantic excesses. From the one, it learns sobriety; from the other, unchastity. For it is unchastity, not merely to have carnal intercourse with women, but even to look upon a woman with unchaste eyes. From the one, it learns modesty; from the other, conceited self-importance. For, “All things,” says the Apostle, “are lawful for me, but not all things expedient.” (1 Corinthians 6:12.) From the one, decent behavior; from the other unseemliness. For, as to the doings in the theatres, I pass these. But to let you see that it is not even a pleasure either, but a grief, show me, but a single day after the festival, both those who spent their money in giving it, and those who were feasted with spectacles: and you shall see them all looking dejected enough, but most of all him, your (ἐκεῖνον) famous man that has spent his money for it. And this is but fair: for, the day before, he delighted the common man, and the common man indeed was in high good humor and enjoyment, and rejoiced indeed in the splendid garment, but then not having the use of it, and seeing himself stripped of it, he was grieved and annoyed; and wanted to be the great man, seeing even his own enjoyment to be small compared with his. Therefore, the day after, they change places, and now he, the great man, gets the larger share in the dejection.

Now if in worldly matters, amusements are attended with such dissatisfaction, while disagreeable things are so beneficial, much more does this hold in things spiritual. Why is it that no one quarrels with the laws, but on the contrary all account that matter a common benefit? For indeed not strangers from some other quarter, nor enemies of those for whom the laws are made, came and made these orders, but the citizens themselves, their patrons, their benefactors: and this very thing, the making of laws, is a token of beneficence and goodwill. And yet the laws are full of punishment and restraint, and there is no such thing as law without penalty and coercion. Then is it not unreasonable, that while the expositors of those laws are called deliverers, benefactors, and patrons, we are considered troublesome and vexatious if we speak of the laws of God? When we discourse about hell, then we bring forward those laws: just as in the affairs of the world, people urge the laws of murder, highway robbery,

and the like, so do we the penal laws: laws, which not man enacted, but the Only-Begotten Son of God Himself. Let him that hath no mercy, He says, be punished (Matthew 18:23); for such is the import of the parable. Let him that remembereth injuries, pay the last penalty. Let him that is angry without cause, be cast into the fire. Let him that reviles, receive his due in hell. If you think these laws which you hear strange, be not amazed. For if Christ was not intended to make new laws, why did He come? Those other laws are manifest to us; we know that the murderer and adulterer ought to be punished. If then we were meant only to be told the same things over again, where was the need of a heavenly Teacher? Therefore He does not say, Let the adulterer be punished, but, whoso looketh on with unchaste eyes. And where, and when, the man will receive punishment, He there tells us. And not in fine public monuments, nor yet somewhere out of sight, did He deposit His laws; not pillars of brass did He raise up, and engrave letters thereon, but twelve souls raised He up for us, the souls of the Apostles, and in their minds has He by the Spirit inscribed this writing. This cite we to you. If this was authorized to Jews, that none might take refuge in the plea of ignorance, much more is it to us. But should any say, "I do not hear, therefore have no guilt," on this very score he is most liable to punishment. For, were there no teacher, it would be possible to take refuge in this plea; but if there be, it is no longer possible. Thus see how, speaking of Jews, the Lord deprives them of all excuse; "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin:" (John 15:22): and Paul again, "But I say, have they not heard? Nay, but into all the earth went forth their sound." (Romans 10:18.) For then there is excuse, when there is none to tell the man; but when the watchman sits there, having this as the business of his life, there is excuse no longer. Nay, rather, it was the will of Christ, not that we should look only upon these written pillars, but that we should ourselves be such. But since we have made ourselves unworthy of the writing, at least let us look to those. For just as the pillars threaten others, but are not themselves obnoxious to punishment, nor yet the laws, even so the blessed Apostles. And observe; not in one place only stands this pillar, but its writing is carried round about in all the world. Whether you go among the Indians, you shall hear this: whether into Spain, or to the very ends of the earth, there is none without the hearing, except it be of his own neglect. Then be not offended, but give heed to the things spoken, that ye may be able to lay hold upon

the works of virtue, and attain unto the eternal blessings in Christ Jesus our Lord, with Whom to the Father and Holy Ghost together be glory, power, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 6

ACTS 2:22

“Ye men of Israel, hear these my words.”

[“YE men of Israel”]: it is not for flattery that he uses this term; but, as he has born hard upon them, he relaxes a little, and puts them in mind of their great ancestor [Israel]. Here again he begins with an introduction, that they may not become excited, now that he is going to make express mention to them of Jesus: for in what preceded, there was no reason why they should be excited, while the Prophet was the subject of discourse: but the name of Jesus would have given offense at the very outset. — And he does not say, “Do as I bid you,” but, *Hear*; as being not at all exacting. And observe how he forbears to speak of the high matters, and begins with the very low: “Jesus,” he says: and then straightway mentions the place He belonged to, being one which was held in mean estimation: “Jesus of Nazareth”: and does not say anything great about Him, nor even such as one would say about a Prophet, so far: “Jesus,” he says, “of Nazareth, a man proved (to be) from God among you.” Observe; what great matter was this, to say that He was sent from God? For this was the point which on all occasions both He and John and the Apostles were studious to show. Thus hear John saying: “The same said unto me On whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding on him, this is He.” (John 1:33.) But Christ Himself does this to an extreme; Of Myself I am not come, He sent Me. (ib. 7:28.) And everywhere in the Scriptures this seems the point most studiously insisted upon. Therefore also this holy leader of the blessed company, the lover of Christ, the good shepherd, the man put in trust with the keys of heaven, the man who received the Spiritual Wisdom, when he has first subdued the Jews by fear; and has shown what great things have been vouchsafed to the disciples, and what a right they have to be believed, then first proceeds to speak concerning Him. Only think what boldness it was to say it, in the midst of the murderers — that He is risen! And yet he does not all at once say, He is risen; but what? — “He came,” says he, “from God: this is manifest by the signs which” — he does not yet say, Jesus Himself wrought: but what? — “which God

wrought by Him in the midst of you.” He calls themselves as witnesses. “A man proved (to be sent) from God among you, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God wrought by him in the midst of you, as also ye yourselves know.” Then, having fallen upon the mention of that their sacrilegious outrage, observe how he endeavors to quit them of the crime: “Him,” he says, “being by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God delivered up”: (v. 23) [adding however,] “ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:” for though it was predetermined, still they were murderers. [“By the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God:”] all but using the same words as Joseph did; just as he said to his brethren; “Be not angry one with another by the way: God sent me hither.” (Genesis 45:5, 24.) It is God’s doing. “What of us, then?” (it might be said,) “it was even well done on our part.” That they may not say this, therefore it is that he adds, “By wicked hands ye have crucified and slain.” Here then he hints at Judas; while at the same time he shows them that it was not from any strength of theirs, and would not have been, if He had not Himself permitted it: it was God that delivered Him up. He has transferred the evil entire upon the head of Judas, now already parted from them; for he it was that delivered Him over to them by the kiss. Or, “By wicked hands,” refers to the soldiers: for neither is it simply, “Ye have slain,” but, By wicked men ye have done this. And observe how everywhere they make it of great importance that the Passion should first be confessed. WHOM GOD RAISED UP (v. 24), says he. This was the great thing; and observe how he sets it in the middle of his discourse: for the former matters had been confessed; both the miracles and the signs and the slaying — “Whom God,” says he, “raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be kept in its power.” It is something great and sublime that he has hinted at here. For the expression, “It was not possible,” even itself is that of one assigning something. It shows that death itself in holding Him had pangs as in travail, and was sore bestead: whereas, by *pains*, or, travail-pangs, *of death*, the Old Testament means danger and disaster: and that He so rose as never more to die. For the assertion, “Seeing that it was not possible that He should be holden of it,” means this, that *His* rising was not common to the rest. Then, however, before their thoughts can enter at all into his meaning, he brings David upon them, an authority which sets aside all human reasoning. “For David saith (with reference) to Him.” (v.

25.) And observe how, once more, the testimony is lowly. For therefore he begins the citation further up, with the matters of lowlier import therefore was death not in the number of grievous things [because], says he, “I foresaw the Lord always before my face, that He is on my right hand that I should not be moved:” (v. 25-27) and, “that Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell.” Then, having finished the citation from the Prophet, he adds; “Men and brethren.” (v. 29.) When he is about to say anything great, he uses this opening address, to rouse and to conciliate them. “Let me be allowed,” he says, “to speak freely to you of the patriarch David.” Remarkable lowliness, in a case where he was giving no hurt, nor was there any reason why the hearers should be angry. For he did not say, This is not said concerning David, but concerning the Christ. But in another point of view: by his reverential expression towards the blessed David, he awed them; speaking of an acknowledged fact as if it were a bold thing to say, and therefore begging them to pardon him for saying it. And thereupon his expression is not simply “concerning David,” but “concerning the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried:” he does not also say, “and is not risen again,” but in another way (though this too would have been no great thing to say), “And his sepulcher is with us unto this day,” he has said what comes to the same thing. Then — and even so he does not come to the mention of Christ, but what next? — he goes on with his encomium upon David, “Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that with an oath God had sworn unto him.” (v. 30.) But this he says, that were it but on account of the honor shown to David, and the descent from him, they may accept what is said concerning Christ’s resurrection, as seeing that it would be an injury to the prophecy, and a derogating from (τῆς εἰς αὐτοὺς τιμῆς) their honor, if this were not the fact. “And knowing,” he says, “that with an oath God had sworn unto him” — he does not say simply “promised” — “of the fruit of his loins after the flesh to raise up Christ, to seat Him upon his throne.” Observe how he has again only hinted at what is sublime. For now that he has soothed them with his expression, he confidently adds this: The prophet [saith it] “of His resurrection, that neither was His soul left in hell, nor did His flesh see corruption.” (v. 31.) This again is wonderful: it shows that His resurrection was not like that of other men. For though death laid hold on Him, yet it did not its own work then. — And, as regards the sin, he has spoken of that, covertly and darkly; of the punishment, he forbore to add

anything; but that they had slain Him, this he has spoken out; for the rest he now comes to the sign given by God. And when it is once proved, that He, the slain, was just, was dear to God, then, though thou be silent of the punishment, be sure that he which did the sin will condemn himself more than ever thou canst condemn him: So then, that he refers all to the Father, is in order that they may receive what is said: and that assertion, “Not possible,” he fetches in from the prophecy. Well then, let us again look over what has been said.

“Jesus of Nazareth, a man proved (to be sent) from God unto you.” (Recapitulation of 5:22-31): one, of whom, by reason of His works, there can be no doubt; but who, on the contrary, is demonstrated. Thus also Nicodemus said, “No man can do these miracles which Thou doest — By miracles, and wonders, and signs which God wrought by Him in the midst of you” (John 3:2): not secretly. Setting out from facts notorious to those whom he was addressing, he then comes to things hidden. Thereupon [in saying, “By the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,”] (v. 23) he shows that it was not because they had the power to do it, and that there was a wisdom and a Divine arrangement in the event, seeing it was from God He rapidly passes over the unpleasant part, [adding, “Whom God raised up,” etc.] (v. 24). For it is always a point of great importance with them to show that He was once dead. Though ye should deny it, says he, (ἐκείνοι) those (present) will bear witness to the fact. [“Having loosed the pangs of death.”] He that gives Death trouble, may much more give trouble to them that crucified Him: however, nothing of the kind is here said, as that He had power to slay you. Meanwhile, let us also learn thus to hold. For one that is in pain like a woman in travail, does not hold the thing held, and is not active but passive; and makes haste to cast it off. And it is well said: “For David saith in reference to him” (v. 25); that you may not refer that saying to the Prophet. — [“Therefore being a Prophet, and knowing,” etc.] (v. 30, 31.) Do you observe how he now interprets the prophecy, and does not give it bare of comment? How did He “seat Him upon” David’s “throne?” For the kingdom after the Spirit is in heaven. Observe how, along with the resurrection, he has also declared the kingdom in the fact of His rising again. He shows that the Prophet was under constraint: for the prophecy was concerning Him. Why does he say, not, Concerning His kingdom (it was a great matter), but “Concerning His

resurrection?” And how did He seat Him upon his (David’s) throne? Why, He reigns as King over Jews also, yea, what is much more, over them that crucified Him. “For His flesh saw no corruption.” This seems to be less than resurrection, but it is the same thing.

“This Jesus” — observe how he does not call Him otherwise — “hath God raised up; whereof all we are witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted” (v. 33, 34): again he takes refuge with the Father, and yet it had been enough to say what precedes: but he knows what a great point this is. Here he has hinted at the Ascension also, and that Christ is in heaven: but neither does he say this openly. “And having received,” says he, “the promise of the Holy Ghost.” Observe how, in the beginning of his discourse, he does not say that Jesus Himself had sent It, but the Father: now, however, that he has mentioned His signs and the things done to Him by the Jews, and has spoken of His resurrection, he boldly introduces what he has to say about these matters, again adducing themselves as witnesses by both senses: [“He hath shed forth this, which ye do see and hear.”] And of the resurrection he has made continual mention, but of their outrageous deed he has spoken once for all. “And having received the promise of the Holy Ghost,” This again is great. “The promise,” he says; because [promised] before His Passion. Observe how he now makes it all His [“He hath poured forth this”], covertly making a great point. For if it was He that poured it forth, it is of Him that the Prophet has spoken above, “In the last days I will pour forth of My Spirit on My Servants, and on Mine handmaids, and I will do wonders in the heaven above. (*supra*, 5:17.) Observe what he secretly puts into it! But then, because it was a great thing, he again veils it with the expression of “His having received of the Father.” He has spoken of the good things fulfilled, of the signs; has said, that He is king, the point that touched them; has said, that it is He that gives the Spirit. (*Arist. Rhet.* 1, 3.) (For, however much a person may say, if it does not issue in something advantageous, he speaks to no purpose.) Just as John: “The same,” says he, “shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.” (Matthew 3:11.) And it shows that the Cross not only did not make Him less, but rendered Him even more illustrious, seeing that of old God promised it to Him, but now has given it. Or fit may be], “the promise” which He promised to us. He so foreknew it about to be, and has given it to us greater after the resurrection. And, “hath

poured it out,” he says; not requiring worthiness: and not simply gave, but with abundance. Whence does this appear? Henceforth after the mention of His giving the Spirit, he confidently speaks also of His ascension into heaven; and not only so, but again adducing the witness, and reminding them of that Person concerning Whom Christ once spake. (Matthew 22:43) “For not David,” says he “ascended into the heavens. (v. 34.) Here he no longer speaks in lowly phrase, having the confidence which results from the things said nor does he say, “Be it permitted me to speak,” or the like: “But he saith himself; The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.” Now if He be David’s Lord, much more shall they not disdain Him. “Sit thou on My right hand;” he has set the whole matter here; “until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool:” here also he has brought upon them a great terror, just as in the beginning he showed what He does to His friends, what to his enemies. And again, as to the act of subjugation, not to provoke unbelief, he ascribes it to the Father. Since then these are great things that he has uttered, he again brings his discourse down to lowly matters. “Let therefore,” he says, “the whole house of Israel know assuredly: i.e. question ye not, nor doubt ye: then also in the tone of command it follows; “that God hath made Him both Lord — “ this he says from David — “and Christ,” (v. 36), this from the Psalm: For when it would have been rightly concluded, “Let therefore the whole house of Israel know assuredly that” He sitteth on the right hand of God, this, which would have been great, he forbears, and brings in a different matter which is much more humble, and the expression “Hath made;” i.e. hath ordained: so that there is nothing about (οὐσίωσις) communication of substance here, but the expression relates to this which has been mentioned. “Even this Jesus, Whom ye crucified.” He does well to end with this, thereby agitating their minds. For when he has shown how great it is, he has then exposed their daring deed, so as to show it to be greater, and to possess them with terror. For men are not so much attracted by benefits as they are chastened by fear.

But the admirable and great ones, and beloved of God, need none of these motives: men, such as was Paul: not of the kingdom, not of hell, made he account. For this is indeed to love Christ, this to be no hireling, nor to reckon it a matter of trafficking and trading, but to be indeed virtuous, and

to do all for the love of God. (Romans 9:3.) Then what tears does it not deserve, when, owing so large a measure, we do not even like traders seek the kingdom of heaven! He promises us so great things, and not even so is He worthy to be heard? What can come up to this enmity! And yet, they are mad after money-making, though it be with enemies, though it be with slaves, though it be with persons most hostile to them, that they come in contact, though it be with persons utterly evil, if only they expect that they shall be enabled by their means to make money, they will do everything, will flatter, and be obsequious, and make themselves slaves, and will esteem them more to be revered than all men, to get some advantage out of them: for the hope of money does not allow them to give a thought to any such considerations as these. But the Kingdom is not so powerful as money is; nay, rather, not in the smallest proportion as powerful. For it is no ordinary Being that promises: but this is greater than even the Kingdom itself that we receive it 'from such a Giver! But now the case is the same as if a king, wishing, after ten thousand other benefits, to make us his heirs and coheirs with his son [should be despised]: while some captain of a band of robbers, who has done ten thousand wrongs to us and to our parents, and is himself fraught with ten thousand wickednesses, and has utterly marred our honor and our welfare, should, on presenting a single penny, receive our worship. God promises a Kingdom, and is despised: the Devil helps us to hell, and he is honored! Here God, there Devil. But let us see the difference of the tasks enjoined. For if there were none of these considerations in the case: if it were not, here God, there Devil; not, here one helping to a kingdom, there to a hell: the nature itself of the tasks enjoined were sufficient to induce us to comply with the former For what does each enjoin? The one, the things which make glorious; the other the things which put to shame: one, the things which involve in ten thousand calamities and disgraces; the other, the things which have with them abundant refreshment. For look: the one saith, "Learn ye of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." (Matthew 11:29): the other saith, Be thou savage, and ungentle, and passionate, and wrathful, and more a wild beast than a man. Let us see which is more useful, which, I pray you, more profitable. "Speak not of this," say you. But consider that he is the devil: above all indeed, if that be shown: there is need also to undergo toils, and, on the other hand, the prize of victory will be greater. For not he that enjoins

easy tasks is the kind (κηδεμὼν) benefactor, but he that enjoins what is for our good. Since fathers also enjoin disagreeable tasks; but for this they are fathers: and so again do masters to slaves: but kidnappers and destroyers (λυμεῶνες) on the other hand, do just the reverse. And yet that the commands of Christ are attended with a pleasure, is manifest from that saying. For to what sort do you take the passionate man to belong, and to what the forbearing and meek? Does not the soul of the (ἐκείνου) one seem to be in a kind of solitary retreat, enjoying exceeding quiet; while that of (τούτου) the other is like a market-place and tumult and the midst of cities, where great is the clamor of those going out, the noise of camels, mules, asses: of men shouting loud to those that meet them, that they may not be trodden under foot: and again, of silver-beaters, of braziers, of men thrusting and pushing this way and that and some overborne, some overbearing? But the soul of (τούτου) the former is like some mountain-top, with its delicate air, its pure sunshine, its limpid gushing fountains, its multitude of charming flowers, while the vernal meads and gardens put on their plumage of shrubs and flowers, and glance with rifling waters: and if any sound is heard there, it is sweet, and calculated to affect the ear with a sense of much delight. For either the warbling birds perch on the outermost spray of the branching trees, and cicadas, nightingales and swallows, blended in one harmony, perform a kind of concerted music; or the zephyr gently stirring the leaves, draws whistling tones from pines and firs, resembling oft the notes of the swan: and roses, violets, and other flowers, gently swayed, and (κνανίζοντα) dark-dimpling, show like a sea just rippled over with gentle undulations. Nay, many are the images one might find. Thus, when one looks at the roses, one shall fancy that he beholds in them the rainbow; in the violets a waving sea; in the lilies, the sky. But not by the spectacle alone, and the beholding, does such an one then cause delight: but also in the very body of him that looks to the meadow, rather it refreshes him, and causes him to breathe freely, so that he thinks himself more in heaven than on earth. There is withal a sound of a different kind, when water from the mountain-steep, born by its own force through ravines gently plashes over its pebbly bed with lulling noise, and so relaxes our frame with the pleasurable sensations, as quickly to draw over our eyes the soft languor of slumber. You have heard the description with pleasure: perhaps also it has made you enamored of solitude. But sweeter far than this solitude is the soul of the long-suffering.

For it was not for the sake of describing a meadow, nor for the sake of making a display of language, that we have broached this similitude: but the object was, that, seeing how great is the delight of the long suffering, and how, by converse with a long suffering man, one would be far more both delighted and benefited, than by frequenting such spots, ye may follow after such men. For when not even a breath of violence proceeds from such a soul, but mild and engaging words, then indeed does that gentle softness of the zephyr find its counterpart: entreaties also, devoid of all arrogance, but forming the resemblance to those winged warblers, — how is not this far better? For not the body is fanned by the soft breeze of speech; no, it refreshes our souls heated and glowing. A physician, by ever so great attention, could not so speedily rid a man of the fever, as a patient man would cool, by the breath of his own words, a person who was passionate and burning with wrath. And why do I speak of a physician? Not even iron, made red-hot and dipped into water, so quickly parts with its heat, as does the passionate man when he comes in contact with the soul of the long-suffering. But as, if it chance that singing birds find their way into the market, they go for nothing there, just so is it with our precepts when they light upon souls addicted to wrathful passions. Assuredly, sweeter is gentleness than bitterness and frowardness. — Well, but the one was God’s bidding, the other the devil’s. Do you see that it was not for nothing that I said, even if there were no devil or God in the case, the things enjoined would be enough in themselves to (ἀποστῆσαι) revolt us? For the one is both agreeable to himself, and serviceable to others, the other displeasing to himself, and hurtful to others. Nothing is more unpleasant than a man in a passion, nothing more noisome, more odious, more shocking, as also nothing more pleasing than one who knows not what it is to be in a passion. Better dwell with a wild beast than with a passionate man. For the beast, when once tamed, abides by its law; but the man, no matter how often you have tamed him, again turns wild, unless however he should of himself settle down into some such habit (of gentleness). For as a bright sunny day and winter with all its gloom, so are the soul of the angry and that of the gentle. However, let us at present look not to the mischievous consequences resulting to others, but to those which affect the persons themselves: though indeed it is also no slight mischief (to one’s self) to cause ill to another, for the present, however, let that be the consideration. What executioner with his lash can so lacerate

the ribs, what red-hot lancets (ὀβελίσκοι) ever so pierced the body, what madness can so dispossess a man of his natural reason, as anger and rage do,? I know many instances of persons engendering diseases by giving loose to anger: and the worst of fevers are precisely these. But if they so injure the body, think of the soul. For do not argue that you do not see the mischief, but rather consider, if that which is the recipient of the malignant passion is so hurt, what must be the hurt sustained by that which engenders it! Many have lost their eyes, many have fallen into most grievous disease. Yet he that bears bravely, shall endure all things easily. But, however, both such are the troublesome tasks the devil enjoins, and the wages he assigns us for these is hell. He is both devil and foe to our salvation, and we rather do his bidding than Christ's, Savior as He is, and Benefactor and Defender, and speaking as He does such words, which are both sweeter, and more reverend, and more profitable and beneficial, and are both to ourselves and to those who live in our company the greatest of blessings. Nothing worse than anger, my beloved, nothing worse than unseasonable wrath. It will not have any long delay; it is a quick, sharp passion. Many a time has a mere word been blurted out in anger, which needs for its curing a whole lifetime, and a deed been done which was the ruin of the man for life. For the worst of it is this, that in a little moment, and by one act, and by a single word, full oft has it cast us out from the possession of eternal good, and brought to nought a world of pains. Wherefore I beseech you to do all you can to curb this savage beast. Thus far, however, I have spoken concerning meekness and wrath; if one should take in hand to treat of other opposites, as covetousness and the mad passion for glory, contrasted with contempt of wealth and of glory; intemperance with sobriety; envy with benevolence; and to marshal them each against its opposite, then one would know how great the difference. Behold how from the very things enjoined it is plainly shown, that the one master is God, the other the devil! Why then, let us do God's bidding, and not cast ourselves into bottomless pits; but while there is time, let us wash off all that defiles the soul, that we may attain unto the eternal blessings, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father and Holy Ghost together be glory, power, honor, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 7

ACTS 2:37

“Now when they heard these words (E.V. ‘this,’) they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

Do you see what a great thing gentleness is? More than any vehemence, it pricks our hearts, inflicts a keener wound. For as in the case of bodies which have become callous the man that strikes upon them does not affect the sense so powerfully, but if he first mollify them and make them tender, then he pierces them effectually; so in this instance also, it is necessary first to mollify. But that which softens, is not wrath, not vehement accusation, not personal abuse; it is gentleness. The former indeed rather aggravate the callousness, this last alone removes it. If then you are desirous to reprove any delinquent, approach him with all possible mildness. For see here; he gently reminds them of the outrages they have committed, adding no comment; he declares the gift of God, he goes on to speak of the grace which bore testimony to the event, and so draws out his discourse to a still greater length. So they stood in awe of the gentleness of Peter, in that he, speaking to men who had crucified his Master, and breathed murder against himself and his companions, discoursed to them in the character of an affectionate father and teacher. Not merely were they persuaded; they even condemned themselves, they came to a sense of their past behavior. For he gave no room for their anger to be roused, and darken their judgment, but by means of humility he dispersed, as it were, the mist and darkness of their indignation, and then pointed out to them the daring outrage they had committed. For so it is; when we say of ourselves that we are injured, the opposite party endeavor to prove that they have not done the injury; but when we say, we have not been injured, but have rather done the wrong, the others take the contrary line. If, therefore, you wish to place your enemy (εἰς ἄγωνα) in the wrong, beware of accusing him; nay (ἀγώνισαι), plead for him, he will be sure to find himself guilty. There is a natural spirit of opposition in man. Such was the conduct of Peter. He did not accuse them harshly; on the contrary, he almost endeavored to plead for them, as far as was

possible. And this was the very reason that he penetrated into their souls. You will ask, where is the proof that they were pricked? In their own words; for what say they? "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Whom they had called deceivers, they call "brethren:" not that hereby they put themselves on an equality with them, but rather by way of attracting their brotherly affection and kindness: and besides, because the Apostles had deigned to call them by this title. And, say they, "What shall we do?" They did not straightway say, Well then, we repent; but they surrendered themselves to the disciples. Just as a person on the point of shipwreck, upon seeing the pilot, or in sickness the physician, would put all into his hands, and do his bidding in everything; so have these also confessed that they are in extreme peril, and destitute of all hope of salvation. They did not say, How shall we be saved? but, "What shall we do?" Here again Peter, though the question is put to all, is the man to answer. "Repent," says he, "and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ." (v. 38.) He does not yet say, Believe, but, "Be baptized every one of you." For this they received in baptism. Then he speaks of the gain; "For the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." If you are to receive a gift, if baptism conveys remission, why delay? He next gives a persuasive turn to his address, adding, "For the promise is unto you" (v. 39): for he had spoken of a promise above. "And to your children," he says: the gift is greater, when these are to be heirs of the blessings. "And to all," he continues, "that are afar off:" if to those that are afar off, much more to you that are near: "even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Observe the time he takes for saying, "To those that are afar off." It is when he finds them conciliated and self-accusing. For when the soul pronounces sentence against itself, no longer can it feel envy. "And with many other words did he testify, and exhort, saying." (v. 40.) Observe how, throughout, the writer studies brevity, and how free he is from ambition and display. "He testified and exhorted, saying." This is the perfection of teaching, comprising something of fear and something of love. "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." He says nothing of the future, all is about the present, by which indeed men are chiefly swayed; he shows that the Gospel releases from present evils as well. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (v. 41.) Think you not this cheered the Apostles more than the miracle? "And they

continued steadfastly and with one accord in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship." (v. 42.) Here are two virtues, perseverance and concord. "In the Apostles' doctrine," he says: for they again taught them; "and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer." All in common, all with perseverance. "And fear came upon every soul" (v. 43): of those that believed. For they did not despise the Apostles, like common men, nor did they fix their regard on that which was visible merely. Verily, their thoughts were kindled into a glow. And as Peter had before spoken much, and declared the promises, and the things to come, well might they be beside themselves with fear. The wonders also bore witness to the words: "Many wonders and signs were done by the Apostles." As was the case with Christ; first there were signs, then teaching, then wonders; so was it now. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common." (v. 44.) Consider what an advance was here immediately! For the fellowship was not only in prayers, nor in doctrine alone, but also in (πολιτεία) social relations. "And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." See what fear was wrought in them! "And they parted them," he says, showing the (τὸ οἰκονομικὸν) wise management: "As every man had need." Not recklessly, like some philosophers among the Greeks, of whom some gave up their land, others cast into the sea great quantities of money; but this was no contempt of riches, but only folly and madness. For universally the devil has made it his endeavor to disparage the creatures of God, as if it were impossible to make good use of riches. "And continuing daily with one accord in the temple" (v. 46), they enjoyed the benefit of teaching. Consider how these Jews did nothing else great or small, than assiduously attend at the temple. For, as having become more earnest, they had increased devotion also to the place. For the Apostles did not for the present pluck them away from this object, for fear of injuring them. "And breaking bread from house to house, did take their portion of food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people." (v. 47.) It seems to me that in mentioning "bread," he here signifies fasting and hard life; for they "took their portion of food," not of dainty fare. "With gladness," he says. Seest thou that not the dainty fare, but the (τροφῆς οὐ τρυφῆς) food made the enjoyment. For they that fare daintily are under punishment and pain; but not so these. Do you see that the words of Peter contain this also, namely, the regulation of life? ["And singleness of heart."] For no

gladness can exist where there is no simplicity. How had they “favor with all the people?” On account of their alms deeds. For do not look to the fact, that the chief priests for envy and spite rose up against them, but rather consider that “they had favor with the people.” — “And the Lord added to the Church daily (ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό) [together] such as should be saved. — And all that believed were together.” Once more, the unanimity, the charity, which is the cause of all good things!

[“Now when they heard this,” etc. “Then Peter said unto them,” etc.] (Recapitulation, 5:37.) What had been said was not enough. For those sayings indeed were sufficient to bring them to faith; but these are to show what things the believer behooves to do. And he said not, In the Cross, but, “In the name of Jesus Christ let every one of you be baptized.” (v. 38.) And he does not put them continually in mind of the Cross, that he may not seem to reproach them, but he says simply, “Repent: and why? That we may be punished? No: “And let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.” And yet quite other is the law; of this world’s tribunals: but in the case of the Gospel proclamation (κηρύγματος); when the delinquent has confessed, then is he saved! Observe how Peter does not instantly hurry over this, but he specifies also the conditions, and adds, “Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;” an assertion accredited by the fact, that the Apostles themselves had received that gift. [“For the promise,” etc.] (v. 39.) “The promise,” i.e. the gift of the Holy Ghost. So far, he speaks of the easy part, and that which has with it a great gift; and then he leads them to practice: for it will be to them a ground of earnestness, to have tasted already of those so great blessings [“and with many other words did he testify,” etc.] (v. 40). Since, however, the hearer would desire to learn what was the sum and substance of these further words, he tells us this: [“Saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation.”] [“They then, that gladly received his words,” etc.] (v. 41) they approved of what had been said, although fraught with terror, and after their assent given, proceed at once to baptism. “And they continued” it is written, “steadfastly in the doctrine” (or, “teaching”) “of the Apostles” (v. 42): for it was not for one day, no nor for two or three days that they were under teaching as being persons who had gone over to a different course of life. [“And they continued with one accord in the Apostles’ doctrine,” etc.] The expression

is not, ὁμοῦ “together,” but ὁμοθυμαδὸν, “with one accord;” (“and daily,” he says [afterwards], “they were continuing with one accord in the temple,”) i.e. with one soul. And here again in his conciseness, he does not relate the teaching given; for as young children, the Apostles nourished them with spiritual food. “And fear came upon every soul” (v. 43): clearly, of those, as well, who did not believe; namely, upon seeing so great a change all at once effected, and besides in consequence of the miracles. [“And all that believed were together, and had all things in common,” etc.] (v. 44.) They are all become angels on a sudden; all of them continuing in prayer and hearing, they saw that spiritual things are *common*, and no one there has more than other, and they speedily came together (ἐπι τὸ αὐτὸ), to the same thing in common, even to the imparting to all. “And all the believing” (v. 44), it says, were ἐπι τὸ αὐτὸ: and to see that this does not mean that they were together in place, observe what follows [“And had all things common”]. “All,” it says: not one with the exception of another. This was an angelic commonwealth, not to call anything of theirs their own. Forthwith the root of evils was cut out. By what they did, they showed what they had heard: this was that which he said, “Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” — “And daily continuing with one accord in the temple.” (v. 46.) Since they are become three thousand, they take them abroad now: and withal, the boldness imparted by the Spirit being great: and daily they went up as to a sacred place, as frequently we find Peter and John doing this: for at present they disturbed none of the Jewish observances. And this honor too passed over to the place; the eating in the house. In what house? In the Temple. Observe the increase of piety: They cast away their riches, and rejoiced, and had great gladness, for greater were the riches they, received without labor (ἄπονα Cat. al. ἄγαθά). None reproached, none envied, none grudged; no pride, no contempt was there. As children they did indeed account themselves to be under teaching: as new born babes, such was their disposition. Yet why use this faint image? If you remember how it was when God shook our city with an earthquake, how subdued all men were. (*Infra*, Hom. 41: 2.) Such was the case then with those converts. No knavery, no villany then: such is the effect of fear, of affliction! No talk of “mine” and “thine” then. Hence gladness waited at their table; no one seemed to eat of his own, or of another’s; — I grant this may seem a riddle. Neither did they consider their brethren’s property foreign to

themselves; it was the property of a Master; nor again deemed they aught their own, all was the brethren's. The poor man knew no shame, the rich no haughtiness. This is gladness. The latter deemed himself the obliged and fortunate party; the others felt themselves as honored herein, and closely were they bound together. For indeed, because when people make doles of money, there are apt to be insults, pride, grudging; therefore says the Apostle, "Not grudgingly, or of necessity." — (2 Corinthians 9:7.) ["With gladness and simplicity of heart," etc.] See of how many things he bears witness to them! Genuine faith, upright conduct, perseverance in hearing, in prayers, in singleness, in cheerfulness. ["Praising God."] (v. 47.) Two things there were which might deject them; their abstemious living, and the loss of their property. Yet on both these accounts did they rejoice. ["And having favor with all the people."] For who but must love men of this character, as common fathers? They conceived no malice toward each other; they committed all to the grace of God. ["With all the people."] Fear there was none; yea, though they had taken their position in the midst of dangers. By *singleness*, however, he denotes their entire virtue, far surpassing their contempt of riches, their abstinence, and their perseverance in prayer. For thus also they offered pure praise to God: this is to praise God. But observe also here how they immediately obtain their reward. "Having favor with all the people." They were engaging, and highly beloved. For who would not prize and admire their simplicity of character; who would not be linked to one in whom was nothing underhand? To whom too does salvation belong, but to these? To whom those great marvels? Was it not to shepherds that the Gospel was first preached? and to Joseph, being a man of simple mind, insomuch that he did not let a suspicion of adultery frighten him into doing wrong? Did not God elect rustics, those artless men? For it is written, "Blessed is every simple soul." (Proverbs 11:25.) And again, "He that walketh simply, walketh surely." (Proverbs 10:9.) "True," you will say, "but prudence also is needed." Why, what is simplicity, I pray you, but prudence? For when you suspect no evil, neither can you fabricate any: when you have no annoyances, neither can you remember injuries. Has any one insulted you? You were not pained. Has any one reviled you? You were nothing hurt. Has he envied you? Still you had no hurt. Simplicity is a high road to true philosophy. None so beautiful in soul as the simple. For as in regard of personal appearance, he that is sullen, and downcast, and reserved

(σύννους), even if he be good-looking, loses much of his beauty; while he that relaxes his countenance, and gently smiles, enhances his good looks; so in respect of the soul, he that is reserved, if he have ten thousand good points, disfigures them; but the frank and simple, just the reverse. A man of this last description may be safely made a friend, and when at variance easily reconciled. No need of guards and outposts, no need of chains and fetters with such an one; but great is his own freedom, and that of those who associate with him. But what, you will say, will such a man do if he fall among wicked people? God, Who has commanded us to be simple-minded, will stretch out His hand. What was more guileless than David? What more wicked than Saul? Yet who triumphed? Again, in Joseph's case; did not he in simplicity approach his master's wife, she him with wicked art? Yet what, I pray, was he the worse? Furthermore, what more simple than was Abel? what more malicious than Cain? And Joseph again, had he not dealt artlessly with his brethren? Was not this the cause of his eminence, that he spoke out unsuspectingly, while they received his word sin malice? He declared once and again his dreams unreservedly; and then again he set off to them carrying provisions; he used no caution; he committed all to God: nay, the more they held him in the light of an enemy, the more did he treat them as brothers. God had power not to have suffered him to fall into their hands; but that the wonder might be made manifest, how, though they do their worst, he shall be higher than they: though the blow do come upon him, it comes from another, not from himself. On the contrary, the wicked man strikes himself first, and none other than himself. "For alone," it is said, "shall he bear his troubles." (Proverbs 9:12.) Ever in him the soul is full of dejection, his thoughts being ever entangled: whether he must hear aught or say aught, he does all with complaints, with accusation. Far, very far from such do friendship and harmony make their abode: but fightings are there, and enmities, and all unpleasantness. They that are such suspect even themselves. To these not even sleep is sweet, nor anything else. And have they a wife also, lo, they are enemies and at war with all: what endless jealousies, what unceasing fear! Aye, the wicked, πονηρὸς his name from πονεῖν, "to have trouble." And, indeed, thus the Scripture is ever calling "wickedness" by the name of labor; as, for instance, "Under his tongue is toil and labor;" and again, "In the midst of them is toil and labor." (Psalm 10:7; 90:10; and 55:11.)

Now if any one should wonder, whence those who had at first been of this last class, now are so different, let him learn that affliction was the cause, affliction, that school-mistress of heavenly wisdom, that mother of piety. When riches were done away with, wickedness also disappeared. True, say you, for this is the very thing I am asking about; but whence comes all the wickedness there is now? How is it that it came into the minds of those three thousand and five thousand straightway, to choose virtue, and that they simultaneously became Christian philosophers, whereas now hardly one is to be found? how was it that they then were in such harmony? What was it, that made them resolute and active? What was it that so suddenly inflamed them? The reason is, that they drew near with much piety; that honors were not so sought after as they are now; that they transferred their thoughts to things future, and looked for nothing of things present. This is the sign of an ardent mind, to encounter perils; this was their idea of Christianity. We take a different view, we seek our comfort here. The result is, that we shall not even obtain this, when the time is come. "What are we to do?" asked those men. We, just the contrary — "What shall we do?" What behooved to be done, they did. We, quite the reverse. Those men condemned themselves, despaired of saving themselves. This is what made them such as they were. They knew what a gift they had received. But how can you become like them, when you do everything in an opposite spirit? They heard, and were forthwith baptized. They did not speak those cold words which we do now, nor did they contrive delays (p. 47, note 3); and yet they had heard all the requirements: but that word, "Save yourselves from this generation," made them to be not sluggish; rather they welcomed the exhortation; and that they did welcome it, they proved by their deeds, they showed what manner of men they were. They entered at once the lists, and took off the coat; whereas we do enter, but we intend to fight with our coat on. This is the cause that our antagonist has so little trouble, for we get entangled in our own movements, and are continually thrown down. We do precisely the same thing as he who, having to cope with a man frantic, breathing fire; and seeing him, a professed wrestler, covered with dust, tawny, stripped, clotted with dirt from the sand and sun, and running down with sweat and oil and dirt; himself, smelling of perfumes, should put on his silken garments, and his gold shoes, and his robe hanging down to his heels, and his golden trinkets on the head, and so descend into the arena, and grapple

with him. Such a one will not only be impeded, but being taken up with the sole idea of not staining or rending his fine clothes, will tumble at the very first onset, and withal will suffer that which he chiefly dreaded, the damage of those his fond delights. The time for the contest is come, and say, are you putting on your silks? It is the time of exercise, the hour of the race, and are you adorning yourself as for a procession? Look not to outward things, but to the inward. For by the thoughts about these things the soul is hampered on all sides, as if by strong cords, so that she cannot let you raise a hand, or contend against the adversary; and makes you soft and effeminate. One may think himself, even when released from all these ties, well off, to be enabled to conquer that impure power. And on this account Christ too did not allow the parting with riches alone to suffice, but what saith He? "Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and come and follow Me." (Mark 10:21.) Now if, even when we cast away our riches, we are not yet in a safe position, but stand still in need of some further art and close practice; much more, if we retain them, shall we fail to achieve great things, and, instead thereof, become a laughing-stock to the spectators, and to the evil one himself. For even though there were no devil, though there were none to wrestle with us, yet ten thousand roads on all sides lead the lover of money to hell. Where now are they who ask why the devil was made (ὄϊατί ὁ δ. γέγονεν;)? Behold here the devil has no hand in the work, we do it all ourselves. Of a truth they of the hills might have a right to speak thus, who after they had given proof of their temperance, their contempt of wealth and disregard of all such things, have infinitely preferred to abandon father, and houses, and lands, and wife, and children. Yet, they are the last to speak so: but the men who at no time ought to say it, these do say it. Those are indeed wrestlings with the devil; these he does not think worth entering into. You will say, But it is the devil who instills this same covetousness. Well, flee from it, do not harbor it, O man. Suppose now, you see one flinging out filth from some upper story, and at the same time a person seeing it thrown out, yet standing there and receiving it all on his head: you not only do not pity him, but you are angry, and tell him it serves him right; and, "Do not be a fool," everyone cries out to him, and lays the blame not so much on the other for shooting out the filth, as on him for letting it come on him. But now, you know that covetousness is of the devil; you know that it is the cause of ten thousand evils; you see him flinging out, like filth, his noisome

imaginations; and do you not see that you are receiving on your bare head his nastiness, when it needed but to turn aside a little to escape it altogether? Just as our man by shifting his position would have escaped; so, do you refuse to admit such imaginations, ward off the lust. And how am I to do this? you will ask. Were you a Gentile, and had eyes for things present alone, the matter perhaps might be one of considerable difficulty, and yet even the Gentiles have achieved as much; but you — a man in expectation of heaven and heavenly bliss — and you to ask, “How am I to repel bad thoughts?” Were I saying the contrary, then you might doubt: did I say, covet riches, “How shall I covet riches,” you might answer, “seeing such things as I do?” Tell me, if gold and precious stones were set before you, and I were to say, Desire lead, would there not be reason for hesitation? For you would say, How can I? But if I said, Do not desire it; this had been plainer to understand. I do not marvel at those who despise, but at those who despise not riches. This is the character of a soul exceeding full of stupidity, no better than flies and gnats, a soul crawling upon the earth, wallowing in filth, destitute of all high ideas. What is it you say? Are you destined to inherit eternal life; and do you say, how shall I despise the present life for the future? What, can the things be put in competition? You are to receive a royal vest; and say you, How shall I despise these rags? You are going to be led into the king’s palace; and do you say, How shall I despise this present hovel? Of a truth, we ourselves are to blame in every point, we who do not choose to let ourselves be stirred up ever so little. For the willing have succeeded, and that with great zeal and facility. Would that you might be persuaded by our exhortation, and succeed too, and become imitators of those who have been successful, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory, and power, and honor, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 8

ACTS 3:1

*“Now Peter and John went up together into the temple,
at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.”*

EVERYWHERE we find these two Apostles in great harmony together. “To him Simon Peter beckoned.” (John 13:24.) These two also “came together to the sepulcher. (Ib. 20:3 *et seq.*) And concerning John, Peter said unto Christ, “And what shall this man do?” (Ib. 21:21.) Now as for the other miracles, the writer of this book omits them; but he mentions the miracle by which they were all put in commotion. Observe again that they do not come to them purposely; so clear were they of ambition, so closely did they imitate their Master. Why now did they go up to the temple? Did they still live as Jews? No, but for expediency (*χρησίμως*). A miraculous sign again takes place, which both confirms the converts, and draws over the rest; and such, as they were a sign for having wrought. The disease was in the nature of the man, and baffled the art of medicine. He had been forty years lame (ch. 4:20), as the writer says afterwards, and no one during all that time had cured him. And the most obstinate diseases are those which are born with men. It was a great calamity, insomuch that even to provide for himself his necessary sustenance was impossible for him. The man was conspicuous both from the place, and from his malady. Hear how the matter is related. “And a certain man, lame from his mother’s womb, was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple.” (v. 2.) He sought to receive alms, and he did not know who the men were. “Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us.” (v. 3, 4.) Yet, not even so were the man’s thoughts elevated, but he persisted in his importunity. For such is poverty; upon a refusal, it compels people still to persist. Let this put us to shame who fall back in our prayers. But observe, I pray you, Peter’s gentleness: for he said, “Look on us.” So truly did their very bearing, of itself, betoken their character. “And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have I give thee.” (v. 5, 6.) He did not

say, I give thee something much better than silver or gold: but what? “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up.” (v. 7.) Such was also the way of Christ. Often He healed by word, often by an act, often also He stretched forth the hand, where men were somewhat weak in faith, that the cure might not appear to be spontaneous. “And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up.” This act made manifest the Resurrection, for it was an image of the Resurrection. “And immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked.” (v. 8.) Perhaps it was by way of trying himself that he put it thus to further proof, whether perchance the thing done might not be to no purpose. His feet were weak; it was not that he had lost them. Some say that he did not even know how to walk. “And entered with them into the temple.” Of a truth it was marvelous. The Apostles do not urge him; but of his own accord he follows, by the act of following pointing out his benefactors. “And leaping and praising God;” not admiring them, but God that wrought by them. The man was grateful.

[“Now Peter and John went up together into the temple,” etc.] You observe how they continued in prayer. “The ninth hour:” there they prayed together. [“And a certain man,” etc.] The man was in the act of being carried at that instant. [“Whom they laid daily:”] (his bearers carried him away:) [“at the gate,” etc.] just when people went into the temple. And that you may not suppose that they carried him for some other purpose, but that it was in order that he might receive alms, hear what the writer says: “so that he might receive alms of those entering into the temple.” (Recapitulation of vv. 1-8.) And this is the reason why he also makes mention of the places, to give evidence of what he relates. “And how was it,” you may ask, “that they did not present him to Christ?” Perhaps they were certain unbelieving men, that haunted the temple, as in fact neither did they present him to the Apostles, when they saw them entering, after having done such great miracles. “He asked,” it is written, “to receive an alms.” (v. 3.) Their bearing marked them as certain devout and righteous men. [“And Peter fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said,” etc.] (v. 4, 5.) And observe how John is everywhere silent, while Peter makes excuse for him also; “Silver and gold,” he says, “have I none.” (v. 6.) He does not say, I have none here, as we are wont to speak, but

absolutely, I have none. “What then?” he might say, “do you take no notice of me, your suppliant?” Not so, but of what I have, receive thou. Do you remark how unassuming Peter is, how he makes no display even to the object of his beneficence? [“In the name,” etc. “And he took him by the hand,” etc.] (v. 7.) And the mouth and the hand did all. Such sort of persons were the Jews; lame, and the right thing being to ask for health, these same ask for money, groveling on the ground: for this it was that they beset the temple — to get money. What then does Peter? He did not despise him; he did not look about for some rich subject; he did not say, if the miracle is not done to some great one (εἰς ἐκεῖνον), nothing great is done: he did not look for some honor from him, no, nor heal him in the presence of people; for the man was at the entrance, not where the multitude were, that is, within. But Peter sought no such object; nor upon entering did he proclaim the matter: no, it was by his bearing that he attracted the lame man to ask. And the wonder is, that he believed so readily. For those who are set free from diseases of long standing, hardly believe their very eyesight. Once healed, he remains with the Apostles, giving thanks to God. “And he entered,” it is said, “with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.” (v. 8.) Observe how restless he is, in the eagerness of his delight, at the same time shutting the mouths of the Jews. Also, that he leaped, was to prevent the suspicion of hypocrisy; for after all, this was beyond the possibility of deception. For if previously he was totally unable to walk, even when hunger pressed hard (and indeed he would not have chosen to share with his bearers the proceeds of his begging, if he had been able to manage for himself), this holds still more in the present ease. And how should he have feigned in behalf of those who had given him no alms? But the man was grateful, even after his recovery. And thus on either side his faith is shown, both by his thankfulness, and by the recent event.

He was so well known to all, that “they recognized him. And all the people,” it says, “saw him walking and praising God; and they recognized (ἐπεγίνωσκον) that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple.” (v. 9.) It is well said, “they recognized,” inasmuch as he was one unknown now by reason of what had happened: for we use this term with regard to objects, which we find a difficulty in recognizing. [“And they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened

unto him.”] Needs must it be believed that the name of Christ remits sins, seeing it produces even such effects as this. (“And as he held Peter and John, all the people came together at the porch that is called Solomon’s, greatly wondering.” (v. 11.) From his good feelings and love towards the Apostles, the lame man would not leave them; perhaps he was thanking them openly, and praising them. “And all the people,” it is said, “ran together unto them. And when Peter saw them, he answered.” (v. 12.) Again it is he who acts, and addresses the people.

And in the former instance, it was the circumstance of the tongues that aroused them to hearing, now it was this miracle; then, he took occasion to speak from their accusations now, from their supposition. Let us then consider, in what this address differs from the former, and in what it agrees with that. The former was held in a house, before any one has come over, and before they themselves have wrought anything; this, when all are wondering, and the healed man is standing by; when none doubt, as in the other case where some said “These men are full of new wine.” (Acts 12:13.) At the one, he was surrounded by all the Apostles as he spoke; but at this, he has John alone; for by this time he is bold, and become more energetic. Such is the nature of virtue; once started, it advances, and never stops. Observe also how it was divinely ordered, that the miracle should take place in the temple, that others also might wax bold, while the Apostles work not in holes (εἰς καταδύσεις) and corners, and in secret: though not in the interior of the temple either, where the greater number were. How then, I pray you, was it believed? The man himself who was healed proclaimed the benefit. For there was no reason why he should lie, nor why he should have joined a different set of people. Either then it was because of the spaciousness of the place, that he there wrought the miracle, or because the spot was retired. And observe the event. They went up for one object, and they accomplished another. Thus also did Cornelius: he prayed and fasted . But hitherto they always call Him, “of Nazareth.” “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,” said Peter, *walk*. For in the first instance, the thing required was, that He should be believed in.

Let us not, I pray you, give over at the beginning of the story: and if one has named some particular achievement of virtue, and then has dropped it for awhile, let us begin over again. If we get into the right mood (ἐν ἔξει),

we shall soon arrive at the end, soon reach the summit. For earnestness, it is said, begets earnestness, and dullness begets dullness. He who has effected some little reformation, thereby receives encouragement to approach greater things, and thence again to go on something more than that; and just as it is with fire, the more wood it lays hold on, the more vehement it becomes, so likewise zeal, the more pious reflections it kindles, the more effectually is it armed against their opposites. As, for example: There are set in us, like so many thorns, perjury, falsehood, hypocrisy, deceit, dishonesty, abusiveness, scoffing, buffoonery, indecency, scurrility; again under another head, covetousness, rapacity, injustice, calumny, insidiousness; again, wicked lust, uncleanness, lewdness, fornication, adultery; again, envy, emulation, anger, wrath, rancor, revenge, blasphemy, and numberless others. If we effect a reformation in the first instances, not only in them will the success have been achieved, but through them in the following cases also. For reason has then gained more strength to overthrow those other vices. For instance, if he, who has frequently sworn, once extirpates that satanic habit, he has not only gained this point, but a habit of piety in other respects will have been brought in. For no one, I suppose, averse to swearing would easily consent to do any other wicked act; he will feel a reverence for the virtue already acquired. Just as the man who wears a beautiful robe, will blush to roll himself in the mire; so is it also here. From this beginning he will come to learn not to be angry, not to strike, not to insult. For if once he has come right in little matters, the whole affair is done. Often, however, something of this sort takes place, that a person has once reformed, and then again through carelessness falls back into the old sins but too readily, so that the case becomes irremediable. For instance, we have made it a law to ourselves not to swear; we have got on well, for some three, or even four days; after that being hard put to it, we scattered away the whole of our collected gain; we then fall into indolence and recklessness. Still it is not right to give over; one must set to work zealously again. For it is said, he that has built up a house, and then sees his building pulled down, will have less spirit for building again. Yes, but for all this, one must not be dispirited, but must once more set to work zealously.

Let us then lay down daily laws for ourselves. For a time let us begin with the easier. Let us retrench all that superfluity of paths, and put a bridle on

our tongues; let no one swear by God. Here is no outlay, here is no fatigue, here is no cost of time. It is sufficient to will, and all is done. It is a matter of habit. I beseech and entreat you, let us contribute thus much of zeal. Tell me, if I had bid you contribute your money, would not each one of you readily cast in according to his ability? If you saw me in extreme danger, would you not, if it had been possible, have cut off your own flesh to give me? Well, I am in danger now, and in great danger, such indeed that, were I withal confined to a dungeon, or had I received ten thousand stripes, or were a convict in the mines, I could not suffer more. Reach me then the hand. Consider how great is the danger, that I should not have been able to reform this which is least: I say "least" in regard to the labor required. What shall I have to say hereafter, when thus called to account? "Why did you not remonstrate? why did you not enjoin? why did you not lay the law before them? why did you not cheek the disobedient?" It will not be enough for me to say, that I did admonish. It will be answered, "You ought to have used more vehement rebuke; since Eli also admonished." (1 Samuel 2:24.) But God forbid I should compare you with Eli's sons. Indeed, he did admonish them and say, "Nay, my sons, do not so; evil is the report that I hear of you." (1 Samuel 3:13.) But subsequently the Scripture saith, that he did not admonish his sons: since he did not admonish them severely, or with threats. For is it not strange indeed, that in the synagogues of the Jews the laws are in such force, and whatever the teacher enjoins is performed; while here we are thus despised and rejected? It is not my own glory that I care for (my glory is your good report), but it is for your salvation. Every day we lift up our voice, and shout in your ears. But there is none to hear. Still we take no strong measures. I fear we shall have to give an account at the coming Day of this excessive and unseasonable leniency.

Wherefore, with a loud and clear voice, I proclaim to all and testify, that those who are notorious for this transgression, who utter words which come "of the evil one," (Matthew 5:37.) (for such is swearing,) shall not step over the threshold of the Church. Let this present month be the time allowed you for reforming in this matter. Talk not to me, "Necessity of business compels me to use oaths, else people do not believe me." To begin with this, retrench those oaths which come merely of habit. I know many will laugh, but it is better to be laughed at now, than wept for

hereafter. They will laugh, who are mad. For who, I ask, in his right mind would laugh at the keeping of the commandment? But suppose they do; why, it will not be at us, but at Christ, that such men will laugh. You shudder at the word! I knew you would. Now if this law were of my making, at me would be the laughing; but if Another be the Lawgiver, the jeering passes over to Him. Yes, and Christ was once spit upon, and smitten with the palm, smitten upon the face. Now also He bears with this, and it is no wonder (οὐδὲν ἀπεικός)! For this, hell is prepared; for this, the worm that dieth not. Behold, again I say and testify; let him laugh that will, let him scoff that listeth. Hereunto are we set, to be laughed at and mocked, to suffer all things. We are “the offscouring” (1 Corinthians 4:13) or the world, as blessed Paul says. If any man refuse to conform to this order, that man I, by my word, as with a trumpet’s blast, do prohibit to set foot over the Church’s threshold, be he prince, be he even the crowned head. Either depose me from this station, or if I am to remain, expose me not to danger. I cannot bear to ascend this throne, without effecting Some great reformation. For if this be impossible, it is better to stand below. Nothing more wretched than a ruler who does his people no good. Do exert yourselves, and attend to this, I entreat you; and let us strive, and of a surety more will come of it. Fast, entreat God (and we will do the same with you) that this pernicious habit may be eradicated. It is no great matter, to become teachers to the world; no small honor to have it said everywhere, that really in this city there is not a man that swears. If this come to pass, you will receive the reward not only of your own good works; indeed what I am to you, this you will become to the world. Assuredly others also will emulate you; assuredly you will be a candle set upon a candlestick.

And is this, you will say, the whole matter? No, this is not all, but this is a beginning of other virtues. He who swears not, will certainly attain unto piety in other respects, whether he will or not, by dint of self-respect and awe. But you will urge that most men do not keep to it, but fall away. Well, better one man that doeth the will of the Lord, than ten thousand transgressors. In fact, hereby is everything subverted, everything turned upside down, I mean, because after the fashion of the Theater we desire numbers not a select number. For what indeed will a multitude be able to profit? Would you learn that it is the saints, not the numbers, which make

the multitude? Lead out to war ten hundred thousand men, and one saint, and let us see who achieves the most? Joshua the son of Nun went out to war, and alone achieved all; the rest were of no use. Wouldest thou see, beloved, that the great multitude, when it does not the will of God, is no better than a thing of naught? I wish indeed, and desire, and with pleasure would be torn in pieces, to adorn the Church with a multitude, yea, but a select multitude; yet if this be impossible, that the few should be select, is my desire. Do you not see, that it is better to possess one precious stone, than ten thousand farthing pieces? Do you not see that it is better to have the eye sound, than to be loaded with flesh, and yet deprived of sight? Do you not see that it is better to have one healthy sheep, than ten thousand with the murrain; that fine children, though few, are better than many children diseased withal; that in the Kingdom there will be few, but in hell many? What have I to do with a multitude? what profit therein? None. Rather they are a plague to the rest. It is as if one who had the option of ten healthy persons of ten thousand sick folks, should take to himself the latter in addition to the ten. The many who do nothing well, will avail us only for punishment hereafter, and disgrace for the time being. For no one will urge it as a point in our favor that we are many; we shall be blamed for being unprofitable. In fact, this is what men always tell us, when we say, We are many; “aye, but bad,” they answer.

Behold again: I give warning, and proclaim with a loud voice, let no one think it a laughing matter: I will exclude and prohibit the disobedient; and as long as I sit on this throne, I will give up not one of its rights. If any one depose me from it, then I am no longer responsible; as long as I am responsible, I cannot disregard them; on account not of my own punishment, but of your salvation. For I do exceedingly long for your salvation. To advance it, I endure pain and vexation. But yield your obedience, that both here and hereafter you may receive a plentiful reward, and that we may in common reap eternal blessings; through the grace and mercy of the only-begotten Son of God; to Whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory, power, and honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 9

ACTS 3:12

*“And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people,
Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this, or why look ye so earnestly on us,
as though by our own power or holiness we have made this man to walk?”*

THERE is greater freedom of speech in this harangue, than in the former. Not that he was afraid on the former occasion, but the persons whom he addressed there, being jesters and scoffers, would not have born it. Hence in the beginning of that address he also bespeaks their attention by his preamble; “Be this known unto you, and hearken to my words.” (ch. 2:14.) But here there is no need of this management. (κατασκευῆς.) For his hearers were not in a state of indifference. The miracle had aroused them all; they were even full of fear and amazement. Wherefore also there was no need of beginning at that point, but rather with a different topic; by which, in fact, he powerfully conciliated them, namely, by rejecting the glory which was to be had from them. For nothing is so advantageous, and so likely to pacify the hearers, as to say nothing about one’s self of an honorable nature, but, on the contrary, to obviate all surmise of wishing to do so. And, in truth, much more did they increase their glory by despising glory, and showing that what had just taken place was no human act, but a Divine work; and that it was their part to join with the beholders in admiration, rather than to receive it from them. Do you see how clear of all ambition he is, and how he repels the honor paid to him? In the same manner also did the ancient fathers; for instance, Daniel said, “Not for any wisdom that is in me.” (Daniel 2:30.) And again Joseph, “Do not interpretations belong to God?” (Genesis 11:8.) And David, “When the lion and the bear came, in the name of the Lord I rent them with my hands.” (1 Samuel 17:34.) And so likewise here the Apostles, “Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?” (v. 13.) Nay, not even this; for not by our own merit did we draw down the Divine influence. “The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers.” See how assiduously he thrusts himself (εἰσωθεῖ) upon the fathers of old, lest he should appear to be introducing a new doctrine. In the former address he appealed to the

patriarch David, here he appeals to Abraham and the rest. “Hath glorified His Servant Jesus.” Again a lowly expression, like as in the opening address.

But at this point he proceeds to enlarge upon the outrage, and exalts the heinousness of the deed, no longer, as before, throwing a veil over it. This he does, wishing to work upon them more powerfully. For the more he proved them accountable, the better his purpose were effected. “Hath glorified,” he says, ‘His Servant Jesus, Whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.’ The charge is twofold: Pilate was desirous to let Him go; you would not, when he was willing. “But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince (or Author) of Life: Whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.” (v. 14, 15.) Ye desired a robber instead of Him. He shows the great aggravation of the act. As he has them under his hand, he now strikes hard. “The Prince of Life,” he says. In these words he establishes the doctrine of the Resurrection. “Whom God hath raised from the dead.” (ch. 2:56.) “Whence doth this appear?” He no longer refers to the Prophets, but to himself, inasmuch as now he has a right to be believed. Before, when he affirmed that He was risen, he adduced the testimony of David; now, having said it, he alleges the College of Apostles. “Whereof we are witnesses, he says.

“And His name, through faith in His name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.” Seeking to declare the matter (*ζητῶν τὸ πρῶγμα εἰπεῖν*), he straightway brings forward the sign: “In the presence,” he says, “of you all.” As he hid born hard upon them, and had shown that He Whom they crucified had risen, again he relaxes, by giving them the power of repentance; “And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.” (v. 17.) This is one ground of excuse. The second is of a different kind. As Joseph speaks to his brethren, “God did send me before you (Genesis 45:5); what in the former speech he had briefly said, in the words, “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken,” — this he here enlarges upon: “But what God before had showed by the mouth of all His Prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled.” (v.

18.) At the same time showing, that it was not of their doing, if this be proved, that it took place after God's counsel. He alludes to those words with which they had reviled Him on the Cross, namely "Let Him deliver Him, if He will have Him; for He said, I am the Son of God. If He trust in God, let Him now come down from the cross." (Matthew 27:42, 43.) O foolish men, were these idle words? It must needs so come to pass, and the prophets bear witness thereunto. Therefore if He descended not, it was for no weakness of His own that He did not come down, but for very power. And Peter puts this by way of apology for the Jews, hoping that they may also close with what he says. "He hath so fulfilled," he says. Do you see now how he refers everything to that source? "Repent ye therefore," he says, "and be converted." He does not add, "from your sins;" but, "that your sins, may be blotted out," means the same thing. And then he adds the gain: "So shall the times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord." (v. 19.) This betokens them in a sad state, brought low by many wars. For it is to the case of one on fire, and craving comfort, that the expression applies. And see now how he advances. In his first sermon, he but slightly hinted at the resurrection, and Christ's sitting in heaven; but here he also speaks of His visible advent. "And He shall send Jesus the Christ ordained (for you), "Whom the heaven must (*i.e.* must of necessity) receive, until the times of the restitution of all things." The reason why He does not now come is clear. "Which God hath spoken," he continues, "by the mouths of His holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you." Before, he had spoken of David, here he speaks of Moses. "Of all things," he says, "which He hath spoken." But he does not say, "which Christ," but, "which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." (v. 20, 21.) Then he betakes him to the ground of credibility, saying, "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things." And then the greatness of the punishment: "And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those that follow, after, as many as have spoken have likewise foretold of these days." (v. 23, 24.) He has done well to set the distinction here. For whenever he says anything great, he

appeals to them of old. And he found a text which contained both truths; just as in the other discourse he said, “Until He put His foes under His feet.” (ch. 2:35.) The remarkable circumstance is, that the two things stand together; that is, subjection and disobedience, and the punishment. “Like unto me,” he says. Then why are ye alarmed? “Ye are the children of the prophets” (v. 25): so that to you they spake, and for your sakes have all these things come to pass. For as they deemed that through their outrage they had become alienated (and indeed there is no parity of reason, that He Who now is crucified, should now cherish them as His own), he proves to them that both the one and the other are in accordance with prophecy. “Ye are the children,” he says, “of the Prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, ‘And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.’ Unto you first,” he continues, “God having raised up His Son (τόν Παῖδα) sent Him.” “To others indeed also, but to you first who crucified Him.” “To bless you,” he adds, “in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” (v. 26.)

Now let us consider again more minutely what has been read out. (Recapitulation.) In the first place, he establishes the point that the miracle was performed by them ; saying, “Why marvel ye?” And he will not let the assertion be disbelieved: and to give it more weight, he anticipates their judgment. “Why look ye,” he says, “so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?” (v. 12.) If this troubles and confounds you, learn Who was the Doer, and be not amazed. And observe how on all occasions when he refers to God, and says that all things are from Him, then he fearlessly chides them: as above where he said, “A man approved of God among you.” (ch. 2:22.) And on all occasions he reminds them of the outrage they had committed, in order that the fact of the Resurrection may be established. But here he also subjoins something else; for he no more says, “of Nazareth,” but what? “The God of our fathers hath glorified His Servant Jesus.” (v. 13.) Observe also the modesty. He reproached them not, neither did he say at once, “Believe then now: behold, a man that has been forty years lame, has been raised up through the name of Jesus Christ.” This he did not say, for it would have excited opposition. On the contrary, he begins by commending them for admiring the deed, and again calls them after their ancestor: “Ye men of Israel.” Moreover, he does not say, It was Jesus that

healed him: but, “The God of our fathers hath glorified,” etc. But then, lest they should say, How can this stand to reason — that God should glorify the transgressor? therefore he reminds them of the judgment before Pilate, showing that, would they but consider, He was no transgressor; else Pilate had not wished to release Him. And he does not say, “when Pilate was desirous,” but, “was determined to let Him go.” “But ye denied the Holy One,” etc. (v. 13, 14.) Him who had killed others, ye asked to be released; Him Who quickeneth them that are killed, ye did not wish to have! And that they might not ask again, How should it be that God now glorifies Him, when before He gave no assistance? he brings forward the prophets, testifying that so it behooved to be. “But those things which God before had showed,” etc., (*infra* 5:18.) Then, lest they should suppose that God’s dispensation was their own apology, first he reproveth them. Moreover, that the denying Him “to Pilate’s face,” was no ordinary thing; seeing that he wished to release Him. And that ye cannot deny this, the man who was asked in preference to Him is witness against you. This also is part of a deep dispensation. Here it shows their shamelessness and effrontery; that a Gentile, one who saw Him for the first time, should have discharged Him, though he had heard nothing striking; while they who had been brought up among His miracles, have done the very opposite! For, as he has said, “When he (Pilate) had determined to let Him go,” that it may not be imagined that he did this of favor, we read, “And he said, It is a custom with you to release one prisoner: will ye therefore that [release unto you this man? (Matthew 27:15.) “But ye denied the Holy One and the Just.” (Mark 15:6.) He does not say, “Ye delivered up;” but everywhere, “Ye denied.” For, said they, “We have no king but Caesar.” (John 19:15.) And he does not say only, Ye did not beg off the innocent, and,” Ye denied” Him but, “Ye slew” Him. While they were hardened, he refrained from such language; but when their minds are most moved, then he strikes home, now that they are in a condition to feel it. For just as when men are drunk we say nothing to them, but when they are sober, and are recovered from their intoxication then we chide them; thus did Peter: when they were able to understand his words, then he also sharpened his tongue, alleging against them many charges; that, Whom God had glorified, they had delivered up; Whom Pilate would have acquitted they denied to his face; that they preferred the robber before Him.

Observe again how he speaks covertly concerning Christ's power, showing that He raised Himself: just as in his first discourse he had said, "Because it was not possible that He should be holden of it" (ch. 2:24), so here he says, "And killed the Prince of Life." (v. 15.) It follows that the Life He had was not from another. The prince (or author) of evil would be he that first brought forth evil; the prince or author of murder, he who first originated murder; so also the Prince (or Author) of Life must be He Who has Life from Himself. "Whom God raised up," he continues: and now that he has uttered this, he adds, "And his name, upon faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; yea, the faith which is by Him hath given Him this perfect soundness. [The faith which is by Him *ἡ δὲ αὐτοῦ πίστις*.] And yet it was *ἡ εἰς αὐτὸν πίστις*, "the faith which is in Him" (as its object) that did all. For the Apostles did not say, "By the name," but, "In the name," and it was in Him (*εἰς αὐτὸν*) that the man believed. But they did not yet make bold to use the expression, "The faith which is in Him." For, that the phrase "By Him" should not be too low, observe that after saying, "Upon the faith of His name," he adds, "His name hath made him strong," and then it is that he says, "Yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness." Observe how he implies, that in the *καὶ ἐκεῖνο* former expression also "Whom God raised up," he did but condescend to their low attainments. For that Person needed not Another's help for His rising again, Whose Name raised up a lame man, being all one as dead. Mark how on all occasions he adduces their own testimony. Thus above, he said, "As ye yourselves also know;" and, "In the midst of you:" and here again, "Whom ye see and know: in the presence of you all." (ch. 2:22.) And yet that it was, "In His name," they knew not: but they did know that the man was lame, that he stands there whole. They that had wrought the deed themselves confessed, that it was not by their own power, but by that of Christ. And had this assertion been unfounded, had they not been truly persuaded themselves that Christ had risen again, they would not have sought to establish the honor of a dead man instead of their own, especially while the eyes of the multitude were upon them. Then, when their minds were alarmed, immediately he encourages them, by the appellation of Brethren, "And now, brethren, I wot, etc." For in the former discourse he foretold nothing, but only says concerning Christ, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly:" here he adds an admonition. There he waited till the

people spoke: here, he knew how much they had already effected, and that the present assembly was better disposed toward them. "That through ignorance ye did it." And yet the circumstances mentioned above were not to be put to the score of ignorance. To choose the robber, to reject Him Who had been adjudged to be acquitted, to desire even to destroy Him — how should this be referred to ignorance? Nevertheless, he gives them liberty to deny it, and to change their mind about what had happened. "Now this indeed, that you put to death the innocent, ye knew: but that you were killing "the Prince of Life," this, belike, ye did not know." And he exculpated not them alone, but also the chief contrivers of the evil, "ye and your rulers:" for doubtless it would have roused their opposition, had he gone off into accusation. For the evil-doer, when you accuse him of some wickedness that he has done, in his endeavor to exonerate himself, grows more vehement. And he no longer says, "Ye crucified," "Ye killed," but, "Ye did it;" leading them to seek for pardon. If those rulers did it through ignorance, much more did these present. "But these things which God before had showed," etc. (v. 18.) But it is remarkable, that both in the first and in the second discourse, speaking to the same effect, that is, in the former, "By the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God;" and in this, "God before had showed that Christ should suffer;" in neither does he adduce any particular text in proof. The fact is, that each one of such passages is accompanied with many accusations, and with mention of the punishment in store for them [as]; "I will deliver up," says one, "the wicked in requital for His grave, and the rich in return for His death." (Isaiah 53:9.) And again, "Those things," he says, "which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled." It shows the greatness of that "counsel," in that *all* spoke of it, and not one only. It does not follow, because the event was through ignorance, that it took place irrespectively of God's ordinance. See how great is the Wisdom of God, when it uses the wickedness of others to bring about that which must be. "He hath fulfilled," he says: that they may not imagine that anything at all is wanting; for whatsoever Christ must needs suffer, has been fulfilled. But do not think, that, because the Prophets said this, and because ye did it through ignorance, this sufficeth to your exculpation. However, he does not express himself thus, but in milder terms says, "Repent ye therefore." (v. 19.) "Why? For either it was through ignorance, or by the dispensation of God." "That your sins may

be blotted out.” I do not mean the crimes committed at the Crucifixion; perhaps they were through ignorance; but so that your other sins may be blotted out: this only. “So shall the times of refreshing come unto you.” Here he speaks of the Resurrection, obscurely. For those are indeed times of refreshing, which Paul also looked for, when he said, “We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burthened.” (2 Corinthians 5:4.) Then to prove that Christ is the cause of the days of refreshing, he says, “And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was for you ordained.” (v. 20.) He said not, “That your sin may be blotter out,” but, “your sins;” for he hints at that sin also. “He shall send.” And whence? “Whom the heaven must receive.” (v. 21.) Still [“must”] “receive?” And why not simply, Whom the heaven hath received? This, as if discoursing of old times: so, he says, it is divinely ordered, so it is settled: not a word yet of His eternal subsistence. — “For Moses indeed said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord raise up for you:” “Him shall ye hear in all things that He shall speak unto you:” and having said, “All things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy Prophets,” (v. 22) now indeed he brings in Christ Himself. For, if He predicted many things and it is necessary to hear Him, one would not be wrong in saying that the Prophets have spoken these things. But, besides, he wishes to show that the Prophets did predict the same things. And, if any one will look closely into the matter, he will find these things spoken in the Old Testament, obscurely indeed, but nevertheless spoken. “Who was purposely designed,” says he: in Whom there is nothing novel. Here he also alarms them, by the thought that much remains to be fulfilled. But if so, how says he, “Hath fulfilled?” (v. 18.) The things which it was necessary “that Christ should suffer,” are fulfilled: the things which must come to pass, not yet. “A prophet shall the Lord God raise up for you from among your brethren, like unto me.” This would most conciliate them. Do you observe the sprinkling of low matters and high, side by side, — that He Who was to go up into the heavens should be like unto Moses? And yet it was a great thing too. For in fact He was not simply like unto Moses, if so be that “every soul which will not hear shall be destroyed.” And one might mention numberless other things which show that He was not like unto Moses; so that it is a mighty text that he has handled. “God shall raise Him up unto you,” says Moses, “from among your brethren,” etc.: consequently Moses himself threatens those that should not hear. “Yea, and all the

prophets,” etc.: all this is calculated to attract” Yea, and all the prophets,” says the Apostle. “from Samuel.” He refrains from enumerating them singly, not to make his discourse too long; but having alleged that decisive testimony of Moses, he passes by the rest. “Ye,” he says, “are the children of the Prophets, and of the covenant which God made.” (v. 25) “Children of the covenant;” that is, heirs. For test they should think that they received this offer from the favor of Peter, he shows, that of old it was due to them, in order that they may the rather believe that such also is the will of God. “Unto you first,” he continues, “God having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him. (v. 26.) He does not say simply, “Unto you He sent His Son,” but also, after the resurrection, and when He had been crucified. For that they may not suppose that he himself granted them this favor, and not the Father, he says, “To bless you.” For if He is your Brother, and blesses you, the affair is a promise. “Unto you first.” That is, so far are you from having no share in these blessings, that He would have you become moreover promoters and authors of them to others. For you are not to feel like castaways. “Having raised up”: again, the Resurrection. “In turning away,” he says, “every one of you from his iniquities.” In this way He blesses you: not in a general way. And what kind of blessing is this? A great one. For of course not the turning a man away from his iniquities is itself sufficient to remit them also. And if it is not sufficient to remit, how should it be to confer a blessing? For it is not to be supposed that the transgressor becomes forthwith also blessed; he is simply released from his sins. But this, “Like unto me,” would no wise apply. “Hear ye Him,” he says; and not this alone, but he adds, “And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.” When he has shown them that they had sinned, and has imparted forgiveness to them, and promised good things, then indeed, then he says, “Moses also says the same thing.” What sort of connection is this: “Until the times of the restitution;” and then to introduce Moses, saying, that all that Christ said shall come to pass? Then also, on the other hand, he says, as matter of encomium (so that for this reason also ye ought to obey): “Ye are the children of the prophets and of the covenant:” i.e. heirs. Then why do you stand affected towards that which is your own, as if it were another’s? True, you have done deeds worthy of condemnation; still you may yet obtain pardon. Having said this, with reason he is now able to say, “Unto you God sent his Son Jesus to bless you.” He says not,

To save you, but what is greater; that the crucified Jesus blessed His crucifiers.

Let us then also imitate Him. Let us cast out that spirit of murder and enmity. It is not enough not to retaliate (for even in the Old Dispensation this was exemplified); but let us do all as we would for bosom-friends, as we would for ourselves so for those who have injured us. We are followers of Him, we are His disciples, who after being crucified, sets everything in action in behalf of his murderers, and sends out His Apostles to this end. And yet we have often suffered justly; but those acted not only unjustly, but impiously; for He was their Benefactor, He had done no evil, and they crucified Him. And for what reason? For the sake of their reputation. But He Himself made them objects of reverence. “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that do ye, but after their works do ye not.” (Matthew 23:2.) And again in another place, “Go thy way, show thyself to the priest.” (ib. 8:4.) Besides, when He might have destroyed them, He saves them. Let us then imitate Him, and let no one be an enemy, no one a foe, except to the devil.

Not a little does the habit of not swearing contribute to this end: I mean to the not giving way to wrath: and by not giving way to wrath, we shall not have an enemy either. Lop off the oaths of a man, and you have clipt the wings of his anger, you have smothered all his passion. Swearing, it is said, is as the wind to wrath. Lower the sails; no need of sails, when there is no wind. If then we do not clamor, and do not swear, we have cut the sinews of passion. And if you doubt this, just put it to experiment. Impose it as a law upon the passionate man that he shall never swear, and you will have no necessity of preaching moderation to hint. So the whole business is finished. For even though you do not forswear yourselves [yet], by swearing at all, do you not know in what absurd consequences you involve yourselves — binding yourselves to an absolute necessity and as with a cord, and putting yourselves to all manner of shifts, as men studying how to rescue their soul from an evil which there is no escaping, or, failing of that, obliged [by that self-imposed necessity] to spend your life thenceforth in vexation, in quarrels, and to curse your wrath? But all is in vain, and to no purpose. Threaten, be peremptory (**διόρισαι**), do all, whatever it be, without swearing; [so]: it is in your power to reverse

(ἀναλῦσαι) both what you have said and what you have done if you have the mind. Thus on the present day I must needs speak more gently to you. For since ye have heard me, and the greater part of the reformation is achieved by you, now then let us see for what purpose the taking of oaths was introduced, and why allowed to be. In relating to you their first origin, and when they were conceived, and how, and by whom we shall give you this account in requital for your obedience. For it is fit that he who has made his practice right, should be taught the philosophy of the matter, but he who is not yet doing the right, is not worthy to be told the history.

They made many covenants in Abraham's time, and slew victims, and offered sacrifices, and as yet oaths were not. Whence then did they come in? When evil increased, when all was confusion, upside down, when men had turned aside to idolatry: then it was, then, when men appeared no longer worthy to be believed, that they called God as witness, as if thereby giving an adequate surety for what they said. Such in fact is the Oath: it is a security where men's principles cannot be trusted. So that in the indictment of the swearer the first charge is this, — that he is not to be trusted without a surety, and a great surety too: for such is the exceeding faithlessness, that they ask not man as surety, but will needs have God! Secondly, the same charge lies against him who receives the oath: that, in a question of compact, he must drag in God for warranty, and refuse to be satisfied unless he get Him. O the excessive stupidity, the insolence of such conduct! Thou, a worm, earth and dust, and ashes, and vapor, to drag in thy Lord as the, surety, and to compel the other to drag Him in likewise! Tell me, if your servants were disputing with each other, and exchanging assurances with each other, and the fellow-servant should declare that for his part he would not be satisfied till he had their common master given him for surety, would he not have stripes given him without number, and be made to know that the master is for other purposes, and not to be put to any such use as this? Why do I speak of a fellow-servant? For should he choose any respectable person, would not that person consider it an affront? But I do not wish to do this, say you. Well: then do not compel the other to do so either: since where men only are in question, this is done — if your party says, "I give such an one as my surety," you do not allow him. "What then," say you, "am I to lose what I have given?" I am not speaking of this; but that you allow him to insult God. For which

reason greater shall be the inevitable punishment to him who forces the oath upon another, than to him who takes it: the same holds with regard to him who gives an oath when no one asks him. And what makes it worse, is, that every one is ready to swear, for one farthing, for some petty item, for his own injustice. All this may be said, when there is no perjury; but if perjury follow in the train, both he that imposes and he that takes the oath have turned everything upside down. "But there are some things," you will say, "which are unknown." Well take these into account, and do nothing negligently; but, if you do act negligently, take the loss to yourself as your punishment. It is better to be the loser thus, than in a very different way. For tell me — you force a man to take an oath, with what expectation? That he will forswear himself? But this is utter insanity; and the judgment will fall upon your own head; better you should lose your money, than he be lost. Why act thus to your own detriment, and to the insulting of God? This is the spirit of a wild beast, and of an impious man. But you do this in the expectation that he will not forswear himself? Then trust him without the oath. "Nay, there are many," you reply, "who in the absence of an oath would presume to defraud; but, once the oath taken, would refrain." You deceive yourself, man. A man having once learnt to steal, and to wrong his neighbor, will presume full oft to trample upon his oath; if on the contrary he shrinks from swearing, he will much more shrink from injustice. "But he is influenced against his will." Well then, he deserves pardon.

But why am I speaking of this kind of oaths, while I pass over those in the market-place? For as regards these last, you can urge none of these pleas. For ten farthings you there have swearing and forswearing. In fact, because the thunderbolt does not actually fall from heaven, because all things are not overthrown, you stand holding God in your bonds: to get a few vegetables, a pair of shoes, for a little matter of money, calling Him to witness. What is the meaning of this? Do not let us imagine, that because we are not punished, therefore we do not sin; this comes of God's mercy; not of our merit. Let your oath be an imprecation upon your own child, upon your own self: say, "Else let the hangman lash my ribs." But you dare not. Is God less valuable than thy ribs? is He less precious than thy pate? Say "Else let me be struck blind." But no. Christ so spares us, that He will not let us swear even by our own head; and yet we so little spare

the honor of God, that on all occasions we must drag Him in! Ye know not what God is, and with what sort of lips he behooves to be invoked. Why, when we speak of any man of eminent worth, we say, "First wash your mouth, and then make mention of him:" and yet, that precious Name which is above every name, the Name which is marvelous in all the earth, the Name which devils hear and tremble, we haul about as we list! Oh! the force of habit! thereby has that Name become cheap. No doubt, if you impose on any one the necessity of coming into the sacred edifice to take his oath there, you feel that you have made the oath an awful one. And yet how is it that it seems awful in this way, but because we have been in the habit of using that at random, but not this? For ought not a shudder of awe to be felt when God is but named? But now, whereas among the Jews His Name was held to be so reverend, that it was written upon plates, and none was allowed to wear the characters except the high-priest alone: we bandy about His Name like any ordinary word. If simply to name God was not allowed to all; to call Him to witness, what audacity is it! nay, what madness! For if need were (rather than this) to fling away all that you have, ought you not readily to part with all? Behold, I solemnly declare and testify; reform these oaths of the forum, these superfluous oaths, and bring to me all those who wish to take them. Behold, in the presence of this assembly, I charge those who are set apart for the tending of the Houses of Prayer, I exhort and issue this order to them, that no person be allowed to take such oaths at his own discretion: or rather, that none be allowed to swear in any other way, but that the person be brought to me, whosoever he be, since even for these matters less will not serve but they must needs come before us, just as if one had to do with little children. May there be no occasion! It is a shame in some things still to need to be taught. Do you dare to touch the Holy Table, being a person unbaptized? No, but what is still worse, you the baptized dare to lay your hand upon the Holy Table, which not even all ordained persons are allowed to touch, and so to take your oath. Now you would not go and lay your hand upon the head of your child? and yet do you touch the Table, and not shudder, not feel afraid? Bring these men to me; I will judge, and send them away rejoicing, both the one and the other. Do what you choose; I lay it down as a law that there be no swearing at all. What hope of salvation, while we thus make all to have been done in vain? Is this the end of your bills, and your bonds, that you should sacrifice your own

soul? What gain do you get so great as the loss? Has he forsworn himself? You have undone both him and yourself. But has he not? even so still you have undone (both), by forcing him to transgress the commandment. Let us cast out this disease from the soul: at any rate let us drive it out of the forum, out of our shops, out of our other work-places; our profits will but be the greater. Do not imagine that the success of your worldly plans is to be ensured by transgressions of the Divine laws. "But he refuses to trust me," say you; and in fact I have sometimes heard this said by some: "Unless I swear oaths without number, the man will not trust me." Yes, and for this you may thank yourself, because you are so off-hand with your oaths. For were it not so, but on the contrary were it clear to all men that you do not swear, take my word for it, you would be more readily believed upon your mere nod, than those are who swallow oaths by thousands. For look now: which do you more readily believe? me who do not swear, or those that do swear? "Yes," say you, "but then you are ruler and bishop." Then suppose I prove to you that it is not only for that reason? Answer me with truth, I beseech you; were I in the habit of perpetually swearing, would my office stand me in that stead? Not a whir. Do you see that it is not for this reason? And what do you gain at all? Answer me that. Paul endured hunger; do you then also choose to hunger rather than to transgress one of the commandments of God. Why are you so unbelieving? Here are you, ready to do and suffer all things for the sake of not swearing: and shall not He reward you? Shall He, Who sustains day by day both takers and breakers of oaths, give you over to hunger, when you have obeyed Him? Let all men see, that of those who assemble in this Church not one is a swearer. By this also let us become manifest, and not by our creed alone; let us have this mark also to distinguish us both from the Gentiles and from all men. Let us receive it as a seal from heaven, that we may everywhere be seen to be the King's own flock. By our mouth and tongue let us be known, in the first place, just as the barbarians are by theirs: even as those who speak Greek are distinguished from barbarians, so let us be known. Answer me: the birds which are said to be parrots, how are they known to be parrots? is it not by speaking like men? Let us then be known by speaking like the Apostles; by speaking like the Angels. If any one bid you swear tell him, "Christ has spoken, and I do not swear." This is enough to make a way for all virtue to come in. It is a gate to religion, a high road leading to the philosophy of piety; a kind of

training-school. These things let us observe, that we may obtain also the future blessings, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory, power and honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 10

ACTS 4:1

“And as they spake unto the people, there came unto them the priests, and the captain of the temple.”

ERE yet their had time to take breath after their first trials, straightway they enter into others. And observe how the events are disposed. First, they were all mocked together; this was no small trial: secondly, they enter into dangers. And these two things do not take place in immediate succession; but when first the Apostles have won admiration by their two discourses, and after that have performed a notable miracle, thereupon it is that, after they are waxen bold, through God’s disposal, they enter the lists. But I wish you to consider, how those same persons, who in the case of Christ must need look out for one to deliver Him up to them, now with their own hands arrest the Apostles, having become more audacious and more impudent since the Crucifixion. In truth, sin, while it is yet struggling to the birth, is attended with some sense of shame; but when once fully born, it makes those more shameless who practice it. “And the captain of the temple,” it is said. The object again was to attach a public criminality to what was doing, and not to prosecute it as the act of private individuals: such in fact was constantly their plan of proceeding.

“Being grieved that they taught the people.” (v. 2.) Not merely because they taught, but because they declared, not alone that Christ Himself was risen from the dead, but moreover, that we through Him do rise again. “Because they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead.” So mighty was His Resurrection, that to others also He is the cause of a resurrection. “And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day; for it was now eventide. (v. 3.) What impudence! They feared not the multitude; for this also the captain of the temple was with them: they had their hands still reeking with the blood of the former victim. “For it was now eventide,” it is said. It was with the wish to abate their spirit that those men did this, and guarded them; but the delay only served to make the Apostles more intrepid. And consider who these are who are arrested. They are the chiefs of the Apostles, who

are now become a pattern to the rest, that they should no longer crave each other's support, nor want to be together. "Howbeit, many having heard the word, believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand." (v. 4.) How was this? Did they see them in honor? Did they not behold them put in bonds? How then did they, believe? Do you see the evident efficacy? And yet even those that believed already might well have become weaker. But no, it is no longer so: for Peter's sermon had laid the seed deep into them, and had taken a hold upon their understandings. Therefore were [their enemies] incensed, that they did not fear them, that they made no account of their present troubles. For, say they, if He that was crucified effects such great things, and makes the lame to walk, we fear not these men either. This again is of God's ordering. For those who now believe were more numerous than the former. Therefore it was that in their presence they bound the Apostles, to make them also more fearful. But the reverse took place. And they examine them not before the people, but privately, that the hearers may not profit by their boldness.

"And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the High Priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the High Priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem." (v. 5, 6.) For now along with the other evils (of the times), the Law was no longer observed. And again they set off the business with the form of a tribunal, to constitute them guilty by their iniquitous sentence. "And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" (v. 7.) And yet they knew it well; for it was because they were "grieved that they preached through Jesus the resurrection" that they arrested them. Then for what purpose do they question them? They expected the numbers present would make them recant, and thought by this means to have put all right again. Observe then what they say: "And by what name have ye done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them." (v. 8.) And now, I pray you, call to mind Christ's saying; "When they deliver you up unto the synagogues, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall speak; for it is the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. (Luke 12:11, 14.) So that it was a mighty Power they enjoyed. What then says Peter? "Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel." Mark the Christian wisdom of the man; how full of confidence it is: he utters not a word of insult, but

says with respect, “Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we be this day called to account of the good deed done to the impotent man.” He takes them in hand right valiantly; by the opening of his speech he exposes them, and reminds them of the former things: that it is for a work of beneficence they are calling them to account. As if he had said, “In all fairness we ought to have been crowned for this deed, and proclaimed benefactors; but since “we are even put upon our trial for a good deed done to an impotent man,” not a rich man, not powerful, not noble — and yet who would feel envy in a case like this?” It is a most forcible (ἀπαγγελία, al. ἐπαγγελία) way of putting the case; and he shows that they are piercing their own selves: — “By what means this man is made whole: be it known unto you all, and to all the people Israel; that by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth:” — this is what would vex them most. For this was that which Christ had told the disciples, “What ye hear in the ear that preach ye upon the housetops. — That in the name of Jesus Christ,” he says, “of Nazareth, Whom ye crucified, Whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole.” (v. 10.) (Matthew 10:27.) Think not, he says that we conceal the country, or the nature of the death. “Whom ye crucified, Whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand before you whole.” Again the death, again the resurrection. “This is the stone,” he says, “which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.” (v. 11.) He reminds them also of a saying which was enough to frighten them. For it had been said, “Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. (Matthew 21:44.) — Neither is there salvation in any other, (v. 12.) Peter says. What wounds, think you, must these words inflict on them! “For there is none other name,” he continues, “under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Here he utters also lofty words. For when the object is, not to carry some point successfully, but only to show boldness he does not spare; for he was not afraid of striking too deep. Nor does he say simply, “By another;” but, “Neither is there salvation in any other: that is, He is able to save us. In this way he subdued their threatening.

“Now when they saw the, boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” (v. 13.) The two

unlearned men beat down with their rhetoric them and the chief priests. For it was not they that spake, but the grace of the Spirit. "And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it." (v. 14.) Great was the boldness of the man; that even in the judgment-hall he has not left them. For had they said that the fact was not so, there was he to refute them. "But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, What are we to do to these men?" (v. 15.) See the difficulty they are in, and how the fear of men again does everything. As in the case of Christ, they were not able (as the saying is) to undo what is done, nor to cast it into the shade, but for all their hindering, the Faith did but gain ground the more; so was it now. "What shall we do?" O the folly! to suppose that those who had tasted of the conflict, would now take fright at it: to expect, impotent as their efforts had proved in the beginning, to effect something new, after such a specimen of oratory as had been exhibited! The more they wished to hinder, the more the business grew upon their hands. But what say they? "For that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straightly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach, in the name of Jesus." (v. 16-18.) See what effrontery is shown by these, and what greatness of mind by the Apostles. "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people." (v. 19-21.) The miracles shut their mouths: they would not so much as let them finish their speech, but cut them short in the middle, most insolently. "For all men glorified God for that which was done. For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was showed." (v. 22.) But let us look over what has been said from the beginning.

"And as they spake unto the people, etc. Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead." (Recapitulation, 5:1, 2.) So then at first they did all for the sake of man's opinion (or glory): but now another motive was added: that they should

not be thought guilty of murder, as they said subsequently, “Do ye wish to bring this man’s blood on us?” (ch. 5:28.) O the folly! Persuaded that He was risen, and having received this proof of it, they expected that He Whom death could not hold, could be cast into the shade by their machinations! What can match the folly of this! Such is the nature of wickedness: it has no eyes for anything, but on all occasions it is thrown into perturbation. Finding themselves overborne, they felt like persons who have been outwitted: as is the case with people who have been forestalled and made a sport of in some matter. And yet they everywhere affirmed that it was God that raised Him: but it was “in the Name of Jesus” that they spake showing that Jesus was risen. “Through Jesus, the resurrection of the dead”: for they themselves also held a resurrection: a cold and ‘puerile doctrine, indeed, but still they held it. Why this alone, was it not sufficient to induce them to do nothing to them — I mean, that the disciples with such boldness bore themselves in the way they did? Say, wherefore, O Jew, dost thou disbelieve? Thou oughtest to have attended to the sign done, and to the words, not to the evil disposition of the many. “By their teaching the people.” For already they were in ill repute with them by reason of what they had done to Christ; so that they were rather increasing their own obloquy. “And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold until the morrow; for it was now eventide.” (v. 3.) In the case of Christ, however, they did not so; but having taken Him at midnight, they immediately led him away, and made no delay, being exceedingly in fear of the multitude: whereas in the case of the Apostles here, they were bold. And they no more take them to Pilate, being ashamed and blushing at the thought of the former affair, lest they should also be taken to task for that.

“And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes. were gathered together at Jerusalem.” (v. 5.) Again in Jerusalem: and there it is that men’s blood is poured out; no reverence for their city either; “And Annas, and Caiaphas,” etc. (v. 6.) “And Annas,” it says, “and Caiaphas.” His maid-servant it was that questioned Peter, and he could not bear it: in his house it was that Peter denied, when Another was in bonds there: but now, when he has come into the midst of them all, see how he speaks! “By what name have ye done this?” Why dost thou not speak it, what it is, but keepest that out of sight? “By what name have ye

done this?" (v. 7.) And yet he affirmed, It was not we that did it. "Ye rulers of the people," etc. (v. 8.) Observe his wisdom: he does not say outright, "In the Name of Jesus we did it," but how? "In His Name this man" — He does not say, "was made whole by us;" but — "doth stand here before you whole." And again, "If we be examined concerning the good deed done to the impotent man." (v. 9.) He hits them hard, that they are always making a crime of such acts, finding fault with works of beneficence done to men: and he reminds them of their former doings, that *they* run to do murder, and not only so, but make a crime of doing good deeds. Do you observe too (in point of rhetoric) with what dignity they express themselves? Even in the use of words they were becoming expert by practice, and henceforth they were not to be beaten down. "Be it known unto you all," etc. (v. 10.) Whereby he shows them that they rather do, in spite of themselves, preach Christ; themselves extol the doctrine, by their examining and questioning. O exceeding boldness — "Whom ye crucified! Whom God raised up" — this is bolder still! Think not that we hide what there is to be ashamed of. He says this all but tauntingly: and not merely says it, but dwells upon the matter. "This," says he, "is the Stone which was set at naught by you builders;" and then he goes on to teach them, saying in addition, "Which is made the head of the corner" (v. 11.); that is to say, that the Stone is indeed approved! Great was the boldness they now had, in consequence of the miracle. And when there was need to teach, observe how they speak and allege many prophecies; but when the point was to use boldness of speech, then they only speak peremptorily. Thus "Neither," says he, "is there any other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." (v. 12.) It is manifest to all, he says, because not to us alone was that Name given; he cites even themselves as witnesses. For, since they asked, "In what name did ye it?" "In Christ's," says he: "there is none other name. How is it that ye ask? On all hands this is palpable. "For there exists not another name under heaven, whereby we must be saved." This is the language of a soul which has renounced (κατεγνωκυίας) this present life. His exceeding outspokenness proves here, that when he speaks in lowly terms of Christ, he does it not of fear, but of wise forbearance (συγκαταβαίνων): but now that it was the fitting time, he speaks not in lowly terms: by this very thing intending to strike dismay into them. Behold another miracle not less than the former. "And beholding the boldness of Peter and John," etc.

“And they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.” (v. 13.) Not without a meaning has the Evangelist set down this passage; but in saying, “they recognized them that they had been with Jesus,” he means, in His Passion: for only these were [with Him] at that time, and then indeed they had seen them humble, dejected: and this it was that most surprised them: the greatness of the change. For in fact Annas and Caiaphas with their company were there, and these then also had stood by Him, and their boldness now amazed them. “And beholding the boldness.” For not only their words; their very bearing showed it; that they should stand there so intrepidly to be tried in a cause like this, and with uttermost peril impending over them! Not only by their words, but by their gesture also, and their look and voice, and, in short, by everything about them, they manifested the boldness with which they confronted the people. From the things they uttered, they marveled, perhaps: “that they were unlearned and common men:” for one may be unlearned, yet not a common or private man, and a common man, yet not unlearned. “Having perceived,” it says. Whence? From what they said? Peter does not draw out long speeches, but then by his very manner and method (τῆς ἀπαγγελίας καὶ τῆς συνθήκης) he declares his confidence. “And they recognized them that they had been with Jesus.” Which circumstance made them believe that it was from Him they had learned these things, and that they did all in the character of His disciples. But not less than the voice of these, the miracle uttered a voice of its own: and that sign itself stopped their mouths. “And beholding the man,” etc.] So that they would have been peremptory (ἐπέσκηψαν) with them, if the man had not been with them. “We cannot deny it.” So that they would have denied it, if the thing had not been so: if the testimony had not been that of the people in general. “But that it spread no further among the people.” (v. 17.) And yet it was palpable to all men! But such is the nature of wickedness: everywhere it is shamed. “Let us straitly threaten them.” What sayest thou? Threaten? And expect ye to stop the preaching? And yet all beginnings are hard and trying. Ye slew the Master, and did not stop it: and now, if ye threaten, do ye expect to turn us back? The imprisonment did not prevail with us to speak submissively, and shall ye prevail? “And they called them, and commanded them,” etc. (v. 18, 19.) It had been much better for them to let them go. “And Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you

more than unto God, judge ye.” When the terror was abated (for that command was tantamount to their being dismissed), then also the Apostles speak more mildly: so far were they from mere bravery: “Whether it be right,” says he: and “We cannot [but speak]. Whether it be right in the sight of God to obey you rather than God.” (v. 20.) Here [by “God”] they mean Christ, for he it was that commanded them. And once more they confirm the fact of His Resurrection. “For we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard:” so that we are witnesses who have a right to be believed. “So when they had further threatened them.” (v. 21.) Again they threatened in vain. “They let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.” So then the people glorified God, but these endeavored to destroy them: such fighters against God were they! Whereby they made them more conspicuous and illustrious. “For My strength,” it is said, “is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9.)

Already these as martyrs have born testimony: set in the battle against all, they said, “We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard.” If the things we speak be false, reprehend them; if true, why hinderest thou? Such is philosophy! Those, in perplexity, these in gladness: those covered with exceeding shame, these doing all with boldness: those in fear, these in confidence. For who, I would ask, were the frightened? those who said, “That it spread no further among people,” or these who said, “we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard?” And these had a delight, a freedom of speech, a joy surpassing all; those a despondency, a shame, a fear; for they feared the people. But these were not afraid of those; on the contrary, while these spake what they would, those did not what they would. Which were in chains and dangers? was it not these last?

Let us then hold fast to virtue; let not these words end only in delight, and in a certain elevation of the spirits. This is not the theater, for singers (*κιθαρῳδῶν*), and tragedians, and musicians (*κιθαρπιστῶν*), where the fruit consists only in the enjoyment and where the enjoyment itself passes with the passing day. Nay, would that it were enjoyment alone, and not mischief also with the enjoyment! But so it is: each man carries home with him much of what he has witnessed there, sticking to him like the infection of a plague: and one indeed, of the younger sort, having culled such snatches of song here and there of those satanic plays, as he could fix in

his memory, goes singing them about the house: while another, a senior, and forsooth too staid for such levity, does not this indeed, but what is there spoken, both the preachments and the very words, he remembers it all; and another again, some filthy and absurd ditty. From this place you depart, taking nothing with you. — We have laid down a law — nay, not we: God forbid! for it is said, “Call no man your master upon the earth” (Matthew 23:8); Christ has laid down a law that none should swear. Now, say, what has been done with regard to this law? For I will not cease speaking of it; “lest,” as the Apostle saith, “if I come again, I must not spare.” (2 Corinthians 13:2.) I ask then, have you laid the matter to heart? have you thought of it seriously? have you been in earnest about it, or must we again take up the same subject? Nay, rather, whether you have or not, we will resume it, that you may think seriously about it, or, if you have laid it to heart, may again do this the more surely, and exhort others also. With what then, I pray you, with what shall we begin? Shall it be with the Old Testament? For indeed this also is to our shame, that the precepts of the Law, which we ought to surpass, we do not even thus observe! For we ought not to be hearing such matters as these: these are precepts adapted to the poor Jewish level (τῆς Ἰουδαϊκῆς εὐτελείας): we ought to be hearing those counsels of perfection; “Cast away thy property, stand courageously, and give up thy life in behalf of the Gospel, scorn all the goods of earth, have nothing in common with this present life; if any wrong thee, do him good; if any defraud thee, bless him; if any revile thee, show him honor; be above everything.” (S. Ambros. *de Off.* 1:2.) These and such as these are what we ought to be hearing. But here are we discoursing about swearing; and our case is just the same as if, when a person ought to be a philosopher, one should take him away from the great masters, and set him to spell syllables letter by letter! Just think now what a disgrace it would be for a man having a flowing beard, and with staff in hand, and cope on shoulders, to go to school with children, and be set the same tasks with them would it not be above measure ridiculous? And yet the ridicule which belongs to us is even greater. For not as the difference between philosophy and the spelling-lesson, so is that between the Jewish polity and ours: no indeed, but as the difference between angels and men. Say now, if one could fetch down an angel from heaven, and should bid him stand here and listen to our preaching, as one whose duty it is to conform himself thereto, would it not be shameful and preposterous?

But if to be yet, like children, under teaching about these things be ridiculous; what must it be, not even to attend to these things: how great the condemnation, how great the shame To be Christians still, and to have to learn that it is not right to swear! However, let us put up with that, lest we incur even worse ridicule.

Well, then, let us speak to you today from the Old Testament. What does it tell us? “Accustom not thy mouth to swearing; neither use thyself to the naming of the Holy One.” And why? “For as a servant that is continually beaten shall not be without a blue mark, so he that sweareth.” (Ecclus. 23:10.) See the discernment of this wise man. He did not say, “Accustom not to swearing” thy mind, but “thy mouth”; because being altogether an affair of the mouth, thus it is easily remedied. For at last it becomes a habit without intention; as for instance, there are many who entering the public baths, as soon as they have passed the threshold, cross (Hom. in 1 Corinthians 11:7) themselves (σφραγίζονται). This the hand has got to do, without any one’s bidding, by force of habit. Again, at the lighting of a candle, often when the mind is intent on something else, the hand makes the sign. In the same way also the mouth, without concurrence of the mind, articulates the word, from mere habit, and the whole affair is in the tongue. “Neither use thyself,” he says, “to the naming of the Holy One. For as a servant that is continually beaten shall not be without a blue mark, so he that sweareth.” He speaks not here of false oaths, but he cuts down all oaths, and to them also assigns their punishment. Why then, swearing is a sin. For such in truth is the soul; full of all these ulcers, all these scars. But you do not see them? Yes, this is the mischief of it; and yet you might see if you wished; for God has given you eyes. With eyes of this kind did the Prophet see, when he said, “My wounds stink, and are corrupt, because of my foolishness.” (Psalm 38:5.) We have despised God, we have hated that good Name, we have trodden Christ under foot, we have lost all reverence, none names the Name of God with honor. Yet if you love any one, even at his name you start to your feet; but God you thus continually invoke, and make nothing of it. Call upon Him for the benefit of your enemy; call upon Him for the salvation of your own soul; then he will be present, then you will delight Him; whereas now you provoke Him to anger. Call upon Him as Stephen did; “Lord,” he said, “lay not this sin to their charge.” (ch. 7:59.) Call upon Him as did the wife

of Elkanah, with tears and sobs, and prayers. (1 Samuel 1:10.) I prevent you not, rather I earnestly exhort you to it. Call upon him as Moses called upon Him, yea, cried, interceding for those who had driven him into banishment. For you to make mention at random of any person of consideration, is taken as an insult: and do you bandy God about in your talk, in season, out of season? I do not want to hinder you from keeping God always in your mind: nay, this I even desire and pray for, only that you should do this, so as to honor Him. Great good would this have done us, if we had called upon God only when we ought, and for what we ought. And why, I would ask, were such miracles wrought in the Apostles' times, and not in ours? And yet it is the same God, the same Name. But no, the case is not the same. For then they called upon Him only for those objects which I have mentioned; whereas we call upon Him not for these, but quite other purposes. — If a man refuse to believe you, and that is why you swear, say to him, “Believe me:” however, if you will needs make oath, swear by yourself. I say this, not to set up a law against Christ's law; God forbid; for it is said. “Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay (Matthew 5:37): but by way of coming down to your present level, that I may more easily lead you to the practice of this commandment, and divert you from this tyrannical habit. How many who have done well in other respects, have been undone by these practices! Shall I tell you why it was permitted the ancients to take oaths? (for to take false oaths, was not permitted to them either.) Because they swore by idols. But are you not ashamed to rest in laws, by which they in their infirmity were led on to something better? It is true, when I take a Gentile in hand, I do not immediately lay this injunction upon him, but in the first place I exhort him to know Christ; but if the believer, who has both learnt Him and heard Him, must needs crave the same forbearance with the Gentile, what is the use, what the gain (of his Christianity?) — But the habit is strong, and you cannot detach yourself from it? Well then, since the tyranny of habit is so great, transfer it into another channel. And how is this to be done? you will ask. What I have said often, I say also now; let there be many monitors (*λογισταὶ*), let there be many examiners and censors (*ἐξετασταὶ, δοκιμασταὶ*). Say, if you chance to put on your mantle inside out, you allow your servant to correct your mistake, and are ashamed to learn of him, although there is much to be ashamed of in this; and here when you are getting hurt to your soul, are you ashamed to be

taught better by another? You suffer your menial to put your dress in order, and to fasten your shoes, and will you not endure him that would put your soul in order? Let even your menial, your child, your wife, your friend, your kinsman, your neighbor, be your teachers on this point. For as when a wild beast is hunted down from all sides, it is impossible for it to escape; so he that has so many to watch him, so many to reprove him, who is liable to be struck at from all sides, cannot help being on his guard. The first day he will find it hard to put up with, and the second, and the third; but after that it will come easier, and, the fourth passed, there will not even be anything to do. Make the experiment, if you doubt me; take it into consideration, I beseech you. It is not a trifling matter to be wrong in, nor yet to come fight in; on both sides it is great for evil and for good. May the good be effected, through the grace and loving-mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory, power, and honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 11

ACTS 4:23

“And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.”

NOT for their own glory did they tell the tale — how should such be their motive? — but what they displayed was the proofs therein exhibited of the grace of Christ. All that their adversaries had said, this they told; their own part, it is likely, they omitted: this made the hearers all the more courageous. What then? These again flee to the true Succor, to the Alliance invincible, and again, “with one accord. And when they heard that,” it is said, “with one accord they lifted up their voice to God, and said:” (v. 24) and with great earnestness, for it is no prayer made at random. Observe with what exquisite propriety their prayers are framed: thus, when they besought to be shown who was meet for the Apostleship, they said, “Thou, Lord, which knowest the heart of all men, show:” (ch. 1:24) for it was a subject for Prescience there: but here, where the thing needed was that the mouths of their adversaries should be stopped, they speak of lordship; wherefore they begin thus: Lord, “(Δέσποτα) the God that madest heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who, by the Holy Ghost through the mouth of Thy servant, David our father, didst say, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ.” (v. 24-26.) It is to sue God, as one may say upon His own covenants, that they thus produce this prophecy: and at the same time to comfort themselves with the thought, that in vain are all the imaginations of their foes. This then is what they say: Bring those words into accomplishment, and show that they “imagine vain things. — For of a truth,” they proceed, “there were gathered together in this city, against Thy holy Child Jesus, (Παῖδα) Whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings.” (v. 27-29.) Observe their largeness of mind (φιλοσοφίαν). These are not words of imprecation. In saying, “their threatenings, they do not mean this or that

thing specifically threatened, but only in general, the fact of their threatening, perhaps, as being formidable. In fact, the writer is concise in his narrative. And observe, they do not say, “Crush them, cast them down;” but what? “And grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy word.” Let us also learn thus to pray. And yet how full of wrath one would be, when fallen among men intent upon killing him, and making threats to that effect? how full of animosity? But not so these saints. “By stretching forth Thine hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the Name of Thy holy Child Jesus.” (v. 30.) If in that Name the mighty deeds are wrought, great will be the boldness.

“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together.” (v. 31.) This was the proof that they were heard, and of His visitation. “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” What means, “They were filled?” It means, They were inflamed; and the Gift burned up within them. “And they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.” (v. 32.) Do you see that together with the grace of God they also contributed their part? For everywhere it ought to be well observed, that together with the grace of God they do their part likewise. Just as Peter said above, “Silver and gold have I none”; and again, that “they were all together.” (ch. 3:6.) But in this place, having mentioned that they were heard, the sacred writer proceeds to speak also of them, what virtue they showed. Moreover, he is just about to enter upon the narrative of Sapphira and Ananias, and with a view to show the detestable conduct of that pair, he first discourses of the noble behavior of the rest. Now say, did their love beget their poverty, or the poverty the love? In my opinion, the love beget the poverty, and then the poverty drew tight the cords of love. For observe what he says: “They were all of one heart and of one soul.” Behold, heart and soul are what make the “together.” “Neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power the Apostles rendered their testimony (ἀπεδίδου) of the resurrection.” (v. 33.) The phrase betokens them to be as persons put in trust with a deposit: he speaks of it as a debt or obligation: that is, their testimony they with boldness did render, or pay off, to all. “And great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked.” (v. 34.) Their feeling was just as if

they were under the paternal roof, all for awhile sharing alike. It is not to be said, that though indeed they maintained the rest, yet they did it with the feeling that the means whereof they maintained them were still their own. No, the admirable circumstance is this, that they first alienated their property, and so maintained the rest, on purpose that the maintenance might not come as of their own private means, but as of the common property. “For as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the price of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles’ feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.” (v. 35.) A great mark of honor this, that “they laid them at the Apostles’ feet. And Joses, who by the Apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (‘which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation.’)” (v. 36.) I do not think that this is the same with the companion of Matthias; for that person was also called Justus and [Barsabas, but this, Joses and] “Barnabas” [“son of consolation”]. I suppose he also received the name from his virtue, as being qualified and suited for this duty. “A Levite, and of the country of Cyprus by birth.” Observe on all occasions how the writer indicates the breaking up of the Law. But how was he also a “Cyprian by birth?” Because they then even removed to other countries, and still were called Levites. “Having land, sold it, and brought the price, and laid it at the Apostles’ feet.”

Let us now look over again what has been said. [“And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.”] (Recapitulation, 5:23.) See the unostentatious conduct of the Apostles, and their largeness of mind. They did not go about boasting, and say, “How we served (ἀπεχρησάμεθα) the priests!” nor were they ambitious of honor: but, we read, “they came unto their own company. Observe how they do not cast themselves upon temptations, but when the temptations present themselves, with courage endure them. Had it been some other of the disciples, perhaps, emboldened by the countenance of the multitude, he might have insulted, might have vented ever so many harsh expressions. But not so these true philosophers; they do all with mildness and with gentleness. “And when they heard that, we read, with one accord they lifted up their voice to God. (v. 24.) That shout proceeded from delight and great emotion. Such indeed are the prayers which do their work, prayers replete with true

philosophy, prayers offered up for such objects, by such persons, on such occasions, in such a manner; whereas all others are abominable and profane. “Lord, Thou the God that madest heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is.” Observe how they say nothing idle, no old wives’ talk and fables, but speak of His power. Just as Christ Himself said to the Jews, “If I by the Spirit of God do cast out devils: behold the Father also speaks by the Spirit. For what saith it? “Lord, the God Who, by the Holy Ghost, through the mouth of our father Thy servant David didst say, Why did the nations rage?” (v. 25.) Scripture is wont thus to speak of one as of many. “For of a truth, Lord, against Thy Holy Child Jesus, Whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, etc. (v. 27.) Observe how, even in prayer, they circumstantially describe the Passion, and refer all to God. — That is, Not they had power to do this: but Thou didst it all, Thou that didst permit, that dost call to account, and yet didst bring to accomplishment, Thou the All-skillful and Wise, that didst serve Thee of Thine enemies for Thine own pleasure. (v. 28.) “For to do whatever Thy hand,” etc. Here they discourse of His exceeding Skill and Wisdom and Power. So then, as enemies they came together, and with murderous purpose, and as opposing themselves, but they did what things Thou wouldest: “For to do,” as it is said, “whatsoever Thy hand and Thy purpose determined before to be done.” What means, “Thy hand?” Here he seems to me to denote one and the same thing by power and purpose, meaning that for Thee it is enough but to will: for it is not by power that one determines. “Whatsoever Thy hand,” etc. i.e. Whatsoever Thou didst ordain: either this is the meaning, or, that by His hand He did effect. “And now, Lord, regard their threatenings.” (v. 29.) As at that time, it is said, they “imagined vain things,” so “now,” grant that their imaginations may be in vain: i.e. let not their threatenings come into accomplishment. And this they said not because they would themselves deprecate any hardship, but for the preaching’s sake. For they do not say, “and deliver us out of dangers;” but what? “And grant unto Thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak Thy word.” Thou Who didst bring to pass the former designs, bring these also to accomplishment. Observe, how they affirm God to be the Author of their confidence; and how they ask all for God’s sake, nothing for their own glory or ambition. They promise for their own part, that they will not be dismayed; but they pray that signs may be wrought “by stretching forth Thy hand to heal, and that signs and

wonders may be done:" (v. 30) for without these, however great the zeal they showed, they would be striving to no purpose. God assented to their prayer, and manifested this, by shaking the place. For "when they had prayed," it is said, "the place was shaken. (v. 31.) And wherefore this was done, hear from the prophet, when he says, "He looketh on the earth, and maketh it to tremble. (Psalm 104:32.) For by this He made it manifest that He is present to their prayers. And again, another prophet saith, "The earth was shaken, and did tremble at the presence of the Lord." (Psalm 18:7; 68:8.) And God did this, both to make it more awful, and to lead them on to a courageous trust. "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." They gained increased boldness. As it was the beginning (of their work), and they had besought a sensible sign for their persuasion (**πρὸς τὸ πεισθῆναι αὐτοῦς**) — but after this we nowhere find the like happening — therefore great was the encouragement they received. In fact, they had no means of proving that He was risen, save by miraculous signs. So that it was not only their own assurance (**ἀσφαλείαν**) that they sought: but that they might not be put to shame, but that they might speak with boldness. "The place was shaken," and that made them all the more unshaken. For this is sometimes a token of wrath, sometimes of favor and providence, but on the present occasion, of wrath. For in those times it took place in an unusual manner. Thus, at the Crucifixion, the earth was shaken: and the Lord Himself says, "Then there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. (Matthew 24:7.) But then the wrath of which it was a sign was against the adversaries: as for the disciples, it filled them with the Spirit. Observe, even the Apostles, after the prayer, are "filled with the Holy Ghost." "And the multitudes of them that believed," etc. (v. 32.) Great, you perceive, is the virtue of this thing, seeing their was need of this (grace) even in that Company. For this is the foundation of all that is good, this of which he now for the second time makes mention, exhorting all men to the contempt of riches: "Neither said any of them that aught of the things he possessed was his own," "but they had. all things common." For that this was in consequence not merely of the miraculous signs, but of their own purpose, is manifest by the case of Sapphira and Ananias. "And with great power gave the Apostles witness," etc. (v. 33.) Not in word, but with power the Apostles exhibited their testimony of the Resurrection: just as Paul saith, "And my preaching

was not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but with manifestation of the Spirit and of power.” And it is not merely, With power, but, “With great power.” (1 Corinthians 2:4.) “And great grace,” it says, “was upon them all; for neither was there any among them that lacked. (v. 34.) This is why the grace (was upon them all,) for that “there was none that lacked:” that is, from the exceeding ardor of the givers, none was in want. For they did not give in part, and in part reserve: nor yet in giving all, give it as their own. And they lived moreover in great abundance: they removed all inequality from among them, and made a goodly order. “For as many as were possessors,” etc. And with great respect they did this: for they did not presume to give into their hands, nor did they ostentatiously present, but brought to the Apostles’ feet. To them they left it to be the dispensers, made them the owners, that thenceforth all should be defrayed as from common, not from private, property. This was also a help to them against vain-glory. If this were done now, we should ire more pleasant lives, both rich and poor, nor would it be more pleasant to the poor than to the rich themselves. And if you please, let us now for awhile depict it in words, and derive at least this pleasure from it, since you have no mind for it in your actions. For at any rate this is evident, even from the facts which took place then, that by selling their possessions they did not come to be in need, but made them rich that were in need. However, let us now depict this state of things in words, and let all sell their possessions, and bring them into the common stock — in words, I mean: let none be excited, rich or poor. How much gold think you would be collected? For my part, I conjecture — for of course it is not possible to speak exactly — that supposing all here, men and women, to empty out their whole property, lands, possessions, houses, — for I will not speak of slaves, since at that time there was no such thing, but doubtless such as were slaves they sat at liberty, — perhaps ten hundred thousand pounds weight of gold would be the amount collected: nay, twice or thrice as much. For consider; at what number of “*juga*” (yokes) is our city rated? How many (of the population) shall we say are Christians? shall we say an hundred thousand, and the rest Greeks and Jews? Then what thousands (of pounds) of gold would be collected! And what is the number of poor? I do not think more than fifty thousand. Then to feed that number daily, what abundance there would bet And yet if the food were received in common, all taking their meals together, it would require no such great outlay after

all. But, you will ask, what should we do after the money was spent? And do you think it ever could be spent? Would not the grace of God be ten thousand fold greater? Would not the grace of God be indeed richly poured out? Nay, should we not make it a heaven upon earth? If, where the numbers were three thousand and five thousand, the doing of this thing had such splendid success, and none of them complained of poverty, how much more glorious would this be in so vast a multitude? And even of those that are without, who would not contribute? — But, to show that it is the living separately that is expensive and causes poverty, let there be a house in which are ten children: and the wife and the man, let the one work at her wool, the other bring his earnings from his outdoor occupation: now tell me, in which way would these spend most? by taking their meals together and occupying one house, or by living separately? Of course, by living separately. For if the ten children must live apart, they would need ten several rooms, ten tables, ten attendants, and the income otherwise in proportion. Is it not for this very reason, that where there is a great number of servants, they have all one table, that the expense may not be so great? For so it is, division always makes diminution, concord and agreement make increase. The dwellers in the monasteries live just as the faithful did then: now did ever any of these die of hunger? was ever any of them not provided for with plenty of everything? Now, it seems, people are more afraid of this than of falling into a boundless and bottomless deep. But if we had made actual trial of this, then indeed we should boldly venture upon this plan (τοῦ πράγματος). What grace too, think you, would there not be! For if at that time, when there was no believer but only the three thousand and the five thousand: when all, throughout the world, were enemies, when they could nowhere look for comfort, they yet boldly entered upon this plan with such success; how much more would this be the case now, when by the grace of God there are believers everywhere throughout the world? What Gentile would be left? For my part, I think there would not be one: we should so attract all, and draw them to us? But yet if we do but make fair progress, I trust in God that even this shall be realized. Only do as I say, and let us successfully achieve things in their regular order; if God grant life, I trust that we shall soon bring you over to this way of life.

In the first place, as regards that law about swearing: accomplish that; establish it firmly: and let him that has kept it make known him that has not, and call him to account withal and rebuke him sternly. For the *supra*, Hom. 8.) appointed time (ἡ προθεσμία), is at hand and I am holding inquisition in the matter, and him that is found guilty I will banish and exclude. But God forbid that any such should be found among us; rather may it appear, that all have strictly kept this spiritual watchword. And as in war it is by the watchword that friends and strangers are shown, so let it be now; for indeed now also we are engaged in a war; that we may know our brethren that are properly such. For what a good thing it is that we should have this to be our cognizance both here and in a foreign land! What a weapon this, against the very head of the devil! A mouth that cannot swear will soon both engage God in prayers, and smite the devil a deadly blow. A mouth that cannot swear will also be incapable of using insulting language. Cast out this fire from your tongue, as you would from a house: this fire, drag it out. Give your tongue a little rest: make the sore less virulent. Yea, I beseech you, do this, that I may go on to set you another lesson: for as long as this is not rightly done, I dare not pass on to any other. Let this lesson be got perfectly, and you shall have a consciousness of the achievement, and then I will introduce you to other laws, or rather not I, but Christ. Implant in your soul this good thing, and by little and little ye shall be a paradise of God, far better than that paradise of old. No serpent among you, no deadly tree, nor any such thing. Fix this habit deep. If this be done, not ye only that are present shall be benefited, but all that are in all the world; and not they alone, but those that are to succeed hereafter. For a good habit having once entered, and being kept by all, will be handed on to long ages, and no circumstances shall be able to erase it. If he that gathered sticks on the sabbath was stoned, — the man that is doing a far more heinous work than that gathering, the man that is amassing a lead of sins, for such is the multitude of oaths, what shall he undergo? what shall he not have to endure? You will receive great assistance from God, if this be well achieved by you. If I were to say, Be not abusive, immediately you will plead to me your indignation; should I say, Be not envious, you will urge some other excuse. But in this case you have nothing of the kind to say. On which account I began with the easy precepts, which indeed is also the uniform practice in all arts. And thus one comes to the higher duties, by learning first those which are easier far.

How easy it is you will see, when by the grace of God having succeeded in this, you shall receive another precept.

Put it in my power to speak out boldly, in the presence both of Gentiles and of Jews, and, above all, of God. Yea, I entreat you by the love, by the pangs wherewith I have travailed for your birth, “my little children.” I will not add what follows, “of whom I travail in birth again;” nor will I say, “until Christ be formed in you.” (Galatians 4:19). For I am persuaded, that Christ has been formed in you. Other language I will use towards you; “My brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and my crown.” (Philippians 4:1.) Believe me that I shall use no other language. If at this moment there were placed upon my head ten thousand richly-jeweled royal crowns, they could not give me the joy which I feel at your growth in holiness; or rather, I do not think the monarch himself has such a joy, as that wherewith I joy over you. Let him have come home, victorious over all the nations at war with him, let him have won many other crowns besides the crown of his right; and receive other diadems as tokens of his victory: I do not think he would joy over his trophies, as I joy over your soul’s progress. For I exult, as if I had a thousand crowns on my head; and well may I rejoice. For if by the grace of God you achieve this good habit, you will have gained a thousand battles far more difficult than his; by wrestling and fighting with malicious demons, and fiendish spirits, with the tongue, not with sword, but by the will. For consider how much is gained, if so be that you do succeed! You have eradicated, first, a heinous habit; secondly, an evil conceit, the source of all evil, namely, the opinion that the thing is indifferent and can do no hurt; thirdly, wrath; fourthly, covetousness; for all these are the offspring of swearing. Nay, hence you will acquire a sure footing in the way to all other virtues. For as when children learn their letters, they learn not them alone, but by means of them are gradually taught to read; so shall it be With you. That evil conceit will no longer deceive you, you will not say, This is indifferent; you will no longer speak by mere habit, but will manfully stand against all, so that having perfected in all parts that virtue which is after God, you may reap eternal blessings, through the grace and loving-kindness of His Only-Begotten Son, to Whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory, power and honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 12

ACTS 4:36, 37

“And Joses, who by the Apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation), a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the Apostles’ feet.”

THE writer is now about to relate the affair of Ananias and Sapphira, and in order to show that the man’s sin was of the worst description, he first mentions him who performed the virtuous deed; that, there being so great a multitude all doing the same, so great grace, so great miracles, he, taught by none of these, but blinded by covetousness, brought destruction upon his own head. “Having land, — meaning that this was all he possessed, — sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the Apostles’ feet. But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the Apostles’ feet.” (ch. 5:1, 2.) The aggravating circumstance was, that the sin was concerted, and none other saw what was done. How came it into the mind of this hapless wretch to commit this crime? “But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?” (v. 3.) Observe even in this, a great miracle performed, greater far than the former. “Whiles it remained,” say she, “was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?” (v. 4.) That is, “Was there any obligation and force? do we constrain you against your will?” “Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost.” (v. 5.) This miracle is greater than that of the lame man, in respect of the death inflicted, and the knowing what was in the thought of the heart, even what was done in secret. “And great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, and wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much?” (v. 6-8.) The woman he would fain save, for the man had been the author of the sin: therefore he gives her time to clear herself, and opportunity for

repentance, saying, “Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Holy Ghost? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then she fell down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost; and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard these things.” (v. 9-11.)

After this fear had come upon them, he wrought more miracles; both Peter and the rest; “And by the hands of the Apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon’s porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them,” i.e. to the Apostles; “but the people magnified them,” i.e. the Jewish people. If “no man durst join himself unto them,” the Apostles, “there were,” however, “the more added unto the Lord, believers, multitudes both of men and of women, insomuch that they brought out into the streets their impotent folk, and laid them upon couches and beds, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.” (v. 12-15.) For Peter was the wonderful one, and he to whom they more gave heed both because of his public harangue, the first and the second and the third, and because of the miracle; for he it was that wrought the miracle, the first, the second, the third: for the present miracle was twofold: first, the convicting the thoughts of the heart, and next the inflicting of death at his word of command. “That at the least the shadow of Peter passing by,” etc. This had not occurred in the history of Christ; but see here what He had told them actually coming to pass, that “they which believe on Me, the works that I do shall they do also; and greater works than these shall they do.” (John 14:12.) “There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them that were vexed with unclean spirits; and they were healed every one.” (v. 16.)

And now I would have you observe the way in which their whole life is interwoven. First there was despondency on account of Christ taken from them, and then came joy because of the Spirit descending upon them; again, dejection because of the scoffers, and then joy in the result of their own apology. And here again we find both dejection and gladness. In that they were become conspicuous, and that God made revelations to them,

there was gladness: in that they had cut off some of their own company, there was sadness. Once more: again there is gladness upon their success, and again sadness by reason of the High Priest. And so it will be seen to be the case throughout. And the same will be found to hold in the case of the ancient saints likewise. — But let us look over again what has been said.

“They sold them,” it is written, “and brought the prices, and laid them down at the Apostles’ feet.” (Recapitulation 4, 34-37.) See, my beloved brethren, how instead of leaving the Apostles to sell, they themselves sold, and presented the prices to them. “But a certain man named Ananias,” etc. (v. 1.) This history touches Bishops too, and very forcibly. And the wife of Ananias was privy to the thing done: therefore he examines her. But perhaps some one will say that he dealt very harshly with her. What do you mean? What harshness? If for gathering sticks a man is to be stoned, much rather ought he for sacrilege; for this money was become sacred. He that has chosen to sell his goods and distribute them, and then withdraws them, is guilty of sacrilege. But if he is sacrilegious, who resumes from his own, much more he who takes from what is not his own. And do not think that because the consequence is not now the same, the crime will go unpunished. Do you see that this is the charge brought against Ananias, that having made the money sacred, he afterwards secreted it? Coudest thou not, said Peter, after selling thy land, use the proceeds as thine own? Wast thou forbidden? Wherefore after thou hadst promised it? See how at the very beginning, the devil made his attack; in the very midst of such signs and wonders, how this man was hardened! Something of the same kind had happened upon a time in the Old Testament. The son of Charmi coveted the devoted thing: for observe there also what vengeance ensues upon the sin. Sacrilege, beloved, is a most grievous crime, insulting, and full of contempt. We neither obliged thee to sell, the Apostle says, nor to give thy money when thou hadst sold; of thine own free choice thou didst it; why hast thou then stolen from the sacred treasury? “Why,” he says, “hath Satan filled thine heart?” (v. 3.) Well, if Satan did the thing, why is the man made guilty of it? For admitting the influence of the devil, and being filled with it. You will say, they ought to have corrected him. But he would not have received correction; for he that has seen such things as he had seen, and is none the better, would certainly be none the better for anything else that could be

done; the matter was not one to be simply passed over: like a gangrene, it must be cut out, that it might not infect the rest of the body. As it is, both the man himself is benefited in regard that he is not left to advance further in wickedness, and the rest, in that they are made more earnest; otherwise the contrary would have ensued. In the next place, Peter proves him guilty, and shows that the deed was not hidden from him, and then pronounces the sentence. But wherefore, upon what purpose hast thou done this? Didst thou wish to keep it? Thou oughtest to have kept it all along, and never to have professed to give it. The sacrilege, beloved, is a grievous one. For another, it may be, coveted what was not his own: but it was at thy discretion to keep what was thine own. Why then didst thou first make it sacred, and then take it? Out of excessive contempt hast thou done this. The deed does not admit of pardon, it is past pleading for. — Therefore let it be no stumbling-block to any, if at present also there are sacrilegious persons. If there were such persons then, much more now, when evils are many. But let us “rebuke them before all, that others also may fear.” (1 Timothy 5:20.) Judas was sacrilegious, but it was no stumbling-block to the disciples. Do you see how many evils spring from love of money? “And great fear, it is said, came on all them that heard these things.” (v. 5.) That man was punished, and others profited thereby. Not without cause. And yet, signs had been wrought before: true, but there was not such a sense of fear. So true is that saying, “The Lord is known by executing judgments.” (Psalm 9:16.) The same thing had occurred in the case of the Ark: Uzzah was punished and fear came upon the rest. (2 Samuel 6:7.) But in that instance the king through fear removed from him the Ark; but here the disciples became more earnestly heedful. [“And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in,” etc.] (v.7.) But observe how Peter, instead of sending for her, waited till she entered; and how none of the others durst carry out the intelligence. Such the teacher’s awfulness, such the disciples’ reverence, such the obedience! “An interval of three hours,” — and yet the woman did not hear of it, and none of those present reported it, although there was time enough for it to be noised abroad; but they were afraid. This circumstance the Evangelist relates with wonder even, when he says, “Not knowing what was done, came in.” “And Peter answered unto her,” etc. (v. 8.) And yet she might have perceived even from this that Peter knew the secret. For why, having questioned none

other, does he question you? Was it not clear that he asked because he knew? But so great was her hardness, it would not let her attempt to evade the guilt; and with great confidence she replied; for she thought she was speaking only to a man. The aggravation of the sin was, that they committed it as with one soul, just as upon a settled compact between them. "How is it that ye have agreed together," he said, "to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door." (v. 9.) First he makes her learn the sin, and then shows that she will justly suffer the same punishment with her husband, since she has committed the same wickedness: "And they shall carry thee out. And she fell down straightway at his feet," for she was standing near him, and yielded up the ghost." (v. 10.) So entirely by their own act had they invited upon themselves the vengeance! Who after that would not be struck with awe? who would not fear the Apostle? who would not marvel? who not be afraid? "And they were with one accord, all of them in Solomon's porch," (v. 12) no longer in a house, but having occupied the very Temple, they there passed their time! No longer they guarded themselves against touching the unclean; nay, without scruple they handled the dead. And observe how, while to their own people they are severe, against the aliens they do not exercise their power. "But the people," he says, "magnified them." (v. 13.) And as he had mentioned their being "in Solomon's porch," that you may not wonder how the multitude allowed this, he tells us that they did not dare even to approach them: for "no man," he says, "durst join himself unto them." "But believers were the more added unto the Lord, multitudes both of men and women: insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them." (v. 14, 15.) Great faith, surpassing what had been shown in the case of Christ. How comes this? Because Christ declared: "And greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto My Father." (John 14:12.) And these things the people do, while the Apostles remain there, and are not moving about from place to place: also from other places they were all bringing [their sick] on beds and couches: and from all quarters accrued to them fresh tribute of wonder; from them that believed, from them that were healed, from him that was punished; from their boldness of speech towards those (their adversaries), from the virtuous behavior of the believers: for certainly the effect produced was

not owing to the miracles only. For though the Apostles themselves modestly ascribe it all to this cause, declaring that they did these things in the name of Christ, yet at the same time the life and noble conduct of the men helped to produce this effect. “And believers were more added unto the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.” Observe, how he now no longer tells the number of them that believe; at such a rate was the faith making way even to an immense multitude, and so widely was the Resurrection proclaimed. So then “the people magnified them:” but they were now no longer lightly to be despised as once they were: for in a little moment, at a single turn of the scale, such have been the effects produced by the fisherman and by the publican! Earth was become a heaven, for manner of life, for boldness of speech, for wonders, for all besides; like Angels were they looked upon with wonder: all unconcerned for ridicule, for threats, for perils: compassionate were they, and beneficent; some of them they succored with money, and some with words, and some with healing of their bodies and of their souls; no kind of healing (πᾶν εἶδος ἰατρείας) but they accomplished.

Peter all but pleads for himself, when at the point to inflict the punishment, and at the same time gives a lesson to the rest. For because the act would seem exceeding stern, therefore it is that he does so much in the case. In respect of the woman also the process of judgment was terrible. But see how many evils grow out of the sacrilege covetousness, contempt of God, impiety; and upon these too he pleaded for himself before the assembly, in that he did not immediately proceed to punishment, but first exposed the sin. None groaned, none lamented, all were terrified. For as their faith increased, the signs also were multiplied, and great was the fear among their own company: for the things which are from without do not so militate (πολενεῖ) against our peace, as do the acts of our own people. If we be firmly joined together, no warfare will be hard: but the mischief would be the being divided and broken up. Now they went about in the public place: with boldness they attacked even the market, and in the midst of enemies they prevailed, and that saying was fulfilled, “Be Thou Ruler in the midst among Thine enemies.” (Psalm 110:2.) This was a greater miracle, that they, arrested, cast into prison, should do such acts as these!

If those for lying suffered such things, what shall not the perjured suffer? Because she simply affirmed, “Yea, for so much,” ye see what she suffered. Bethink you then; they that swear and forswear themselves, of what should they be worthy? It comes in opportunely today even from the Old Testament to show you the heinousness of perjury. “There was,” it says, “a flying sickle, ten cubits in breadth.” (Zechariah 5:2.) The “flying” betokens the swift advent of the vengeance which pursues oaths; that it is many cubits in length and breadth, signifies the force and magnitude of the woes; that it comes flying “from heaven,” is to show that the vengeance comes from the judgment-seat on high: that it is in the form of a sickle,” denotes the inevitableness Of the doom: for just as the sickle, where it comes and has hooked the neck, is not drawn back with nothing but itself, but with the head reaped off, even so the vengeance which comes upon the sweaters is severe, and will not desist until it have completed its work. But if we swear and escape, let us not be confident; this is but to our woe. For what think ye? How many, since Ananias and Sapphira, have dared the same with them? How is it then, say you, that they have not met with the same fate? Not because it was allowed in them, but because they are reserved. for a greater punishment. For those who often sin and are not punished, have greater reason to fear and dread than if they were punished. For the vengeance is increased for them by their present impunity and the long-suffering of God. Then let us not look to this, that we are not punished; but let us consider whether we have not sinned: if sinning we are not punished, we have the more reason to tremble. Say, if you have a slave, and you only threaten him, and do not beat him; when is he most in fear, when most inclined to run away? Is not when you only threaten him? And hence we advise each other not to be continually using threats, thereby choosing rather to agitate the mind by the terror, and lacerating it worse than with blows. For in the one instance the punishment is momentary, but in the other it is perpetual. If then no one feels the stroke of the sickle, do not look to this, but rather let each consider whether he commits such sins. Many like things are done now as were done before the Flood, yet no flood has been sent: because there is a hell threatened, and vengeance. Many sin as the people did in Sodom, yet no rain of fire has been poured down; because a river of fire is prepared. Many go the lengths of Pharaoh; yet they have not fared like Pharaoh, they have not been drowned in a Red Sea: for the sea that awaits them, is

the sea of the bottomless pit, where the punishment is not accompanied with insensibility, where there is no suffocation to end all, but in ever lengthened torture, in burning, in strangling, they are consumed there. Many have offended like the Israelites, but no serpents have devoured them: there awaits them the worm that never dieth. Many have been like Gehazi, yet they have not been struck with leprosy: for instead of leprosy, it remains for them to be cut asunder, and numbered among the hypocrites. Many have both sworn and forsworn; but if they have indeed escaped, let us not be confident: the gnashing of teeth awaits them. Yea, here too they will suffer many grievous woes, though, it may be, not immediately, but after further transgressions, that the vengeance may be the greater; for even we often set out at first with small sins, and then through great offenses lose all. Therefore when you see anything happening to you, call to mind that particular sin of yours. The sons of Jacob are an example of this. Remember Joseph's brothers; they had sold their brother, they had even attempted to slay him; nay, they had slain him, as far as inclination went; they had deceived and grieved the old man; they suffered nothing. After many years they are brought into extreme peril, and now they are put in remembrance of this their sin. Exceeding wisely is this circumstance brought in. Hear what they say: "We are verily guilty concerning our brother." (Genesis 42:21.) In this manner then do thou also, when anything happens, say, We are verily guilty, because we have not obeyed Christ; because we have sworn; my much swearing, and my false swearing, has fallen upon my own head. Confess thou; since they also confessed, and were saved. For what though the punishment follow not immediately? Since Ahab also did not immediately after his sin in the matter of Naboth suffer that vengeance which he yet at last suffered. (1 Kings 21:19.) And what is the reason of this? God sets thee a time, in which to wash thyself clean; but if thou persist, at last He will send down the vengeance. You have seen the fate of liars. Consider what is the fate of false swearers, consider, and desist. It is impossible a swearer should not forswear himself, whether he will or not; and no perjurer can be saved. One false oath sufficeth to finish all, to draw down upon us the whole measure of vengeance. Let us then take heed to ourselves, that we may escape the punishment due to this offense, and be deemed worthy of the loving kindness of God, through the grace and mercies of His only-

begotten Son, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory, power, and honor, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 13

ACTS 5:17, 18

“Then having risen up, the high-priest and they that were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees) were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the Apostles, and put them in the common prison.”

“Having risen up,” that is, being roused, being excited at the things taking place, the high-priest and they which were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees) were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the Apostles:” they now assault them more vigorously: “and put them in the common prison;” but did not forthwith bring them to trial, because they expected them again to be softened down. “But the Angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.” “And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught.” (v. 19-21.) This was done both for the encouragement of the disciples, and for the benefit and instruction of the others. And observe how the proceeding in the present instance is just the same as in what Christ Himself did. Namely, in His miracles though He does not let men see them in the act of being wrought, He furnishes the means whereby they may be apprised of the things wrought: thus, in His Resurrection, He did not let them see how He rose in the water made wine, the guests do not see it done, for they have been drinking much, and the discernment He leaves to others. Just so in the present case, they do not see them in the act of being brought forth, but the proofs from which they might gather what had been done, they do see. And it was by night that the Angel put them forth. Why was this? Because in this way they were more believed than they would have been in the other: so, people would not even have had occasion to put the question: they would not in some other way have believed. So it was in the old times, in the case of Nebuchadnezzar: he saw them praising God in the furnace, and then indeed he was put in amazement. (Daniel 3:24.) Whereas then these priests ought as their first question to have asked, How came ye out? instead of this, as if nothing had happened, they ask, “Did we not straitly charge you not to speak?” (v. 28.) And observe, by report of others they are apprised of all the

circumstances: they see the prison remaining closed with safety, and the guards standing before the doors. A twofold security this; as was the case at the sepulcher, where was both the seal, and the men to watch. See how they fought against God! Say, was this of man's doing, that happened to them? Who led them forth, when the doors were shut? How came they out, with the keepers standing before the door? Verily they must be mad or drunken to talk so. Here are men, whom neither prison, nor bonds, nor closed doors, had been able to keep in; and yet they expect to overpower them: such is their childish folly! Their officers come and confess what has taken place, as if on purpose to debar them from all show of reason. Do you mark how there is miracle upon miracle, differing in kind, some wrought by them, others on them, and these more illustrious than the others? "And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high-priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told, saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. Now when the high-priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow." (v. 21-25.) It is well ordered that the information was not brought to them at once, but they are first utterly at a loss what to think, that when they have considered it well and seen that there is a Divine Power in the case, then they may learn the whole state of the case. "Then came one, and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people. Then went the captain with the other officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the multitude, lest they should have been stoned." (v. 25, 26.) O the folly of the men! "They feared," saith he, "the multitude." Why, how had the multitude helped the Apostles? When they ought to have feared that God Who was continually delivering them like winged creatures out of their power, instead of that, "they feared the multitude! "And the high-priest," shameless, reckless, senseless, "asked them, saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and intend to bring this man's blood upon us." (v. 27, 28.) What then (say the Apostles)? Again with mildness

they address them; and yet they might have said, “Who are ye, that ye countermand God?” But what do they say? Again in the way of exhortation and advice, and with much mildness, they make answer. “Then Peter and the other Apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.” (v. 29.) High magnanimity! He shows them too that they are fighting against God. For, he says, Whom ye killed, Him hath God raised up. “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” (v. 30, 31.) And again they refer the whole to the Father, that He should not seem to be alien to the Father. “And hath exalted,” saith He, “with his right hand.” He affirms not merely the Resurrection, but the Exaltation also. “For to give repentance to Israel.” Observe here as before the gain (to them): observe the perfection of doctrine conveyed in the form of apology. “And we are witnesses of these things.” (v. 32.) Great boldness of speech! And the ground of their credibility: “And so is also the Holy Ghost, Whom God hath given to them that obey Him.” Do you observe that they allege not only the Spirits testimony? And they said not, “Whom He hath given” to us, but, “to them that obey Him: therein alike showing their own unassuming: temper, and intimating the greatness of the gift, and showing the hearers that it was possible for them also to receive the Spirit. See, how these people were instructed both by deeds and by words, and yet they paid no heed, that their condemnation might be just. For to this end did God suffer the Apostles to be brought to trial, that both their adversaries might be instructed, and all might learn, and that the Apostles might be invigorated to boldness of speech. “And they hearing that, were cut to the heart.” (v. 33.) The others (on a former occasion) “when they heard these things were pricked;” here they were cut (as with a saw) (**διεπρίοντο**) “and desired to slay them.” (ch. 2:37.)

But it is necessary now to look over again what we have read. “But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. Brought them forth.” (Recapitulation, 5:19, 20.) He did not bring them away to benefit themselves thereby, but, “Stand,” he says, “and speak in the temple to the people.” But if the guards had put them out, as those thought, they would have fled, that is, supposing they had

been induced to come out: and if those had put them forth, they would not have stood in the temple, but would have absconded. No one is so void of sense, as not at once to see this. “Did we not straitly charge you?” (v. 28.) Well, if they undertook to obey you, ye do well to call them to account: but if even at the very time they told you they would not obey, what account have you to call them to, what defense is there for them to make? “And behold ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.” Mark the inconsistency of the accusations and the exceeding folly. They want to make it appear now, that the dispositions of the Jews are sanguinary, as if they were doing these things not for the truth’s sake, but in the wish to be revenged. And for this reason too the Apostles do not answer them with defiance (**θρασέως**): for they were teachers. And yet where is the man, who, with a whole city to back him, and endowed with so great grace, would not have spoken and uttered something big? But not so did these: for they were not angered; no, they pitied these men, and wept over them, and marked in what way they might free them from their error and wrath. And they no longer say to them, “Judge ye:” (ch. 4:19) but they simply affirm, saying, “Whom God raised up, Him do we preach: it is by the will of God that these things are done.” They said not, Did not we tell you even then, that “we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard?” (ib. 20.) for they are not contentious for glory; but they repeat again the same story, — the Cross, the Resurrection. And they tell not, wherefore He was crucified — that it was for our sakes: but they hint at this indeed, but not openly as yet, wishing to terrify them awhile. And yet what sort Of rhetoric is here? None at all, but everywhere it is still the Passion, and the Resurrection and the Ascension, and the end wherefore: “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus,” etc. (v. 30, 31.) And yet what improbable assertions are these! Very improbable, no doubt; but for all that, not rulers, not people, had a word to say against them: but those had their mouths stopped, and these received the teaching. “And we,” saith he, “are witnesses of these things.” (v. 32.) Of what things? Of His having promised forgiveness and repentance: for the Resurrection indeed was acknowledged, now. But that He giveth forgiveness, both we are witnesses, and “so is the Holy Ghost,” Who would not have come down, unless sins had been first remitted: so that this is an indisputable proof. “When they heard that, they, were cut” (to the heart), “and took counsel

to slay them.” (v. 33.) Hearest thou of the forgiveness of sins, O wretched man, and that God doth not demand punishment, and dost thou wish to slay them? What wickedness was this! And yet, either they ought to have convicted them of lying, or if they could not do that, to have believed: but if they did not choose to believe, yet they ought not to slay them. For what was there deserving of death? Such was their intoxication, they did not even see what had taken place. Observe, how everywhere the Apostles, when they have made mention of the crime, add the mention of forgiveness; showing, that while what had been done was worthy of death, that which was given was proffered to them as to benefactors! In what other way could any one have persuaded them?

“Then stood up the high-priest,” etc. As men in high repute, these (the Apostles) were about to take their place near to the Prophets. The Sadducees were they that were most sore on the subject of the Resurrection. But perchance some one will say: Why, what man, endowed with such gifts as the Apostles were, would not have been great? But consider, I pray you, how, before that they were endowed with the grace, “they were continuing steadfastly with one accord in prayer” (ch. 1:14), and depending on the aid from above. And dost thou, my beloved, hope for the kingdom of heaven, yet endurest naught? And hast thou received the Spirit, yet sufferest not such things, nor encounterest perils? But they, before they had breathing-time froth their former dangers, were again led into others. And even this too, that there is no arrogance, no conceit, how great a good it is! To converse with mildness, what a gain it is! For not all that they did was the immediate work of grace, but there are many marks of their own zeal as well. That the gifts of grace shine forth in them, this was from their own diligence. See, for instance, from the very beginning, how careful Peter is; how sober and vigilant: how they that believed east away their riches, had no private property, continued in prayer, showed that they were of one mind, passed their time in fastings. What grace, I ask (alone), did all this? Therefore it is that He brings the evidence home to them through their own officers. Just as in the case of Christ, it was their officers who said, “Never man spake as this Man speaketh.” (John 7:46.) These (proofs) are more apt to be believed than the Resurrection. — Observe also the moderation shown by (the rulers) themselves, and how they give way. “The high-priest asked them, saying,” etc. (v. 27): here he

reasons with them, forsooth, in a moderate tone; for he was frightened: indeed to hinder was what he desired rather than to kill, since that he cannot do: and with the view to rouse them all, and show them the extreme danger they are in, “And intend,” says he (to the Apostles),” to bring this man’s blood upon us.” Dost thou still take Him to be but *man*? He wants to make it appear that the injunction was necessary for their own safety. But mark what (Peter) says: “Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” (v. 31.) Here he forbears to mention the Gentiles, not to give them a handle against him. “And they desired,” it says, “to slay them.” (v. 33.) See again these in perplexity, these in pain: but those in quiet and cheerfulness and delight. It is not merely, They were grieved, but “They were cut” (to the heart). Truly this makes good that proverb, “Evil do, evil fare:” as we may see in this case. Here were these men in bonds, set at the bar of judgment, and the men that sit in judgment upon them were in distress and helpless perplexity. For as he who strikes a blow upon the adamant, gets the shock of the blow himself, so it was with these men. But they saw that not only was their boldness of speech not stopped, but rather their preaching increased the more, and that they discoursed without a thought of fear, and afforded them no handles against them.

Let us imitate these, my beloved: let us be undaunted in all our dangers. There is nothing dreadful to him that fears God; but all that is dreadful is for others. For when a man is delivered from his passions, and regards all present things as a shadow, say, from whom shall he suffer anything dreadful? whom shall he have to fear? whom shall he need plead to? Let us flee to this Rock which cannot be shaken. If any one were to build for us a city, and throw up a wall around it, and remove us to a land uninhabited, where there were none to disturb us, and there supply us with abundance of everything, and not suffer us to have aught to trouble us with anybody, he would not set us in such perfect safety, as Christ hath done now. Be it a city made of brass, if you will, surrounded on all sides with a wall, lofty and impregnable, let there be no enemy near it; let it have land plentiful and rich, let there be added abundance of other things, let the citizens too be mild and gentle, and no evil-doer there, neither robber, nor thief, no informer, no court of justice, but merely agreements (*συναλλάγματα*); and let us dwell in this city: not even thus would it be possible to live in

security. Wherefore? Because there could not but be differences with servants, with wives, with children, to be a groundwork of much discomfort. But here was nothing of the kind; for here was nothing at all to pain them or cause any discomfort. Nay, what is more wonderful to say, the very things which are thought to cause discomfort, became matter of all joy and gladness. For tell me, what was there for them to be annoyed at? what to take amiss? Shall we cite a particular case for comparison with them? Well, let there be one of consular dignity, let him be possessed of much wealth, let him dwell in the imperial city, let him have no troublesome business with anybody, but only live in delight, and have nothing else but this to do, seated at the very summit of wealth and honor and power: and let us set against him a Peter, in bonds if you will, in evils without number: and we shall find that he is the man that lives the most delightfully. For when there is such excess of joy, as to be delighted when in bonds, think what must be the greatness of that joy! For like as those who are high in office, whatsoever evils may happen, are not sensible of them, but continue in enjoyment: so did these the more rejoice on account of these very evils. For it is impossible, impossible in words to express how great pleasure falls to their lot, who suffer for Christ's sake: for they rejoice in their sufferings, rather than in their good things. Whoso loves Christ, knows what I say. — But what as regards safety? And who, I ask, if he were ever so rich, could have escaped so many perils, going about among so many different nations, for the sole purpose of bringing about a reformation in their manner of life? For it was just as if by royal mandate that they carried all before them, nay, far more easily, for never mandate could have been so effectual, as their words were. For the royal edict compels by necessity, but these drew men willingly and spontaneously, yea, and with hearts above measure thankful. What royal edict, I ask, would ever have persuaded men to part with all their property and their lives; to despise home, country, kindred, yea, even self-preservation? Yet the voices of fishermen and tent-makers availed for this. So that they were both happy, and more powerful and strong than all others. “Yes,” say you, “those of course were, for they wrought miracles.” (*supra*, p. 83, note 4.) But I ask what miracles did those who believed work. the three thousand, and the five thousand; and yet these, we read, passed their time in gladness? And well they might: for that which is the groundwork of all discomforts, the possession of riches, was done away with. For that, that,

I say, was ever the cause both of wars and fighting, and grief, and discomfort, and all evils: the thing which makes life full of labor and troubles, it is that. And indeed it would be found that many more rich than poor have reason to be sad. If any think this is not true, their notion is derived not from the nature of the things, but from their own fancy. And if the rich do enjoy some sort of pleasure, this is not to be wondered at: for even those who are covered all over with the itch, have a good deal of pleasure. For that the rich are for all the world like these, and their mind affected in the same sort, is plain from this circumstance. Their cares annoy them, and they choose to be engrossed with them for the sake of the momentary pleasure: while those who are free from these affections, are in health and without discomfort. Whether is more pleasant, I ask, whether of the two more safe? To have to take thought only for a single loaf of bread and suit of clothes, or for an immense family, both slaves and freemen, not having care about himself (only)? For as this man has his fears for himself, so have you for those who depend on your own person. Why, I pray you, does poverty seem a thing to be shunned? Just in the same way as other good things are, in the judgment of many, things to be deprecated. "Yes," say you, "but it is not that those good things are subjects for deprecation, but that they are hard of attainment." Well, so is poverty, not a thing to be deprecated, but hard of attainment: so that if one could bear it, there would be no reason to deprecate it. For how is it that the Apostles did not deprecate it? how is it that many even choose it, and so far from deprecating, even run to it? For that which is really a thing to be deprecated, cannot be an object of choice save to madmen. But if it be the men of philosophic and elevated minds that betake themselves to this, as to a safe and salubrious retreat, no wonder if to the rest it wears a different appearance. For, in truth, the rich man seems to me to be just like a city, unwall'd, situated in a plain, inviting assailants from all sides: but poverty, a secure fortress, strong as brass can make it, and the way up to it difficult. "And yet," say you, "the fact is just the reverse: for these are they, who are often dragg'd into courts of law, these are they who are overborne and ill-treated." No: not the poor, as poor, but those who being poor want to be rich. But I am not speaking of them, but of such as make it their study to live in poverty. For say, how comes it that nobody ever drags the brethren of the hills into courts of law? and yet if to be poor is to be a mark for oppression, those ought most of all to be dragg'd thither,

since they are poorer than all others. How comes it that nobody drags the common mendicants into the law-courts? Because they are come to the extreme of poverty. How is it that none does violence to them, none lays vexatious informations against them? Because they abide in a stronghold too safe for that. How many think it a condition hard to struggle against, poverty, I mean, and begging! What then, I ask, is it a good thing to beg? "It is good, if there be comfort," say you; "if there be one to give: it is a life so free from trouble and reverses, as every one knows." But I do not mean to commend this; God forbid! what I advise is the not aiming at riches.

For say, whom would you rather call blessed? those who find themselves at home with virtue, (*ἐπιτηδείους πρὸς ἀρετήν*) or those who stand aloof? Of course, those who are near. Say then, which of the two is the man to learn anything that is profitable, and to shine in the true wisdom? the former, or the latter? The first, all must see. If you doubt it, Satisfy yourself in this way. Fetch hither from the market-place any of the poor wretches there; let him be a cripple, lame, maimed: and then produce some other person, comely of aspect, strong in body, full of life and vigor in every part, overflowing with riches: let him be of illustrious birth, and possessed of great power. Then let us bring both these into the school of philosophy: which of them, I ask, is more likely to receive the things taught? The first precept, at the outset, "Be lowly and moderate" (for this is Christ's command): which will be most able to fulfill it, this one or the other? "Blessed are they that mourn" (Matthew 5:4): which will most receive this saying? "Blessed are the lowly:" which will most listen to this? "Blessed are the pure in heart. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake" (ib. 8, 6, 10). Which will with ease receive these sayings? And, if you will, let us apply to all of them these rules, and see how they will fit. Is not the one inflamed and swollen all over, while the other is ever lowly minded and subdued in his whole bearing? It is quite plain. Yes, and there is a saying to that effect among those that are without: "(I was) a slave, Epictetus by name, a cripple in body, for poverty a very Irus, and a friend of the Immortals." For how, I would ask, can it be otherwise, but that the soul of the rich must teem with evils; folly, vainglory, numberless lusts, anger and passion, covetousness,

iniquity, and what not? So that even for philosophy, the former is more congenially (**ἐπιτηδεία**) disposed than the latter. By all means seek to ascertain which is the more pleasant: for this I see is the point everywhere discussed, whether such an one has the more enjoyable way of life. And yet even as regards this, we need not be in doubt; for to be near to health, is also to have much enjoyment. But whether of the two, I would ask, is best disposed (**ἐπιτηδεις**) to the matter now in hand, that which we will needs carry into accomplishment — our law, I mean — the poor man or the rich? Whether of them will be apt to swear? The man who has children to be provoked with, the man who has his covenants with innumerable parties, or the man who is concerned to apply for just a loaf of bread or a garment? This man has not even need of oaths, should he wish, but always lives free from cares of business; nay, more, it is often seen that he who is disciplined to swear not at all, will also despise riches; and one shall see in his whole behavior his ways all branching off from this one good habit, and leading to meekness, to contempt of riches, to piety, to subduedness of soul, to compunction of heart. Then let us not be indolent, my beloved, but let us again show great earnestness: they who have succeeded, that they may keep the success achieved, that they be not easily caught by the receding wave, nor the refluent tide carry them back again [they too who are yet behindhand, that they may be raised up again, and strive to make up that which is wanting. And meanwhile let those who have succeeded, help those who have not been able to do the same]: and by reaching out their hands, as they would to men struggling in the deep water, receive them into the haven of no-swearing (**ἀνωμοσίας**). For it is indeed a haven of safety, to swear not at all: whatever storms burst upon us, to be in no danger of sinking there: be it anger, be it insult, be it passion, be it what it may, the soul is stayed securely; yea, though one have vented some chance word or other that ought not, and had been better not, to be spoken, yet he has laid himself under no necessity, no law. (*Supra*, Hom. 9: 5. ad. Pop. Ant. 8: 3.) See what Herod did for his oath's sake: he cut off the head of the Fore-runner. "But because of his oaths," it says, "and because of them which sat at meat with him" (Mark 6:26), he cut off the head of the Prophet. Think what the tribes had to suffer for their oath in the matter of the tribe of Benjamin (Judges 21:5-10): what Saul had to suffer for his oath (1 Samuel 14:24, etc.). For Saul indeed perjured himself, but Herod did what was even worse than perjury, he committed murder. Joshua again —

you know how it fared with him, for his oath in the matter of the Gibeonites. (Joshua, ch. ix.) For it is indeed a snare of Satan, this swearing. Let us burst the cords; let us bring ourselves into a condition in which it will be easy (not to swear); let us break loose from every entanglement, and from this snare of Satan. Let us fear the command of the Lord: let us settle ourselves in the best of habits: that, making progress, and having achieved this and the rest of the commandments, we may obtain those good things which are promised to them that love Him, through the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory, power, and honor, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 14

ACTS 5:34

“Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded the men to be put forth a little space.”

This Gamaliel was Paul’s teacher. And one may well wonder, how, being so right-minded in his judgment, and withal learned in the law, he did not yet believe. But it cannot be that he should have continued in unbelief to the end. Indeed it appears plainly from the words he here speaks. He “commanded,” it says, “to put the men forth a little space [and said unto them.]” Observe how judiciously he frames his speech, and how he immediately at the very outset puts them in fear. And that he may not be suspected of taking their part, he addresses them as if he and they were of the same opinion, and does not use much vehemence, but as speaking to men intoxicated through passion, he thus expresses himself: “Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.” (v. 35.) Do not, he would say, go to work rashly and in a hurry. “For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody: to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to naught.” (v. 36.) By examples he teaches them prudence; and, by way of encouragement, mentions last the man who seduced the greatest number. Now before he gives the examples, he says, “Take heed to yourselves;” but when he has cited them, then he declares his opinion, and says, “Refrain from these men.” For, says he, “there rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this council or this work be of men, it will come to naught. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow them.” (al. *it*) (v. 37-39.) Then what is there, he would say, to hinder you to be overthrown? For, says he (take heed), “lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.” He would dissuade them both by the consideration that the thing is impossible, and because it is not for their good. And he does not say by whom these

people were destroyed, but that there they “were scattered,” and their confederacy fell away to nothing. For if, says he, it be of man, what needs any ado on your part? but if it be of God, for all your ado you will not be able to overcome it. The argument is unanswerable. “And they were persuaded by him.” (v. 40.) How were they persuaded? So as not to slay them, but merely to scourge, For, it says, “And when they had called the Apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.” See after what great works they are scourged! And again their teaching became more extended: for they taught at home and in the temple, “And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. (v. 41, 42.) And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Hellenists against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.” (ch. 6:1.) Not absolutely in those immediate days; for it is the custom of Scripture to speak of things next about to happen, as taking place in immediate succession. But by “Hellenists” I suppose he means those who spoke Greek [“against the Hebrews”]: for they did not use the Greek language. Behold another trial! observe how from within and from without there are warrings, from the very first! “Then,” it says, “the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.” (v. 2.) Well said: for the needful must give precedence to the more needful. But see, how straightway they both take thought for these (inferior matters), and yet do not neglect the preaching. “Because their widows were overlooked:” for those (the Hebrews) were treated as the persons of greater consequence (αἰδεσιμώτεροι). “Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we Will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost (v. 3-5.) so were the others also full of faith; not to have the same things happening as in the case of Judas, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira — “and Philip, and Prochoras, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: whom they set before the Apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands

on them. And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. (v. 5-7.)

But let us look over again what has been spoken. “Ye men of Israel take heed to yourselves.” (Recapitulation, 5:35.) See here, I pray you, how mildly Gamaliel reasons, and how he says but a few words to them, and does not recount ancient histories, although he might have done so, but more recent instances, which are most powerful to produce belief. With this view he throws out a hint himself, saying, “For before. these days” (v. 36): meaning, not many days before. Now had he at once said, “Let these men go,” both himself would have fallen into suspicion, and his speech would not have been so effective: but after the examples, it acquired its own proper force. And he mentions not one instance, but a second also: “for,” saith the Scripture, “in the mouth of two witnesses” (Matthew 18:16): and yet he had it in his power to mention even three. “Refrain from these men.” (v. 38.) See how mild his manner is, and his speech not long, but concise, and his mention even of those (impostors) how free from passion: “And all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered.” And for all this he does not blaspheme Christ. They heard him, all these unbelievers, heard him, these Jews. [“For if this council or this work be of men, it will come to naught.”] Well then, since it did not come to nought, it is not of men. [“But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it.”] (v. 39.) Once more he checks them by the impossibility and the inexpediency of the thing, saying, “Lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.” And he does not say, If Christ be God; but the work (itself) declares (this). He does not pronounce upon it, either that, it is “of men,” or that it is “of God;” but he leaves the proof to the future. “They were persuaded [by him].” (v. 40.) Then why, it may be asked, do ye scourge them? Such was the incontrovertible justness of his speech, they could not look it in the face; nevertheless, they sated their own animosity; and again they expected to terrify them in this way. By the fact also of his saying these things not in the presence of the Apostles, he gained a hearing more than he would otherwise have done; and then the suavity of his discourse and the justness of what was said, helped to persuade them. in fact, this man all but preached the Gospel. “Ye were persuaded,” one may say, “that ye had not. strength to overthrow it. Wherefore did ye not believe?” Such is

the witness born even by enemies. There it is four hundred, there, four thousand: and here the first movers were twelve. Let not the number which added itself affright you. (ch. 2:41; 4:4.) He might also have mentioned another instance, that of the Egyptian, but what he has spoken is fully sufficient. And he closes his speech with an alarming topic: “Lest haply,” etc. And he does not pronounce upon it, lest he should seem to be pleading their cause; but he reasons by way of syllogism froth the issue of the matter. And he does not venture to pronounce that it is not of men, nor yet that it is of God; for bad he said that it was of God. they would have gainsaid him: but had he said that it was of men, they would again have taken prompt measures. Therefore he bids them wait for the end, saying, “Refrain,” But they once more threaten knowing indeed that they avail nothing, but doing after their manner. Such is the nature of wickedness: it attempts even impossibilities. — “And after this man rose up Judas,” etc. These things Josephus relates in detail. (*Ant.* 20:8; *ib.* 5:2; 18:1. *B. J.* 2:8. 1.) But what a great thing it was that he ventured to affirm: that it was of God, when in the sequel it received its proof from the events! Great boldness of speech, great freedom from all respect of persons! And he does not say, “But if ye do not overthrow it, it is of God;” but, “If it be of God, it will not be overthrown.” “And to him they agreed.” (v. 40.) They revered the high character of the man. “And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ.” (v. 41.) What miracles so wonderful as this? Nowhere is the like of this recorded of the old saints: for Jeremiah indeed was scourged for the word of God, and they threatened Elijah, and the rest: but in this case, even by this very thing, and not only by their miracles, these showed forth the power of God. He does not say, that they were not pained, but that though pained they rejoiced. How does this appear? From their boldness afterwards: they were so instant still, even after their beatings, in preaching the word. “But in the temple,” it says, “and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.” (v. 42.) “And in those days” — when these things were done, when there were scourgings, when there were threatenings, when the disciples were multiplying — also, it says, “there arose a murmuring.” (ch. 6:1.) And this comes of the multitude: for it is impossible to have strict order in a multitude. “There arose a murmuring,” etc. to, — “And a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

— There arose murmuring against the Hebrews “ — for that description of people seemed to be more honorable — “ because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.” (v. 1-7.) So then there was a daily ministrations for the widows. And observe how he calls it a “ministrations” (*διακονία*), and not directly alms: extolling by this at once the doers, and those to whom it was done. “Were neglected.” This did not arise from malice, but perhaps from the carelessness of the multitude. And therefore he brought it forward openly, for this was no small evil. Observe, how even in the beginning the evils came not only from without, but also from within. For you must not look to this only, that it was set to rights, but observe that it was a great evil that it existed. “Then the twelve,” etc. (v. 2.) Do you observe how outward concerns succeed to inward? They do not act at their own discretion, but plead for themselves to the congregation. So ought it to be done now. “It is not reason,” says he, “that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.” First he puts to them the unreasonableness of the thing; that it is not possible for both things to be done with the same attention: just as when they were about to ordain Matthias, they first show the necessity of the thing, that one was deficient, and there must needs be twelve. And so here they showed the necessity; and they did it not sooner, but waited till the murmuring arose; nor, on the other hand, did they suffer this to spread far. And, lo! they leave the decision to them: those who pleased all, those who of all were honestly reputed, them they present: not now twelve, but “seven, full of the Spirit and of wisdom: well reported of” for their conversation. (v. 3.) Now when Matthias was to be presented, it was said, “Therefore must one of these men which have companied with us all the time” (ch. 1:21): but not so here: for the case was not alike. And they do not now put it to the lot; they might indeed themselves have made the election, as moved by the Spirit: but nevertheless, they desire the testimony of the people. The fixing the number, and the ordaining them, and for this kind of business, rested with them: but the choice of the men they make over to the people, that they might not seem to act from favor: just as God also leaves it to Moses to choose as elders those whom he knew. (Numbers 11:16.) “And of wisdom.” For indeed there needs much wisdom in such ministrations. For think not, because he hath not the word committed unto him, that such an one has no need of wisdom: he does need it, and much too. “But we,” saith he, “will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the

ministry of the word.” (v. 4.) Again they plead for themselves, beginning and ending with this. “Will give ourselves continually,” he saith. For so it behooved, not just to do the mere acts, or in any chance way, but to be continually doing them. “And the saying,” we are told, “pleased the whole multitude.” (v. 5, 6.) This too was worthy of their wisdom. All approved of what was said so sensible was it. “And they chose,” it says (again it is the people (ἀὐτοί) that choose,) “Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: whom they set before the Apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.” They separated them from the multitude, and it is the people (ἀὐτοί) that draw them, not the Apostles that lead them. Observe how he avoids all that is superfluous: he does not tell in what way it was done, but that they were ordained (ἐχειροτονήθησαν) with prayer: for this is the meaning of χειροτονία, (i.e. “putting forth the hand,”) or ordination: the hand of the man is laid upon (the person,) but the whole work is of God, and it is His hand which toucheth the head of the one ordained, if he be duly ordained. “And the word of God,” it says, “increased: and the number of the disciples multiplied.” (v. 7.) It is not for nothing that he says this: it shows how great is the virtue of alms and good order. And as he is about in the sequel to enlarge (αὐξεν) upon the affair of Stephen, he puts first the causes which led to it. “And many,” he says, “of the priests were obedient to the faith.” For since they perceived such to be the mind of their ruler and teacher, they put the matter to the test of facts. — It is also a subject for wonder, how it was that the multitude was not divided in its choice of the men, and how it was that the Apostles were not rejected by them. But what sort of rank these bore, and what sort of office they received, this is what we need to learn. Was it that of Deacons? And yet this is not the case in the Churches. But is it to the Presbyters that the management belongs? And yet at present there was no Bishop, but the Apostles only. Whence I think it clearly and manifestly follows, that neither Deacons nor Presbyters is their designation: but it was for this particular purpose that they were ordained. And this business was not simply handed over to them without further ceremony, but the Apostles prayed over them, that power might be given to them. But observe, I pray you, if there were need of seven men for this, great in proportion must have been the sums of money that flowed in, great in proportion also the

number of widows. So then the prayers were not made in an off-hand way, but with much deliberate attention: and this office, as well as preaching, was thus brought to good effect; for what they did, they effected mostly by the means of these (their prayers.) Thus they were enabled to give their attention to things spiritual; thus were these also free to undertake long journeys; thus were these put in trust with the word. But the writer does not say this, nor extol them, but that it was “not reason” that they should leave the work given to them. Thus they had been taught by Moses’s example not to undertake the management of everything by themselves. (Numbers 11:14.) “Only,” it is said, “that we should remember the poor.” (Galatians 2:10.) And how did they bring these forward? They fasted. “Look you out seven men,” etc. (v. 3.) It is not simply, spiritual men, but, “full of the Spirit and of wisdom, “for it needed very great superiority of mind (*φιλοσοφίας*) to bear the complainings of widows. For what profits it, that the dispenser of alms steal not, if nevertheless he waste all, or be harsh and easily provoked? “And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.” (v. 5.) And in this regard Philip also was admirable: for it is of him that the writer says: “And we entered into the house of Philip the Evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.” — (ch. 21:8.) Dost thou mark how matters are ordered quite otherwise than after the matter of men? “And the number of disciples was multiplied in Jerusalem.” (v. 7.) In Jerusalem the multitude increased. Wonderful, where Christ was slain, there the preaching increased! And not only was it not the case that some were offended then in the manner of Ananias, but the awe became even greater: while these are scourged, those threatening, those tempting the Spirit, those murmuring. But I would have thee remark under what circumstances the multitude increased: after these trials, then it was that the multitude increased, and not before. Mark also how great the mercy of God. Of those chief-priests, of the very men who had indignation and sore displeasure and so cried out and said, “He saved others, Himself He cannot save;” of these same,” Many,” it says, “were obedient unto the faith.” (Matthew 27:42.) Him therefore let us also imitate. He received them, and did not cast them out. So let us requite those our enemies, who have wrought us even numberless ills. Whatever good thing we may have, let us impart to them: let us not pass them by, in our acts of beneficence. For if we ought, by suffering ill, to sate their rage, much more, by doing

them good: for this is a less thing than the other. For it is not all alike, to do good to an enemy, and to be willing to suffer greater wrongs than he wishes (to inflict): from the one we shall come on to the other. This is the dignity of Christ's disciples. Those crucified Him, when He had come for the very purpose of doing them good; His disciples they scourged; and after all this, He admits them to the same honor with His disciples, making them equally partakers of His gifts. I beseech you, let us be imitators of Christ: in this regard it is possible to imitate Him: this makes a man like unto God: this is more than human. Let us hold fast to Mercy: she is the schoolmistress and teacher of that higher Wisdom. He that has learnt to show mercy to the distressed, will learn also not to resent injuries; he that has learnt this, will be able to do good even to his enemies. Let us learn to feel for the ills our neighbors suffer, and we shall learn to endure the ills they inflict. Let us ask the person himself who ill-treats us, whether he does not condemn himself? would he not be glad to show a nobler spirit (*φιλοσοφείν*)? must he not own that his behavior is nothing but passion, that it is little-minded, pitiful? would he not like to be of those who are wronged and are silent, and not of those who do wrong, and are beside themselves with passion? can he go away not admiring the patient sufferer? Do not imagine that this makes men despicable. Nothing makes men so despicable, as insolent and injurious behavior: nothing makes men so respectable, as endurance under insolence and injury. For the one is a ruffian, the other a philosopher; the one is less than man, the other is equal to angels. For though he be inferior to the wrong-doer, yet, for all that, he has the power, if he had the mind, to be revenged. And besides, the one is pitied by all, the other hated. What then? The former will be much the better of the two: for everybody will treat the one as a madman, the other as a man of sense. He cannot speak of him in evil sort: yea, thou fearest, says one, lest perchance he be not such (as thou wouldest represent). Best that thou speak not evil in thy thought even; next, that thou speak it not to another. Pray not then to God against this man: if thou hear him evil-spoken of, take his part: say, It was passion that spoke such words, not the man; say, It was anger not my friend: his madness, not his heart. Thus let us account of each offense. Wait not for the fire to be kindled, but check it before it comes to that: do not exasperate the savage beast, rather do not suffer it to become exasperated: for thou wilt no longer be able to check it, if once the flame be kindled. For what has the man called thee?

“Thou feel and simpleton.” And which then is liable to the name? the called, or the caller? For the one, be he ever so wise, gets the character of being a feel: but the other, even if he be a simpleton, gets credit for being wise, and of philosophic temper. Say, which is the simpleton? he who alleges against another what is untrue, or he who even under such treatment is unmoved? For if it be the mark of true philosophy to be unmoved however moved; to fall into a passion when none moves to anger — what folly is it! I say not yet, how sore a manner of punishment is in store for those who utter such reproaches and revilings against their neighbor. But how? has he called thee “a low fellow and low-born, a sorry creature and of sorry extraction?” Again he has turned the taunt against himself. For the other will appear worthy and respectable, but he a sorry creature indeed: for to cast up such things, that is to say, meanness of birth, as a disgrace. is little-minded indeed: while the other will be thought a great and admirable character, because he thinks nothing of such a taunt, and is no more affected by it than if he were told that he had about him any other ordinary and quite indifferent circumstance. But does he call thee “adulterer,” and such like? At this thou mayest even laugh: for, when the conscience is not smitten, there can be no occasion for wrath. For when one has considered what bad and disgraceful disclosures he makes, still for all that, there is no need to grieve. He has but laid bare now, what everybody must be apprised of by and bye: meanwhile, as regards himself he has shown all men that he is not to be trusted, for that he knows not how to screen his neighbor’s faults: he has disgraced himself more than he has the other; has stopped up against himself every harbor: has made terrible to himself the bar at which he must hereafter be tried. For not the person (whose secrets are betrayed) will be the object of everybody’s aversion, but he, who where he ought not to have raised the veil, has stripped off the clothes. But speak thou nothing of the secrets thou knowest: hold thou thy peace if thou wouldest bear off the good fame. For not only wilt thou overthrow what has been spoken, and hide it: but thou wilt also bring about another capital result: thou wilt stop sentence being given against thyself. Does somebody speak evil of thee? Say thou “Had he known all, he would not have spoken only thus much.” — So you admire what has been said, and are delighted with it? Aye, but you must follow it. For when we tell you all these maxims of the heathen moralists, it is not because Scripture does not contain hundreds of such sayings, but

because these are of more force to put you to the blush. As in fact Scripture itself is wont to use this appeal to our sense of shame; for, instance, when it says, “Do ye even as the heathen.” (Jeremiah 35:3.) And the prophet Jeremiah brought forward into public view the children of Rechab, how they would not consent to violate the command of their father. — Miriam and her company spake evil of Moses, and he immediately begged them off from their punishment; nay, would not so much as let it be known that his cause was avenged. (Numbers ch. 12) But not so we: on the contrary, this is what we most desire; to have all men know that they have not passed unpunished. How long shall we breathe of the earth? — One party cannot make a fight. Pluck the madmen from both sides, you will exasperate them the more: but pluck from right or from left, and you have quenched the passion. The striker, if he has to do with one who will not put up with blows, is the more set on: but if with one who yields, he is the sooner unnerved, and his blow is spent upon himself. For no practiced pugilist so unnerves the strength of his antagonist, as does a man who being injuriously treated makes no return. For the other only goes off ashamed, and condemned, first by his own conscience, and secondly by all the lookers on. And there is a proverb too, which says, that “to honor another, is to honor one’s self”: therefore also to abuse another is to abuse one’s self. None, I repeat, will be able to harm us, unless we harm ourselves; nor will any make me poor, unless I make myself such. For come, let us look at it in this way. Suppose that I have a beggarly soul, and let all lavish all their substance upon me, what of that? So long as the soul is not changed, it is all in vain. Suppose I have a noble soul, and let all men take from me my substance: what of that? So long as you do not make the soul beggarly, no harm is done. Suppose my life be impure, and let all men say just the contrary of me: what of that? For though they say it, yet they do not judge thus of me in their heart. Again, suppose my life be pure, and let all say of me just the reverse: and what of that? For in their own conscience they will condemn themselves: since they are not persuaded of what they say. Just as we ought not to admit the praise, so neither the criminations. And why say I these things? None will ever be able to plot against us, nor lay us under any evil charge, if we choose (that they shall not). For how now, I ask you? Let him drag me into a court of justice, let him lay vexatious informations, let him, if you will, have the very soul out of me: and what of that? for a little while,

undeservedly to suffer these things, what does it signify? “Well, but this,” say you, “is of itself an evil.” Well, but of itself this is a good, to suffer undeservedly. What? would you have the suffering to be deserved? Let me mention again a piece of philosophy, from one of the sages. A certain person, says the story, had been put to death. And one of the sage’s disciples said to him, “Woe is me, that he should have suffered unjustly!” The other turned upon him, “Why, how now?” said he, “would you have had him justly suffer?” (Socrates ap. Diog. Laert. and Xen. *Mem. Socr.*) John also, was not he unjustly put to death? Which then do you rather pity: them that justly suffer death, or [him? Do you not count them miserable, while] him you even admire? Then what is a man injured, when from death itself he has got great gain, not merely no hurt? If indeed the man had been immortal, and this made him mortal, no doubt it would be a hurt: but if he be mortal, and in the course of nature must expect death a little later, and his enemy has but expedited his death, and glory with it, what is the harm? Let us but have our soul in good order, and there will be no harm from without. But thou art not in a condition of glory? And what of that? That which is true of wealth, the same holds for glory: if I be magnanimous (μεγαλοπρεπής), I shall need none; if vainglorious, the more I get, the more I shall want. In this way shall I most become illustrious, and obtain greater glory; namely, if I despise glory. Knowing these things, let us be thankful to Him Who hath freely given us such a life, and let us ensue it unto His glory; for to Him belongs the glory, forever. Amen.

HOMILY 15

ACTS 6:8

*“And Stephen, full of faith and power,
did great wonders and miracles among the people.”*

SEE how even among the seven one was preeminent, and won the first prize. For though the ordination was common to him and them, yet he drew upon himself greater grace. And observe, how he wrought no (signs and wonders) before this time, but only when he became publicly known; to show that grace alone is not sufficient, but there must be ordination also; so that there was a further access of the Spirit. For if they were full of the Spirit, it was of that which is from the Laver of Baptism. “Then there arose certain of them of the synagogue.” (v. 9.) Again he uses the phrase of “rising up” (ἀνάστασιν, Hom. 13:p. 81), to denote their exasperation and wrath. Here we have a great multitude. And observe the difference in the form of accusation: for since Gamaliel had stopped them from finding fault on the former plea, they bring in another charge. “And there rose up, it says, certain of them of the synagogue of those who are called (τῶν λεγομένων. Edd. τῆς λεγομένης) Libertines, and of the Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.” (v. 9-12.) That they may establish the charge, the phrase is, “he speaks against God, and against Moses.” And with this object too they disputed, that they might force him to say somewhat. But he now discoursed more openly, and perhaps spoke of the cessation of the Divine Law: or, spoke it not, but hinted as much: since had he spoken plainly, there had been no need of suborned men, nor yet of false witnesses. The synagogues were diverse: [to wit, “Of the Libertines”]: “of the Cyrenians, i.e. those in the parts beyond Alexandria [“of the Alexandrians,” etc.]. There also they seem to have had synagogues according to their different nations; for many stayed behind there, that they might not be obliged to be continually traveling. The Libertines perhaps were freedmen of the Romans. As there were many foreigners dwelling there, so they had their synagogues, where the

Law was to be read. “Disputing with Stephen.” Observe him, not taking upon him to teach, but forced to do so. The miracles once more brought him into ill-will; but when he overcame in argument, it was false-witness! For they did not wish to kill intolerable to them. “They could not resist, etc.: then they suborned men.” Everywhere out of hand, but by means of a sentence, that they might hurt their reputation also: and leaving those (the Apostles), they attack these (the disciples), thinking in this way to terrify those also. They say not, “he speaketh,” but, “he ceaseth not to speak. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, and set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law.” (v. 12, 13.) “Ceaseth not,” say they, as if he made this his business. “For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.” (v. 14.) “Jesus,” they say, “the Nazarene,” as a term of reproach, “shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs.” This is also what they said about Christ. “Thou that destroyest this Temple.” (Matthew 27:40.) For great was their veneration for the Temple (as indeed they had chosen to leave their own country (μετοικεῖν) in order to be near it) and for the name of Moses. The charge is twofold. If He “shall change the customs,” He will also introduce others instead: observe how the charge is a bitter one, and fraught with perils. “And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.” (v. 15.) So possible is it even for one in a lower degree to shine. For what, I ask, had this man less than the Apostles? He lacked not miracles, and great was the boldness he exhibited. — “They saw his face,” it is said, “as it had been the face of an angel.” (Exodus 34:30.) For this was his grace, this was the glory of Moses. God made him thus gracious (ἐπίχαριν) of visage, now that he was about to say somewhat, thus at once by his very look to awe them. For there are, yes, there are faces full-fraught with spiritual grace, lovely to them that love, awful to haters and enemies. It mentions also the reason, why they suffered his oration. — “Then,” it proceeds, “said the high-priest, Are these things so?” (ch. 7:1.) Observe, the question is put with mildness, that he may, effect some great mischief. For this reason Stephen too begins his speech in a tone of gentleness, and says, “Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia,

before he dwelt in Charran.” (v. 2.) Immediately at the outset he overthrows their conceit, and makes it appear by what he says, that the temple is nothing, that the customs are nothing either, without their suspecting his drift: also that they shall not overcome the preaching; and that from powerless (*ἀμηχάνων*) things God evermore contrives Him powerful (*εὐμήχανα*) instruments. Mark then how these threads make the texture of the whole speech: and moreover that having evermore enjoyed exceeding goodness, they still requited their Benefactor with the opposite conduct, and that they are now attempting impossibilities. “The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he came into Charran.” Both the temple was not, and sacrifice was not, and yet a vision of God was vouchsafed to Abraham, and yet had he Persians for his ancestors, and was in a strange land. And he does well at the beginning of his speech to call Him, “the God of glory:” seeing that He hath made them that are without honor to be glorious. “Because” (says he) “it was He that made them glorious, He will make us also.” Observe how he leads them away from things of the body, from the place, in the first instance, as the place was in question. “The God of glory,” says he: implying again, that He needs not the glory which comes from us, which comes by the Temple: for Himself is the Fountain thereof. Think not, he would say, in this way to glorify Him. “And from thy kindred.” How then saith the Scripture, that Abraham’s father was willing to go out? Hence we learn, that it was in consequence of Abraham’s vision, that his father was moved to join in the migration. (Genesis 11:31.) “And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into a land which I shall show thee.” (v. 3.) It shows how far these men are from being children of Abraham, how obedient he was. “And from thy kindred.” Uncomfortable (*φορτικὰ*) reflections, both, that he endured the labors, while ye reap the fruits, and that all your ancestors were in evil case. “Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, He removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. And He gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on.” (v. 4, 5.) See how he raises their thoughts away from (their possession of) the land. For if He said (that, He will give: clearly fall came from him), and nothing from themselves. For he came, having left both kindred and country. Wherefore then did He not give it to him? Truly it was a figure of

another land. “And He promised to give it to him.” Do you perceive, that he does not merely resume the thread of his discourse? “He gave him not,” says he; “and He promised; and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.” Again, what God can do: that out of impossibilities, He doeth all; For here is a man in Persia, so far away, and this man God saith He will make Lord of Palestine. But let us look back to what was said before.

Whence, I pray you, did that grace bloom upon the countenance of Stephen? (Recapitulation.) The writer gives him this report above, that he was “full of faith.” (ch. 6:8). For it is possible to have a grace that does not consist in works of healing: “For to one is given the grace of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:8, 9) in such and such wise (τοιῶσδε). But here, it seems to me, it says that he was also gracious to look at: “They saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.” “Full of faith and of power”: (v. 15) which is also the character given of Barnabas “he was a good man, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.” (ch. 11:24.) Whence we learn that the sincere and innocent are, above all others, the men to be saved, and that these same are also more gracious. “Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words.” (v. 11.) In the case of the Apostles they were annoyed that they preached the Resurrection, and that much people flowed unto them: but in this case, that they were getting their diseases healed. (ch. 4:2.) The things for which they ought to give thanks, they made matter of blame: O the madness! The men who overcame them by works, they expected to overcome by words! It is just what they did in the case of Christ, and always they forced them to words. For they were ashamed to seize them without more ado, having nothing to charge them with. And observe, not the persons themselves who bring them to judgment bear witness against them; for they would have been refuted: but they simply hire others, that it may not seem to be an act of mere violence. It is all of a piece with their proceeding in the case of Christ. And observe the power of the preaching, that, though they are not only scourged but stoned, it still prevails: not only, private individuals as they are, dragged to the bar, but assailed from all quarters: and, their enemies themselves being witnesses, not only were these worsted, but “they were not able” even “to resist” (v. 10), though they were exceeding shameless: so mightily did it overthrow them, for all that they could do with their preposterous figments (as the saying that He had a devil — He that cast

out devils!). For the battle was not man's, but God's against men. And there were many combined together; not only they in Jerusalem, but others as well. (v. 9.) For "we have heard him," say they, "speaking blasphemous words against Moses and against God." (v. 11.) O ye shameless ones! Ye work blasphemous deeds, and think nothing of it. This is why Moses is added — because the things of God were no great concern to them: and it is ever and always Moses that they make mention of: "This Moses, which brought us out." (ch. 7:40.) "And they stirred up the people." (v. 12.) Fickleness of the multitude! And yet how could a man who was a blasphemer have so succeeded? How could a blasphemer work such miracles among the people? But the undisciplined multitude made them strong who had the worst of it (in argument). — This was what most annoyed them. "We have heard him," they say, "speaking blasphemous words against Moses and against God" (v. 13): and again, "This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law," and with an addition, "the customs" "which Moses delivered to us" (v. 14); Moses, not God. Upon the supposition of a design to overturn their manner of life (πολιείας), they accused him of impiety also. But to show that it was not in the nature of such a man to speak such things, and harshly ["Then all," it says, "which were in the council, looking steadfastly upon him, saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel"] (v. 15): so mild was he even in countenance. For, in cases where persons were not falsely accused, Scripture mentions nothing of this kind: but as in this case it was all false accusation, with reason does God rectify it by the very look of the man. For the Apostles indeed were not falsely accused, but were forbidden: but this man is falsely accused: and therefore before all else his countenance pleads for him. This abashed even the priest. "And he said," etc. (ch. 7:1.) He shows here, that the promise was made before the Place, before Circumcision, before Sacrifice, before the Temple, and that it was not of their merit that these received either Circumcision or Law, but that the land was the reward of obedience alone. Moreover, that neither on the giving of circumcision does the promise receive its fulfillment. Also, that these were figures, and (so was) both the leaving his country at God's command — not against the law (for home and country is where God shall lead): "Then came he out," it says, "of the land of the Chaldeans" (v. 4): — and that if one look closely into the matter, the Jews are of Persian origin: and that, without miracles, one

must do as God bids, whatever hardships be the consequence; since the Patriarch left both the grave of his father and all that he had, in obedience to God's command. But if Abraham's father was not allowed to take part with him in the privilege of migrating to Palestine, because he was unworthy: much more shall the children (be excluded at last), for all that they may have gone a good distance on the way. "And He promised," it says, "to give it to him, and to his seed after him." (v. 5.) Herein is shown the greatness both of God's goodness and of Abraham's faith. For the expression, "when as yet he had no child," does show his obedience and faith. "Promised to give it to him and to his seed." And yet the events showed the contrary: namely, after he came, he had not "so much as to set his foot on," had not a child; which very things were contrary to his faith.

These things having seen, let us likewise, whatever God shall promise, receive the same, however contrary may be the events. And yet in our case, they are not contrary, but very suitable. For where the promises are, there, when the contraries turn out, they are really contrary; but in our case it is just the reverse: for He has told us that we should have tribulation here, but our rest there. Why do we confound the times? Why do we turn things upside down? Say, art thou afflicted, and livest in poverty, and in dejection? Be not troubled: for it were worth being troubled at, wert thou destined to be afflicted in that world: as for this present affliction, it is the cause of rest. "This sickness," saith He, "is not unto death." (John 11:4.) That affliction is punishment: this, schooling and correction. It is a contest, this life present: if so, to fight is our business now: it is war and battle. In war one does not seek to have rest, in war one does not seek to have dainty living, one is not anxious about riches, one's care is not about a wife then: one thing only he looks at, how he may overcome his foes. Be this our care likewise: if we overcome, and return with the victory, God will give us all things. Be this alone our study, how we may overcome the devil: though after all it is not our own study that does it, but God's grace does the whole business. Be it our one study, how we may attract His grace, how we may draw to ourselves that assistance. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31.) Let us make one thing our study; that He be not our enemy, that He turn not away from us.

Not the being afflicted is an evil; the evil is, to sin. This is the sore affliction, however we may pass our days in luxury: — not to speak of the life to come, it is so even in this life present. Think how our conscience is stung with remorse, and whether this is not worse than any kind of torture! I should like to put the question searchingly to those who live in evil ways (**ἐν κακοίς**), whether they never come to reflect upon their own sins, whether they do not tremble, and are in fear and anguish, whether they do not think those blessed who live in abstinence, them of the mountains, them of the strict rule? (**τοὺς ἐν πολλῇ φιλοσοφίᾳ**) Dost thou wish to find rest in the life to come? Suffer affliction in this life for Christ's sake: there is nothing equal to this rest. The Apostles rejoiced when scourged. Paul gives this exhortation, saying, "Rejoice in the Lord." (Philippians 4:4.) And how can there be rejoicing, where there are bonds, where there are tortures; where there are courts of justice? There, most of all, is rejoicing. But say, how can there be rejoicing, where these are not? For he who is conscious of no evil, will have a sort of exceeding delight, insomuch that in what degree you speak of tribulation, in the same you tell of his delight. The soldier who has received numberless wounds and is come home again, will he not return with exceeding delight, with his wounds as his title for speaking up boldly, and as evidence of his glory and renown? And thou, if thou be able to exclaim as Paul does, "I bear the marks of Jesus" (Galatians 6:17), wilt be able to become great and glorious and renowned. "But there is no persecution." Make thy stand against glory: and should any one speak anything against thee, fear not to be evil-spoken of for Christ's sake: make thy stand against the tyranny of pride, against the fighting of anger, against the torment of concupiscence. These also are "marks," these also are torments. For, I ask, what is the worst in tortures? Is it not, that the soul is pained, and is on fire? For in the other case, the body too has its share: but in this, the whole belongs to the soul. On the soul alone comes all the smart, when one is angry, when one is envious, whatever else of this kind one does, or rather suffers. For, in fact, it is not action, but passion, not a doing, but a suffering — to be angered, to feel envy: therefore indeed they are called passions (or sufferings) (**πάθη** *perturbationes*) of the soul, yea wounds, and bruises. For it is indeed a suffering, and worse than suffering. Bethink you, ye that are angry, that ye do such things in "passion," in a state of suffering. Therefore he who is not angry suffers not. Do you mark that not he who

is abused is the sufferer, but he that abuses, as I said above? For that he is a sufferer, is plain in the first place from the very fact, that such a thing is called by this name of passion: and it is also plain from the (effects on the) body: for these are the affections (*πάθη*) for “sufferings,” as we call them] engendered by anger, viz. dimness of vision, insanity, and numberless others. “But he insulted my boy,” say you; “but [he called him] clown.” Deem it not weakness thy not doing the same thing thyself. For, I ask you, was it well done? You will not say that: then leave that undone which being done were not well done. I know what passions are engendered in such cases. “But,” say you, “how if he despise me, how if he say it again?” Show him that he is in the wrong: rebuke him, entreat him: by meekness anger is put down: go and expostulate with him. For though in cases of wrong done to ourselves it is right not to do even this, yet it is quite necessary to do it in behalf of others. Do not look on it as an insult to yourself that your boy has been insulted: annoyed you may be for his sake, yet not as if you were insulted: for it does not follow because your boy has been ill-treated, that you are disgraced, but he is disgraced that did the ill. Quench (thine anger) that sharp sword: let it lie in its scabbard. If we have it unsheathed, we shall be apt to use it even when the time is not proper, being drawn on by it: but if it be hidden, though a necessity should arise, yet, while we seek it in order to draw it, the anger will be quenched. Christ would not have us be angry on his account: (hear what He saith to Peter: “Put tip again thy sword into the sheath:”) (Matthew 26:52) and art thou angry on account of a boy? Teach thy boy also to be philosophical: tell him thy own sufferings: imitate (herein) thy Teacher. (Matthew 26:52.) When they too (His disciples) were about to be treated with dishonor, He said not, “I will avenge you:” but, “to Me also,” saith He, “they have done the same: bear it nobly, for ye are not better than I.” These words too do thou speak to thy son and thy boy: “Thou art not better than thy master.” But these words of philosophy are counted as the talk of a widow woman. Alas! that it is not in the power of words to bring it home to people in the way that it is possible to be taught it by actual experience! And that you may learn this; stand between two combatants, take part with the wronged, not with the wrong-doers [that you may learn] whether you shall not see the victory on your side, whether you shall not get splendid crowns. — See, how God is insulted, and how He answers; how gently, “Where,” saith He, “is Abel thy brother?” and what

saith the other: "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 6:9.) What could be more contumacious than this? Would any one have heard it (patiently) even from a son? and if from a brother, would he not have thought such conduct an insult? What then? See how again God gently answers, "The voice of thy brother's blood," saith He "crieth unto Me." "But God," it will be said, "is superior to wrath." Yes, but for this reason the Son of God came down, that He might make thee a God as far as human power can go. "But I cannot," says one, "seeing I am man." Well then, let us give you men for instances. And do not suppose I speak of Paul or of Peter: no, but of some of inferior sort, yea, very much lower down. Eli's menial insulted Hannah, saying, "Put away thy wine from thee." (1 Samuel 1:14.) What could be more insulting than this? What then said she? "I am a woman of a hard lot." Indeed, there is nothing equal to affliction: she is the mother of true philosophy. But this same woman, though she has her rival, insulted her not: but what does she? She takes refuge with God, and in her prayer does not even make mention of her, nor say, "Avenge me, for such an one reproaches me:" so magnanimous was that woman (let us men be ashamed): — and yet ye know, that there is nothing like jealousy. The publican, when insulted by the Pharisee, insulted not in return, though, had he wished it, he might have done so: but he bore it like a philosopher, saying, "Be merciful to me a sinner." (Luke 18:13.) Mephibosheth, having been accused and calumniated by his servant, neither said, nor did, any evil to him, not even in the presence of the king himself. (2 Samuel 19:26.) Shall I tell you even of a harlot, what philosophic magnanimity she showed? Hear Christ saying, as she was wiping His feet with her hair, "The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom before you." (Matthew 21:31.) Do you see her standing, and taking courage, and washing away her own sins? Observe, how she was not angry even with the Pharisee, when reproached by him: "for had He known," says he, "that this woman is a sinner, He would not have suffered her (Luke 7:39): and how she said not to him, "What then? Say, art thou pure from sins?" but felt more, wept more, and let fall hotter tears. But if women and publicans and harlots play the philosopher, and that before grace (i.e. of Baptism), what pardon can they deserve, who, after so great grace, fight, and worry, and kick one another, worse than beasts? Nothing is more base than passion, nothing more disgraceful, nothing more frightful, nothing more odious, nothing more hurtful. These things I say, not only in order that towards men we

may be gentle, but also if a wife be a talker, that thou mayest bear it: let thy wife be to thee a school for training and exercise (**παλαίστρα καὶ γυμνάσιον**) For how can it but be absurd, to submit to exercises which yield no profit, where we afflict the body, but not to practice exercises at home, which, even before the contest, present to us a crown? Does thy wife abuse thee? Do not thou become a woman: to be abusive is womanly: it is a disease of the soul, an inferiority. Think not that it is unworthy of thee, when thy wife abuses thee. Unworthy it is, when thou art abusive, but she bears patiently (**φιλοσοφῆ**): then dost thou act unseemly, then art thou disgraced: but if, having been abused, thou bear it, great is the proof of thy strength. I do not say this, to induce wives to be abusive: God forbid: but only in case it should so happen at the instance of Satan. It is the part of men that are strong, to bear the weak. And if thy servant contradict thee, bear it philosophically: not what he deserves to have said to him, do thou say or do, but that which it behooves thee both to do and to say. Never insult a girl by uttering some foul word against her: never call thy servant, scoundrel (**μιαρὸν**): not he is disgraced, but thou. It is not possible to be master of one's self, being in a passion. Like a sea rolling mountains high, it is all hurly-burly: or even as a pure fountain, when mire is cast into it, becomes muddied, and all is in turmoil. You may beat him, you may rend his coat to rags, but it is you that sustain the greater damage: for to him the blow is on the body and the garment, but to you on the soul. It is your own soul that you have cut open; it is there that you have inflicted a wound: you have flung your own charioteer from his horses. you have got him dragging along the ground upon his back. And it is all one, as if one driver being in a passion with another, should choose to be thus dragged along. You may rebuke, you may chide, you may do whatever if be, only let it be without wrath and passion. For if he who rebukes is physician to him who offends, how can he heal another, when he has first hurt himself, when he does not heal himself? Say, if a physician should go to heal another person, does he first wound his own hand, first blind his own eyes, and so set about healing that other? God forbid. So also, however thou rebuke, however thou chide, let thine eyes see clearly. Do not make thy mind muddy, else how shall the cure be wrought? It is not possible to be in the same tranquillity, being in a passion, and being free from passion. Why dost thou first overturn thy master from his seat, and then discourse with him as he lies sprawling on

the ground? Seest thou not the judges, how, when about to hold the assize, they seat themselves upon the bench, in their becoming attire? Thus do thou likewise dress thy soul with the judicial robe (which is gentleness). “But he will not be afraid of me,” say you. He will be the more afraid. In the other case, though you speak justly, your servant will impute it to passion: but if you do it with gentleness, he will condemn himself: and, what is of the first importance, God will accept thee, and thus thou wilt be able to attain unto the eternal blessings, through the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father together with the Holy Spirit be glory, dominion, and honor, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 16

ACTS 7:6, 7

“And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years. And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve Me in this place.”

SEE, what a number of years the Promise has been given, and the manner of the Promise, and nowhere sacrifice, nowhere circumcision! He here shows, how God Himself suffered them to be afflicted, not that He had anything to lay to their charge. “And they shall bring them into bondage,” etc. But nevertheless, they did not these things with impunity. “And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage I will judge, said God.” For, to show that they are not to go by this, in estimating who are pious (by reason of their saying, “He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him,”) (Matthew 27:43). — He, the Same that promised, He that gave the land, first permits the evils. So also now, though He has promised a Kingdom, yet He suffers us to be exercised in temptations. If here the freedom was not to be till after four hundred years, what wonder, with regard to the Kingdom? Yet he performed it, and lapse of time availed not to falsify His word. Moreover, it was no ordinary bondage they underwent. And the matter does not terminate solely in the punishment of those (their oppressors); but they themselves also, He saith, shall enjoy a mighty salvation. Here he reminds them too of the benefit which they enjoyed. “And he gave him the covenant of circumcision.’ and so he begat Isaac.” Here he lets himself down to lower matters. “And circumcised him on the eighth day: and Isaac (begat) Jacob, and Jacob the twelve patriarchs.” (v. 8). — Here he seems to hint now at the type. “And the patriarchs moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt.” (v. 9.) Here again, the type of Christ. Though they had no fault to find with him, and though he came on purpose to bring them their food, they thus ill-treated him. Still here again the promise, though it is a long while first, receives its fulfillment. “And God was with him” — this also is for them — “and delivered him out of all his afflictions.” (v. 10). He shows that unknowingly they helped to fulfill the prophecy, and that they were themselves the cause, and that the

evils recoiled on their own selves. “And gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt, Gave him favor,” in the eyes of a barbarian, to him, the slave, the captive: his brethren sold him, this (barbarian) honored him. “Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren.” (v. 11-13). They came down to buy, and had to depend upon him for everything. What then did he? [“He made himself known to his brethren:”] not to this point only did he carry his friendliness; he also made them known to Pharaoh, and brought them down into the land. “And Joseph’s kindred was made known unto Pharaoh. Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, and were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulcher that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem. But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, till another king arose, which knew not Joseph. (v. 13-18). Then again, fresh disappointment (**ἀνελπιστία**): first, famine, but they came through that: secondly, the falling into the hands of their enemy: thirdly, the being destroyed by the king. Then (to show) God’s fullness of ways and means (**εὐμήχανον**), “In which time,” it says, “Moses was born, and was exceeding fair.” (v. 20.) If the former circumstance was wonderful, that Joseph was sold by his brethren, here again is another circumstance more wonderful still, that the king “nourished” the very person who was to overthrow his dominion, being himself the person that was to perish. Do you observe all along a figurative enacting, so to say, of the resurrection of the dead? But it is not the same thing for God himself to do a thing, and for a thing to come to pass in connection with man’s purpose (**προαίρεσις**). For these things indeed were in connection with man’s purpose [but the Resurrection by itself, independently.] — “And he was mighty,” it says, “in word and in deed” (v. 22): he that was to have died. Then again he shows how ungrateful they were to their benefactor. For, just as in the former instance, they were saved by the injured Joseph, so here again they were saved by another injured person, I mean, Moses. “And when he was full forty years old,” etc. For what though they killed him not actually? In

intention they did kill, as did the others in the former case. There, they sold out of their own into a strange land: here, they drive from one strange land into another strange land: in the former case, one in the act of bringing them food; in this, one in the act of giving them good counsel; one to whom, under God, the man was indebted for his life! Mark how it shows (the truth of) that saying of Gamaliel's, "If it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it." (ch. 5:39.) See the plotted-against eventually becoming the authors of salvation to those plotting against them: the people, plotting against itself, and itself plotted against by others; and for all this, saved! A famine, and it did not consume them: nor was this all: but they were saved by means of the very person, whom they had expected to be destroyed (by their means). A royal edict, and it did not consume them: nay then most did their number increase, when he was dead "who knew" them. Their own Savior they wished to kill, but for all that, they had not power to do it. Do you observe, that by the means whereby the devil tried to bring to naught the promise of God, by those very means 'it was advanced?

"And God spake on this wise," etc. (Recapitulation, 5:6, 7.) This is suitable to be said here also: that God is rich in ways and means to bring us up from hence. For this above all showed the riches of God's resources, that in its very reverses (**ἀποστροφῆ**) the nation increased, while enslaved, while evilentreated, and sought to be exterminated. And this is the greatness of the Promise. For had it increased in its own land, it had not been so wonderful. And besides, it was not for a short time, either, that they were in the strange land: but for four hundred years. Hence we learn a (great lesson) of philosophic endurance (**φιλοσοφίαν**): — they did not treat them as masters use slaves, but as enemies and tyrants — and he foretold that they should be set in great liberty: for this is the meaning of that expression, "They shall serve (Me): and they shall come up hither again" (**ἐνταῦθα ἐπανελεύσονται**); and with impunity. — And observe, how, while he seems to concede something to circumcision, he in fact allows it nothing (v. 8); since the Promise was before it, and it followed after. — "And the patriarchs," he says, "moved with envy. (v. 9.) Where it does no harm, he humors (**χαρίζεται**) them: for they prided themselves much on these also. — And he shows, that the saints were not exempt from tribulation, but that in their very tribulations they obtained help.

And that these persons did themselves help to bring about the results, who wished to cut short these same (afflictions): just as these made Joseph the more glorious: just as the king did Moses, by ordering the children to be killed: since had he not ordered, this would not have been: just as also that (Hebrew) drives Moses into exile, that there he may have the Vision, having become worthy. Thus also him who was sold for a slave, makes He to reign as king there, where he was thought to be a slave. Thus also does Christ in His death give proof of His power: thus also does He there reign as king where they sold Him. “And gave him favor and wisdom,” etc. (v. 10.) This was not only by way of honor, but that he should have confidence in his own power. “And he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.” “Now there came a dearth,” etc. On account of famine — such preparations is he making — “with threescore and fifteen souls,” he says, “Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he and our fathers, and were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulcher that Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem. (v. 11-16). It shows, that they were not masters even to the extent of a burying-place. “But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, till another king arose, which knew not Joseph” (v. 17, 18). Observe, that it is not during the four hundred years that He multiplies them, but (only) when the end was about to draw nigh. And yet already four hundred years were passed, nay more, in Egypt. But this is the wonder of it. “The same dealt subtly with our kindred, and evil-entreated our fathers, that they should cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.” (v. 19.) “Dealt subtly:” he hints at their not liking to exterminate them openly: “that they should cast out their young children,” it says. “In which time Moses was born and was exceeding fair.” (v. 20.) This is the wonder, that he who is to be their champion, is born, neither after nor before, these things, but in the very midst of the storm (θυμῶ). “And was nourished up in his father’s house three months.” But when man’s help was despaired of, and they cast him forth, then did God’s benefit shine forth conspicuous. “And when he was cast out, Pharaoh’s daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.” (v. 21.) Not a word of Temple, not a word of Sacrifice, while all these Providences are taking place. And he was nourished in a barbarian house. “And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and

in deeds.” (v. 22.) “Was trained,” both in discipline and in letters. “And when he was full forty years old.” (v. 23.) Forty years he was there, and was not found out from his being circumcised. Observe, how, being in safety, they overlook their own interests, both he and Joseph, in order that they may save others: “And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: for he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.” (v. 23-25.) — See how up to this point he is not yet offensive to them; how they listened to him while he said all this. And “his face,” we read, “was as the face of an angel” (ch. 6:15). — “For he supposed,” etc. And yet it was by deeds that his championship was shown; what intelligence was there need of here? but still for all this “they understood not. And the next day he showed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?” (v. 26-28.) Do you mark with what mildness he addresses them? He who had shown his wrath in the case of the other, shows his gentleness in his own case. “But he that did his neighbor wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?” Mark; the very words which they said to Christ: “Who made Thee ruler and judge over us?” So habitual a thing was it for Jews to wrong (their benefactors) when in the act of receiving benefits! And again, mark the atrocious baseness: (μιαρίαν al. μοχθηρίαν, Sav. marg.) “As thou didst the Egyptian yesterday! Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons.” (v. 29.) But neither did flight extinguish the plan of Providence, as neither did death (i.e. the death of Christ).

“And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.” (v. 30.) Do you mark that it is not hindered by lapse of time? For when he was an exile, when a stranger, when he had now passed much time in a foreign land, so as to have two sons, when he no longer expected to return, then does the Angel appear to him. The Son of God he calls an Angel, as also he calls Him man. (Appears) in the desert, not in a temple. See how

many miracles are taking place, and no word of Temple, no word of Sacrifice. And here also not simply in the desert, but in the bush. “When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him.” (v. 31.) Lo! he was deemed worthy of the Voice also. “I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” (v. 32, 33.) Lo! how He shows that He is none other than “the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” — He, “the Angel of the Great Counsel.” (Isaiah 9:6. LXX. “Wonderful, Counselor,” E.V.) Here he shows what great loving-kindness God herein exhibits. “Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold. Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet; for the place where thou standest is holy ground.” Not a word of Temple, and the place is holy through the appearance and operation of Christ. Far more wonderful this than the place which is in the Holy of Holies: for there God is nowhere said to have appeared in this manner, nor Moses to have thus trembled. And then the greatness of His tender care. “I have seen, I have seen the affliction of My people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.” (v. 34.) See, how he shows, that both by kindnesses, and by chastisements, and by miracles, God was drawing them to Him: but they were still the same. That God is everywhere present, they learned.

Hearing these things, let us in our afflictions flee to Him. “And their groaning,” saith He, “I have heard:” not simply, “because of their calamities.” But if any should ask, Why then did He suffer them to be evil entreated there? Why, in the first place, to every just man his sufferings are the causes of his rewards. And in the next place, as to why He afflicted them: it was to show His power, that He can (do all), and not only so, but that He may also train them. Observe in fact; when they were in the desert, then they “waxed fat, they grew thick, they spread out in breadth, they kicked” (Deuteronomy 32:15): and ever and always ease was an evil. Therefore also from the beginning He said to Adam: “In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat thy bread.” (Genesis 3:19.) Also (it was) in order that having come out of much suffering into rest, they might give thanks to God. For affliction is a great good. For hear the Prophet saying, “It is good for me, that Thou hast humbled me.” (Psalm 119:71.) But if to great and wonderful men affliction be a great (good), much more to us. And, if you

will, let us examine into the nature of affliction as it is in itself. Let there be some person rejoicing exceedingly, and gay, and giving a loose to jollity: what more unseemly, what more senseless than this? Let there be one sorrowing and dejected: what more truly philosophic than this? For, “It is better,” we read, “to go into the house of mourning, than into the house of laughter.” (Ecclesiastes 7:2.) But, likely enough, you do not like the saying, and want to evade it. Let us however see, what sort of man Adam was in Paradise, and what he was afterwards: what sort of man Cain was before, and what he was afterwards. The soul does not stand fast in its proper place, but, like as by a running tide, (ῥεύματος, Edd. πνεύματος, “wind”) is raised and buoyed up by pleasure, having no steadfastness; facile in making professions, prompt at promising; the thoughts all in restless commotion: laughter ill-timed, causeless hilarity, idle clatter of unmeaning talk. And why speak of others? Let us take in hand some one of the saints, and let us see what he was while in pleasure, what again, when in distress. Shall we look at David himself? When he was in pleasure and rejoicing, from his many trophies, from his victory, from his crowns, from his luxurious living, froth his confidence, see what sort of things he said and did: “But I said in my prosperity,” says he, “I shall never be moved.” (Psalm 30:6.) But when he has come to be in affliction, hear what he says: “And if He say to me, I have no mind for thee; lo! here am I, let Him do that which is pleasing in His sight.” (2 Samuel 15:26.) What can be more truly philosophic than these words? “Whatsoever may be pleasing to God,” saith he, “so let it be.” And again he said to Saul: “If the Lord stirreth thee up against me, may thy sacrifice be acceptable.” (1 Samuel 26:19.) And then too, being in affliction, he spared even his enemies: but afterwards, not friends even, nor those who had done him no injury. Again, Jacob when he was in affliction, said: “If the Lord will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on.” (Genesis 28:20.) As also the son of Noah did nothing of the kind erewhile; but when he was no longer afraid for his safety, you hear how wanton he became. (ib. 9:22.) Hezekiah too, when he was in affliction, see what things he did in order to his deliverance; he put on sackcloth, and such like; but when he was in pleasure, he fell through the haughtiness of his heart. (2 Kings ch. 19:20.) For, saith the Scripture, “When thou hast eaten, and drunk, and art filled, take heed to thyself.” (Deuteronomy 6:11, 12.) For perilous, as on a precipice’s brink, is the post of affluence. “Take heed,” saith he, “to

thysself.” When the Israelites were afflicted, they became all the more increased in number: but when He left them to themselves, then they all went to ruin. And why speak of examples from the ancients? In our own times, let us see, if you please, is it not the case, that when the most are in good case, they become puffed up, hostile to everybody, passionate, while the power is with them: but if it be taken away, they are gentle, lowly (and as) human beings, are brought to a consciousness of their own natural condition. Therefore the Scripture saith, “Pride hath holden them unto the end: their iniquity shall go forth as from fatness.” (Psalm 73:6. LXX.)

Now these things I have spoken, that we should not make enjoyment every way our object. How then does Paul say, “Rejoice alway?” He does not say simply, “Rejoice,” but he adds, “in the Lord.” (Philippians 4:4.) This is the greatest joy, such as the Apostles rejoiced withal; the joy of which prisons, and scourges, and persecutions, and evil report, and all painful things, are the source, and the root, and the occasion; whence also it comes to a happy issue. But that of the world, on the contrary, begins with sweets and ends in bitters. Neither do I forbid to rejoice in the Lord, nay, I earnestly exhort to this. The Apostles were scourged, and they rejoiced: were bound, and they gave thanks: were stoned, and they preached. This is the joy I also would have: from nothing bodily has it its origin, but from spiritual things. It is not possible for him who joys after the fashion of the world, to rejoice also after a godly sort: for every one who joys after the world’s fashion, has his joy in riches, in luxury, in honor, in power, in arrogance: but he who rejoices after the mind of God, has his joy in dishonor for God’s sake, in poverty, in want, in fasting, in humbleness of mind. Seest thou, how opposite are the grounds (of joy)? To go without joy here, is to be without grief also: and to be without grief here, is to go without pleasure too. And in truth these are the things which produce real joy, since the others have the name only of joy, but they altogether consist of pain. What misery the arrogant man endures! How is he cut short (**δικόπτεται**) in the midst of his arrogance, bespeaking for himself numberless insults, much hatred, great enmity, exceeding spite, and many an evil eye! Whether it be that he is insulted by greater men, he grieves: or that he cannot make his stand against everybody, he is mortified. Whereas the humble man lives in much enjoyment: expecting honor from none, if he receive honor, he is pleased, but if not, he is not

grieved. He takes it contentedly that he is honored; but above all, none dishonors him. Now not to seek honor, and yet to be honored — great must be the enjoyment of this. But in the other, it is just the reverse: he seeks honor, and is not honored. And the pleasure that the honor gives is not the same to him who seeks it, as it is to him who seeks it not. The one, however much he receives, thinks he has received nothing: the other, though you give him ever so little, takes it as though he had received all. Then again, he who lives in affluence and luxury has numberless affairs of business, and let his revenues flow in to him ever so easily, and, as it were, from full fountains, yet he fears the evils arising from luxurious living, and the uncertainty of the future: but the other is always in a state of security and enjoyment, having accustomed himself to scantiness of diet. For he does not so bemoan himself at not partaking of a sumptuous board, as he luxuriates in not fearing the uncertainty of the future. But the evils arising from luxurious living, how many and great they are, none can be ignorant: it is necessary, however, to mention them now. Twofold the war, in the body, and in the soul: twofold the storm: twofold the diseases; not only in this respect, but because they are both incurable, and bring with them great calamities. Not so, frugality: but here is twofold health, twofold the benefits. “Sleep of health,” we read, “is in moderate eating.” (Ecclus. 31:20.) For everywhere, that which keeps measure is pleasant, that which is beyond measure, ceases to please. For say now: on a little spark put a great pile of fagots, and you will no longer see the fire shining, but much disagreeable smoke. On a very strong and large man lay a burden which exceeds his strength, and you will see him with his burden lying prostrate on the ground. Embark too large a freight in your vessel, and you have ensured a grievous shipwreck. Just so it is here. For just as in overladen ships, great is the tumult of the sailors, the pilot, the man at the prow, and the passengers, while they cast into the sea the things above deck, and things below; so here too, with their vomitings upwards, and their purgings downwards, they mar their constitutions, and destroy themselves. And what is the most shameful of all, the mouth is made to do the office of the nether parts, and that becomes the more shameful member. But if to the mouth the disgrace be such, think what must it be in the soul! For indeed there it is all mist, all storm, all darkness, great the uproar of the thoughts, at being so thronged and crushed, the soul itself crying out at the abuse done to it: all (the parts and faculties) complaining

of one another, beseeching, entreating, that the filth may be discharged somewhere. And after it is flung out, still the turmoil is not at an end; but then comes fever and diseases. “And how comes it,” say you, “that one may see these luxurious livers, in goodly plight, riding on horseback? What idle talk is this,” say you, “to tell us of diseases? It is I that am diseased, I that am racked, I that am disgusting, while I have nothing to eat.” Ah me! for one may well lament at such words. But the sufferers with the gout, the men that are carried on litters, the men that are swathed with bandages, from what class of people, I ask you, shall we see these? And indeed, were it not that they would deem it an insult, and think my words opprobrious, I would before now have addressed them even by name. “But there are some of them, who are in good health as well.” Because they give themselves not merely to luxurious living, but also to labors. Else show me a man, who does nothing whatever but fatten himself, free from pain as he lies there, without an anxious thought. For though a host of physicians without number came together, they would not be able to rescue him from his diseases. It is not in the nature of things. For I will hold you a medical discourse. Of the matters sent down into the belly, not all becomes nourishment; since even in the food itself, not all is nutritive, but part of it in the process of digestion passes into stool, part is turned into nourishment. If then in the process of digestion the operation is perfect, this is the result, and each finds its proper place; the wholesome and useful part betakes itself to its appropriate place, while that which is superfluous and useless, withdraws itself, and passes off. But if it be in too great quantity, then even the nutritive part of it becomes hurtful. And, to speak by way of example, in order that my meaning may be clearer to you: in wheat part is fine flour, part meal, part bran: now if the mill be able to grind (what is put in), it separates all these: but if you put in too much, all becomes mixed up together. Wine again, if it go through its proper process of formation, and under due influence of the seasons, then, whereas at first all is mixed together, anon part settles into lees, part rises into scum, part remains for enjoyment to those that use it, and this is the good part, and will not readily undergo any change. But what they call “nourishment,” is neither wine, nor lees, while all are mixed up together. — The same may be seen in the river, when its waters make a whirling flood. As at such time we see the fishes floating at top, dead, their eyes first blinded by the muddy slime: so is it with us. For when gormandizing,

like a flood of rain, has drenched the inward parts, it puts all in a whirl, and makes that the faculties (λογισμοὶ), healthy till then and living in a pure element, drift lifeless on the surface. Since then by all these examples we have shown how great the mischief is, let us cease to count these men happy for that, for which we ought to think them wretched, and to bemoan ourselves for that, for which we ought to count ourselves happy, and let us welcome sufficiency with a contented mind. Or do you not hear even what physicians tell you, that “want is the mother of health?” But what I say is, that want is mother, not of bodily health, but also of that of the soul. These things Paul also, that physician indeed, cries aloud; when he says, “Having food and raiment, let us therewith be content.” (1 Timothy 6:8.) Let us therefore do as he bids us, that so, being in sound health, we may perform the work that we ought to do, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory, dominion, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 17

ACTS 7:35

“This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel which appeared to him in the bush.”

THIS is very suitable to the matter in hand. “This Moses,” he says. “This,” the man who had been in danger of losing his life; the man who had been set at naught by them; “this” the man whom they had declined: “this” same, God having raised up, sent unto them. “Whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler?” just as they themselves (the hearers) said, “We have no king, but Caesar.” (John 19:15.) He here shows also, that what was then done, was done by Christ. “The same did God send by the hand of the Angel,” who said unto him, “I am the God of Abraham.” “This” same Moses, he says, — and observe how he points to his renown — “this” same Moses, he says, “brought them out, after that he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years. This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me” (v. 36, 37): set at naught like me. Him, likewise, Herod wished to kill, and in Egypt He found preservation just as it was with the former, even when He was a babe, He was aimed at for destruction. “This is he, that was in the Church in the wilderness with the Angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us.” (v. 38.) Again no mention of temple, none of sacrifice. “With the Angel,” it says, “he received the lively oracles to give unto the fathers.” It shows, that he not only wrought miracles, but also gave a law, as Christ did. Just as Christ first works miracles, and then legislates: so did Moses. But they did not hear him, keeping their disobedience, even after the miracles: “To whom,” he says, “our fathers would not obey:” (v. 39) after the wonders done in those forty years. And not only so, but just the contrary: “but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt. Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us; for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And they made a

calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the Prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your God Kemphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.” (v. 40, 43.) The expression, “gave them up,” means, He suffered. “Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion he had seen.” (v. 44.) Even when there was a Tabernacle, yet there were no sacrifices. “Did ye offer unto Me slain beasts and sacrifices?” (Amos 5:25.) There was “the tabernacle of witness,” and yet it profited them nothing, but they were consumed. But neither before, nor afterwards, did the miracles profit them aught. “Which also, our fathers that came after brought in.” Seest thou, how the holy place is there wherever God may be? For to this end also he says, “in the wilderness,” to compare place with place. Then the benefit (conferred upon them): And our fathers that came after brought it in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; who found favor before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. (v. 45, 46.) David “desired to find favor:” and he builded not, he, the wonderful, the great; but the castaway, Solomon. “But Solomon,” it says, “built Him an house. Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in (places) made with hands. (v. 47-50.) This was shown indeed already by what had been before said: but it is shown also by the voice of a prophet; “What house will ye build for Me? saith the Lord God. As saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build for me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?” (Isaiah 66:1, 2.)

Marvel not, he says, if they on whom Christ confers His benefits refuse His kingdom, seeing in the case of Moses it was just the same. (Recapitulation). “He brought them out;” and rescued them not in a general way, but also while they were in the wilderness. “Wonders and signs,” etc. (v. 35-50.) Do you mark that they themselves (Stephen’s hearers) are concerned in those old miracles also? “This is that Moses:” (v. 37) he, that

conversed with God; he, that had been saved out of situations so strange and wonderful; he, that wrought so great works, and had so great power. [“Which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet,” etc.] He shows, that the prophecy must by all means be fulfilled, and that Moses is not opposed to Him. “This is he that was in the Church in the wilderness, and, that said unto the children of Israel.” (v. 38.) Do you mark that thence comes the root, and that “salvation is from the Jews?” (John 4:22.) “With the Angel,” it says, “which spake unto him.” (Romans 11:16.) Lo, again he affirms that it was He (Christ) that gave the Law, seeing Moses was with “Him” in the Church in the wilderness. And here he puts them in mind of a great marvel, of the things done in the Mount: “Who received living oracles to give unto us.” On all occasions Moses is wonderful, and (so) when need was to legislate. What means the expression, “Living oracles” (λόγια)? Those, whereof the end was shown by words (διὰ λόγων): in other words, he means the prophecies. Then follows the charge, in the first instance, against the patriarchs [after], the “signs and wonders,” after the receiving of the “lively oracles: To whom,” he says, “our fathers would not obey.” (v. 39.) But concerning those, Ezekiel says that they are not “living;” as when he says, “And I gave you statutes that are not good.” (Ezekiel 20:25.) It is with reference to those that he says, “Living. But thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back to Egypt” — the place where they groaned, where they cried, whence they called upon God. “And said unto Aaron, Make us gods which shall go before us.” (v. 40.) O the folly! “Make,” say they; “that they may go before us.” Whither? “Into Egypt.” See how hard they were to tear away from the customs of Egypt! What sayest thou? What, not wait for him that brought thee out, but flee the benefit, and deny the Benefactor? And mark how insulting they are: “For as for this Moses,” they say: — “which brought us out of the land of Egypt” nowhere the name of God: instead of that, they ascribed all to Moses. Where they ought to give thanks (to God), they bring Moses forward: where it was, to do as the Law bade them, they no longer make account of Moses. “We know not what is become of him.” And yet he told them that he was going up to receive the Law: and they had not patience to wait forty days. “Make us gods” — they did not say, “a God.” — And yet one may well wonder at this, that they do not even know. — “And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifices unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands” (v. 41): for which

they ought to have hid their faces. What wonder that ye know not Christ, seeing ye knew not Moses, and God Who was manifested by such wonders? But they not only knew Him not: they also insulted in another way, by their idol making. “Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven” (v. 42.) Hence these same “customs” date their origin, hence the sacrifices: they were themselves the first that made sacrifices to their idols! For that is why it is marked, “They made a calf in Horeb, and offered sacrifices to the idol:” seeing that, before this the name of sacrifice is nowhere mentioned, but only lively ordinances, and “lively oracles. And rejoiced” — that is the reason for the feasts. Exodus 32:5, 6.) “As it is written in the Book of the Prophets” — and observe, he does not cite the text without a purpose, but shows by it that there is no need of sacrifices; saying: “Did ye offer slain beasts and sacrifice to Me?” — He lays an emphasis on this word (to Me?). “Ye cannot say that it was from sacrificing to Me, that ye proceeded to sacrifice to them: — “by the space of forty years:” and this too, “in the wilderness,” where He had most signally shown Himself their Protector. “Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your God Remphan: images which ye made to worship them. The cause of sacrifices! “And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.” (v. 43.) Even the captivity, an impeachment of their wickedness! “But a Tabernacle,” say you, “there was (the Tabernacle) ‘of Witness.’” (v. 44.) (Yes,) this is why it was: that they should have God for Witness: this was all. “According to the fashion,” it says, “that was shown thee on the mount:” so that on the mount was the Original. And this Tabernacle, moreover, “in the wilderness,” was carried about, and not locally fixed. And he calls it, “Tabernacle of witness:” i.e. (for witness) of the miracles, of the statutes. This is the reason why both it and those (the fathers) had no Temple. “As He had appointed, that spake unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen.” Again, it was none other than He (Christ) that gave the fashion itself. “Until the days of David” (v. 45): and there was no temple! And yet the Gentiles also had been driven out: for that is why he mentions this: “Whom God drave out,” he says, “before the face of our fathers. Whom He drave out,” he says: and even then, no Temple! And so many wonders, and no mention of a Temple! So that, although first there is a Tabernacle, yet nowhere a Temple. “Until the days of David,” he says: even David, and no Temple! “And he sought to find favor before God” (v. 46): and built

not: — so far was the Temple from being a great matter! “But Solomon built Him an house.” (v. 47.) They thought Solomon was great: but that he was not better than his father, nay not even equal to him, is manifest. “Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool.” (v. 48, 49.) Nay, not even these are worthy of God, forasmuch as they are made, seeing they are creatures, the works of His hand. See how he leads them on by little and little (showing) that not even these are to be mentioned. And again the prophecy says openly, “What house will ye build Me?” etc. (v. 50.)

What is the reason that at this point he speaks in the tone of invective (**καταφορικῶς**)? Great was his boldness of speech, when at the point to die: for in fact I think he knew that this was the case. “Ye stiffnecked,” he says, “and uncircumcised in heart and ears.” This also is from the prophets: nothing is of himself. “Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.” (v. 51.) When it was not His will that sacrifices should be, ye sacrifice: when it is His will, then again ye do not sacrifice: when He would not give you commandments, ye drew them to you: when ye got them, ye neglected them. Again, when the Temple stood, ye worshipped idols: when it is His will to be worshipped without a Temple, ye do the opposite. Observe, he says not, “Ye resist God,” but, “the Spirit:” so far was he from knowing any difference between Them. And, what is greater: “As your fathers did,” he says, “so do ye.” Thus also did Christ (reproach them), forasmuch as they were always boasting much of their fathers. “Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One:” he still says, “the Just One,” wishing to check them: “of Whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers” — two charges he lays against them — “who have received the Law by the disposition of Angels, and have not kept it.” (v. 52.) How, “By the disposition of Angels?” Some say (The Law), disposed by Angels; or, put into his hand by the Angel Who appeared to him in the bush; for was He man? No wonder that He who wrought those works, should also have wrought these. “Ye slew them who preached of Him.” much more Himself. He shows them disobedient both to God, and to Angels, and the Prophets, and the Spirit, and to all: as also Scripture saith elsewhere: “Lord, they

have slain Thy Prophets, and thrown down Thine altars.” (1 Kings 19:10.) They, then, stand up for the Law, and say, “He blasphemeth against Moses:” he shows, therefore, that it is the), who blaspheme, and that (their blasphemy is not only against Moses, but) against God; shows that “they” from the very beginning have been doing this: that “they” have themselves destroyed their “customs,” that there is no need of these: that while accusing him, and saying that he opposed Moses, they themselves were opposing the Spirit: and not merely opposing, but with murder added to it: and that they had their enmity all along from the very beginning. Seest thou, that he shows them to be acting in opposition both to Moses and to all others, and not keeping the Law? And yet Moses had said, “A Prophet shall the Lord raise up unto you: and the rest also told of this (Christ) that He would come: and the prophet again said, “What house will ye build Me?” and again, “Did ye offer to Me slain beasts and sacrifices” those “forty years?” (Deuteronomy 18:18.)

Such is the boldness of speech of a man bearing the Cross. Let us then also imitate this: though it be not a time of war, yet it is always the time for boldness of speech. For, “I spake,” says one, “in Thy testimonies before kings, and was not ashamed.” (Psalm 119:46.) if we chance to be among heathens, let us thus stop their mouths. without wrath, without harshness. (Comp. Horn. in 1 Corinthians 4:6; 33:4, 5; Colossians 11:2). For if we do it with wrath, it no longer seems to be the boldness (of one who is confident of his cause,) but passion: but if with gentleness, this is boldness indeed. For in one and the same thing success and failure cannot possibly go together. The boldness is a success: the anger is a failure. Therefore, if we are to have boldness, we must be clean from wrath that none may impute our words to that. No matter how just your words may be, when you speak with anger, you ruin all: no matter how boldly you speak, how fairly reprove, or what not. See this man, how free from passion as he discourses to them! For he did not abuse them: he did but remind them of the words of the Prophets. For, to show you that it was not anger, at the very moment he was suffering evil at their hands, he prayed, saying, “Lay not to their charge this sin.” So far was he from speaking these words in anger; no, he spake in grief and sorrow for their sakes. As indeed this is why it speaks of his appearance, that “they saw his face as it had been the face of an angel,” on purpose that they might believe. Let us then be clean

from wrath. The Holy Spirit dwelleth not where wrath is: cursed is the wrathful. It cannot be that aught wholesome should approach, where wrath goes forth. For as in a storm at sea, great is the tumult, loud the clamor, and then would be no time for lessons of wisdom (φιλοσοφείν): So neither in wrath. If the soul is to be in a condition either to say, or to be disciplined to, aught of philosophy, it must first be in the haven. Seest thou not how, when we wish to converse on matters of serious import, we look out for places free from noise, where all is stillness, all calm, that we may not be put out and discomposed? But if noise from without discomposes, much more disturbance from within. Whether one pray, to no purpose does he pray “with wrath and disputings:” (1 Timothy 2:8) whether he speak, he will only make himself ridiculous: whether he hold his peace, so again it will be even then: whether he eat, he is hurt even then: whether he drink, or whether he drink not; whether he sit, or stand, or walk; whether he sleep: for even in their dreams such fancies haunt them. For what is there in such men that is not disagreeable? Eyes unsightly, mouth distorted, limbs agitated and swollen, tongue foul and sparing no man, mind distraught, gestures uncomely: much to disgust. Mark the eyes of demoniacs, and those of drunkards and madmen; in what do they differ from each other? Is not the whole madness? For what though it be but for the moment? The madman too is possessed for the moment: but what is worse than this? And they are not ashamed at that excuse; “I knew not (saith one) what I said.” And how came it that thou didst not know this, thou the rational man, thou that hast the gift of reason, on purpose that thou mayest not act the part of the creatures without reason, just like a wild horse, hurried away by rage and passion? In truth, the very excuse is criminal. For thou oughtest to have known what thou saidst. “It was the passion,” say you, “that spoke the words, not I.” How should it be that? For passion has no power, except it get it from you. You might as well say, “It was my hand that inflicted the wounds, not I.” What occasion, think you, most needs wrath? would you not say, war and battle? But even then, if anything is done with wrath, the whole is spoiled and undone. For of all men, those who fight had best not be enraged: of all men, those had best not be enraged, who want to hurt (τοὺς ὑβρίζοντα). And how is it possible to fight then? you will ask. With reason, with self-command (ἐπιεικεία): since fighting is, to stand in opposition. Seest thou not that even these (common) wars are regulated

by, definite law, and order, and times? For wrath is nothing but an irrational impulse: and an irrational creature cannot possibly perform aught rational. For instance, the man here spoke such words, and did it without passion. And Elias said, "How long will ye halt on both your knees?" (1 Kings 18:21) and spake it not in passion. And Phinees slew, and did it without passion. For passion suffers not a man to see, but, just as in a night-battle, it leads him, with eyes blindfolded and ears stopped up, where it will. Then let us rid ourselves of this demon, at its first beginning let us quell it, let us put the sign of the Cross on our breast, as it were a curb. Wrath is a shameless dog: but let it learn to hear the law. If there be in a sheep-fold a dog so savage as not to obey the command of the shepherd, nor to know his voice all is lost and ruined. He is kept along with the sheep: but if he makes a meal on the sheep, he is useless, and is put to death. If he has learnt to obey thee, feed thy dog: he is useful when it is against the wolves, against robbers, and against the captain of the robbers that he barks, not against the sheep, not against friends. If he does not obey he ruins all: if he learns not to mind thee, he destroys all. The mildness in thee let not wrath consume, but let it guard it, and feed it up. And it will guard it, that it may feed in much security, if it destroy wicked and evil thoughts, if it chase away the devil from every side. So is gentleness preserved, when evil works are nowhere admitted: so we become worthy of respect, when we learn not to be shameless. For nothing renders a man so shameless, as an evil conscience. Why are harlots without shame? Why are virgins shamefaced? Is it not from their sin that the former, from their chastity that the latter, are such? For nothing makes a person so shameless, as sin. "And yet on the contrary," say you, "it puts to shame." Yes; him who condemns himself but him that is past blushing, it renders even more reckless: for desperation makes daring. For "the wicked," saith the Scripture, "when he is come into the depths of evils, despiseth." (Proverbs 18:3.) But he that is shameless, will also be reckless, and he that is reckless, will be daring. See in what way gentleness is destroyed, when evil thoughts gnaw at it. This is why there is such a dog, barking mightily: we have also sling and stone (ye know what I mean): we have also spear and enclosure and cattle-fold: let us guard our thoughts unhurt. If the dog be gentle (σαίην) with the sheep, but savage against those without, and keep vigilant watch, this is the excellence of a dog: and, be he ever so famished, not to devour the sheep; be he ever so

full, not to spare the wolves. Such too is anger meant to be: however provoked, not to forsake gentleness; however at quiet, to be on the alert against evil thoughts: to acknowledge the friend, and not for any beating forsake him, and for all his caressing, to fly at the intruder. The devil uses caressing full oft: let the dog know at sight that he is an intruder. So also let us caress (*σαίνωμεν*) Virtue, though she put us to pain, and show our aversion to Vice, though she give us pleasure. Let us not be worse than the dogs, which, even when whipped and throttled, do not desert their master: but if the stranger also feed them, even so they do hurt. There are times when anger is useful; but this is when it barks against strangers. What means it, “Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause?” (Matthew 5:22.) It means, Stand not up in thine own quarrel, neither avenge thyself: if thou see another suffering deadly wrong, stretch out thy hand to help him. This is no longer passion, when thou art clear of all feeling for thyself alone. David had gotten Saul into his power, and was not moved by passion, did not thrust the spear into him, the enemy he had in his power; but took his revenge upon the Devil. (1 Samuel 26:7.) Moses, when he saw a stranger doing an injury, even slew him (Exodus 2:22): but when one of his own people, he did not so: them that were brethren he would have reconciled; the others not so. That “most meek” (Numbers 12:3) Moses, as Scripture witnesseth of him, see how he was roused! But not so, we: on the contrary, where we ought to show meekness, no wild beast so fierce as we: but where we ought to be roused, none so dull and sluggish. (Hom. 6: *de laud. Pauli, ad fin.*) On no occasion do we use our faculties to the purpose they were meant for: and therefore it is that our life is spent to no purpose. For even in the case of implements; if one use them, one instead of other, all is spoil: if one take his sword, and then, where he should use it and cut with it, uses only his hand, he does no good: again, where he should use his hand, by taking the sword in hand he spoils all. In like manner also the physician, if where he ought to cut, he cuts not, and where he ought not, he does cut, mars all. Wherefore, I beseech you, let us use the thing (*τῷ πράγματι*) at its proper time. The proper time for anger is never, where we move in our own quarrel: but if it is our duty to correct others, then is the time to use it, that we may by force deliver others. (Hom. *in Matthew 16: 7.*) So shall we both be like unto God, always keeping a spirit free from wrath, and shall attain unto the good things that are to come, through the grace and loving-

kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom, to the Father and the Holy Ghost together, be glory, dominion, and honor, now and evermore, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 18

ACTS 7:54

*“When they heard these things, they were cut to **“the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.”**”*

SEE, once more, the wrong-doers in trouble. Just as the Jews are perplexed, saying, “What are we to do with these men?” so these also are “cut to the heart.” (ch. 4:16.) And yet it was he that had good right to be incensed, who, having done no wrong, was treated like a criminal, and was spitefully calumniated. But the calumniators had the worst of it in the end. So true is that saying, which I am ever repeating, “Ill to do, is ill to fare.” And yet he (in his charges against them) resorted to no calumny, but proved (what he said). So sure are we, when we are shamefully born down in a matter wherein we have a clear conscience, to be none the worse for it. — “If they desired,” say you, “to kill him, how was it that they did not take occasion, out of what he said, that they might kill him?” They would fain have a fair-seeming plea to put upon their outrage. “Well then, was not the insulting them a fair plea?” It was not his doing, if they were insulted: it was the Prophet’s accusation of them. And besides, they did not wish it to look as if they killed him because of what he had said against them — just as they acted in the case of Christ; no, but for impiety: now this word of his was the expression of piety. Wherefore, as they attempted, besides killing him, to hurt his reputation also, “they were cut to the heart.” For they were afraid lest he should on the contrary become an object of even greater reverence. Therefore, just what they did in Christ’s case, the same they do here also. For as He said, “Ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of God” (Matthew 26:64), and they, calling it blasphemy, “ran upon Him;” just so was it here. There, they “rent their garments;” here, they “stopped their ears. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him.” (v. 55-58.) And yet, if he lied, they ought to have thought him

beside himself, and to have let him go. — But he wished to bring them over, “and said, Behold,” etc., for, since he had spoken of Christ’s death, and had said nothing of His resurrection, he would fain add this doctrine also. “Standing at the right hand of God.” And in this manner He appeared to him: that, were it but so, the Jews might receive Him: for since the (idea of His) sitting (at the right hand of God) was offensive to them, for the present he brings forward only what relates to His Resurrection. This is the reason also why his face was glorified. For God, being merciful, desired to make their machinations the means of recalling them unto Himself. And see, how many signs are wrought! “And cast him out of the city, and stoned him.” Here again, “without the city,” and even in death, Confession and Preaching. (Hebrews 13:21.) “And the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” (v. 59.) This is meant to show them that he is not perishing, and to teach them. “And he knelt down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” (v. 60.) To clear himself, and show that neither were his former words prompted by passion, he says, “Lord” “lay not this sin to their charge”: wishing also even in this way to win them over. For to show that he forgave their wrath and rage in murdering him, and that his own soul was free from all passion, was the way to make his saying to be favorably received.

“And Saul was consenting unto his death.” Hereupon arises a persecution, and it becomes a great one. “And at that time there was a great persecution against the Church which was at Jerusalem. And they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles.” (ch. 8:1.) Mark how once more God permits temptations to arise; mark, and well observe, how the events are ordered by Divine Providence. They were admired because of the signs: being scourged, they were none the worse for it: (some) were ordained in the matter of the widows : the word increased: once more, God permits a great hindrance to arise. And a persecution of no ordinary kind [“and they were all scattered,” etc.]; for they feared their enemies, now become more daring: and at the same time it is shown that they were but men, these that were afraid, that fled. For, that thou mayest not say after these things that a by grace alone they effected (what they did), they were also persecuted, and themselves

became more timorous, while their adversaries were more daring. “And were all scattered abroad,” it says, “except the Apostles.” But this was divinely ordered, so that they should no longer all sit there in Jerusalem. “And devout men,” it says, “carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.” (v. 2.) If they were “devout,” why did they “make great lamentation over him?” They were not yet perfect. The man was gracious and amiable: this also shows that they were men — not their fear alone, but their grief and lamentation. Who would not have wept to see that mild, that lamb-like person stoned, and lying dead? Fit eulogy to be spoken over his grave has the Evangelist recorded, in this one speech, “Lay not this sin to their charge.” — “And made,” he says, “great lamentation over him.” — But let us look over again what has been said.

He mentions the cause of his (angelic) appearance (Recapitulation, 7:54; 8:2.); “But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.” And when he said, “I see the heavens opened, they stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord.” (v. 56, 57.) And yet in what respect are these things deserving of accusation? “Upon him,” the man who has wrought such miracles, the man who has prevailed over all in speech, the man who can hold such discourse! As if they had got the very thing they wanted, they straightway give full scope to their rage. “And the witnesses,” he says, “laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man, whose name was Saul. (v. 58.) Observe how particularly he relates what concerns Paul, to show thee that the Power which wrought in him was of God. But after all these things, not only did he not believe, but also aimed at Him with a thousand hands: for this is why it says, “And Saul was consenting unto his death.” — And this blessed man does not simply pray, but does it with earnestness: “having kneeled down.” Mark his divine death! So long only the Lord permitted the soul to remain in him. “And having said this, he fell asleep.” (v. 60.) — “And they were all scattered abroad throughout the region of Judea and Samaria. (ch. 8:1.) And now without scruple they had intercourse with Samaria, whereas it had been said to them, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles” “and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not.” (Matthew 10:5.) “Except the Apostles,” it says: they, in this way also, wishing to win the Jews, — but

not to leave the city, — and to be the means of inspiring others with boldness.

“As for Saul, he made havoc of the Church, entering into every house, and halins men and women committed them to prison.” (v. 3.) Great was his frenzy: that he was alone, that he even entered into houses: for indeed he was ready to give his life for the Law. “Haling,” it says, “men and women:” mark both the confidence, and the violence, and the frenzy. All that fell into his hands, he put to all manner of ill-treatment: for in consequence of the recent murder, he was become more daring. “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city. But there was a certain man, called Simon, which before time in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria.” (v. 4-9.) Observe another trial, this affair of Simon. “Giving out,” it says, “that he was himself some great one. To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.” (v. 10-15.) And (yet) great signs had been done: how then had they not received the Spirit? They had received the Spirit, namely, of remission of sins: but the Spirit of miracles they had not received. “For as yet He was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.” (v. 16, 17.) For, to show that this was the case, and that it was the Spirit of miracles they had not received, observe how,

having seen the result, Simon came and asked for this. “And when Simon saw that through laying on of the Apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying. Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.” (v. 18, 19.) “The persecution,” say you, “gained strength.” True, but at that very time to men possessed before (by a hostile power) it brought deliverance. For it planted the miracles like a stronghold, in the heart of the enemy’s country. — Not even the death of Stephen quenched their rage, nay, increased it rather: it scattered wide the teachers, so that the greater became the discipleship. — “And there was joy.” And yet there had been “great lamentation:” true; but mark again the good — “Of a long time” was the deliverance. — And how came he to baptize Simon also? Just as Christ chose Judas. — And “beholding the signs” which he did, forasmuch as the others did not receive the (power of working) signs he durst not ask for it. — How was it then that they did not strike him dead, as they did Ananias and Sapphira? Because even in the old times, he that gathered sticks (on the sabbath-day) was put to death as a warning to others (Numbers 15:32) and in no other instance did any suffer the same fate. So too on the present occasion, “Peter said to him, Thy money perish, because thou hast imagined that the gift of God is to be purchased with money.” — (v. 20.) Why had not these received the Holy Ghost, when baptized? Either because Philip kept this honor for the Apostles; or, because he had not this gift (to impart); or, he was one of the Seven: which is rather to be said. Whence, I take it, this Philip was one of the Apostle. But observe; those went not forth: it was Providentially ordered that these should go forth and those be lacking, because of the Holy Ghost: for they had received power to work miracles, but not also to impart the Spirit to others: this was the prerogative of the Apostles. And observe (how they sent) the chief ones: not any others, but Peter [and John]. “And when Simon,” it says, “saw that through laying on of the Apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given.” He would “Then laid they their hands on them,” etc. Just as Paul also did, when they spake with tongues. (ch. 19:6) Observe the execrable conduct of Simon. “He offered money,” with what object? And yet he did not see Peter doing this for money. And it was not of ignorance that he acted thus; it was because he would tempt them, because he wished to get matter of accusation against them. And therefore also Peter says, “Thou hast no part nor lot in this matter, for thine heart is not right

before God “because thou hast thought,” etc. (v. 21.) Once more he brings to light what was in the thoughts, because Simon thought to escape detection. “Repent therefore of this thy wickedness and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.” (v. 22-24.) Even this he did only formally, as words of course, when he ought to have wept and mourned as a penitent. “If perchance it may be forgiven thee.” Not as though it would not have been pardoned, had he wept, but this is the manner of the Prophet also, to denounce absolutely, (ἄπαγορεύειν) and not to say, “Howbeit, if thou do this, thy sin shall be forgiven,” but that in any wise the punishment shall take effect.

(a) “Therefore they that were scattered abroad, went everywhere, preaching the word.” But I would have thee admire how even in a season of calamity they neglected not the preaching. “Hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.” (Recapitulation, 5:4-6.) Just as in the case of Moses by contrast (with the magicians) the miracles were evident miracles, so here also. There was magic, and so these signs were manifest. (b) “For unclean spirits came out of many that were possessed with them (v. 7); for this was a manifest miracle: — not as the magicians did: for the other (Simon), it is likely, bound (men with spells); — “and many,” it says, “that were palsied and lame were healed.” There was no deceit here: for it needed but that they should walk and work. “And to him they all gave heed, saying, This (man) is the Power of God.” (v. 10.) And that was fulfilled which was spoken by Christ, “There shall come false Christs and false Prophets in My name.” — (Matthew 24:24.) “And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.” (v. 11.) (a) And yet there ought to have been not one demoniac there, seeing that of a long time he had been bewitching them with sorceries: but if there were many demoniacs, many palsied, these pretenses were not truth. But Philip here by his word also won them over, discoursing concerning the kingdom of Christ. (v. 12.) “And Simon,” it says, “being baptized, continued with Philip (v. 13): not for faith’s sake, but in order that he might become such (as he). (b) But why did they not correct him instantly? They were content with his condemning himself. For this too belonged to their work of teaching (τῆς διδασκαλίας) But when he had

not power to resist, he plays the hypocrite, just as did the magicians, who said, "This is the finger of God." And indeed that he might not be driven away again, therefore he "continued with Philip," and did not part from him. "And when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem," etc. (v. 13, 14.) See how many things are brought about by God's Providence through the death of Stephen! (a) "But they," it says, "having come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost: for as yet He was fallen upon none of them. Then laid they their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost." (v. 15-17.) Seest thou that it was not to be done in any ordinary manner, but it needed great power to give the Holy Ghost? For it is not all one, to obtain remission of sins, and to receive such a power. (b) By degrees it is, that those receive the gift. It was a twofold sign: both the giving to those, and the not giving to this man. Whereas then this man ought, on the contrary, to have asked to receive the Holy Ghost, he, because he cared not for this, asks power to give It to others. And yet those received not this power to give: but this man wished to be more illustrious than Philip, he being among the disciples! (a) "He offered them money." (v. 18, 19.) What? had he seen the others doing this? had he seen Philip? Did he imagine they did not know with what mind he came to them? (b) "Thy money with thee to perdition" (v. 20): since thou hast not used it as it ought to be used. These are not words of imprecation, but of chastisement. "To thee," he says, be it (to thee): being such. As if one should say, Let it perish along with thy purpose. Hast thou so mean conceptions of the gift of God, that thou hast imagined it to be altogether a thing of man? It is not this. (a) Wherefore also Peter well calls the affair a gift: "Thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money." Dost thou observe how on all occasions they are clean from money? "For thine heart is not right in the sight of God." (v. 21.) Dost thou see how he does all of malice? To be simple, however, was the thing needed. (b) For had it been done with simplicity, he would have even welcomed his willing mind. Seest thou that to have mean conceptions of great things is to sin doubly? Accordingly, two things he bids him: "Repent and pray, if haply the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." (v. 22.) Seest thou it was a wicked thought he had entertained? Therefore he says, "If haply it may be forgiven thee:" because he knew him to be incorrigible. (a) "For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." (v. 23.) Words of exceeding wrath!

But otherwise he did not punish him: that faith may not thereafter be of compulsion; that the matter may not seem to be carried ruthlessly; that he may introduce the subject of repentance: or also, because it suffices for correction to have convicted him, to have told him what was in his heart, to have brought him to confess himself overcome (ὅτι ἐάλω). For that he says, “Pray ye for me,” is a confession that he has done wrong. Observe him, what a miscreant he is; when he was convicted, then he believed: when again he was convicted, then he became humble. “Seeing his miracles,” [“he was amazed,” and came over.] He thought to be able to escape detection: he thought the thing was an art: but when he had not power to defeat (ἐλεῖν) the Apostles, (b) Again, he fears the multitude, and is afraid to deny it; and yet he might have said, “I did not know: I did it in simplicity: but he was struck with dismay first by the former circumstance, that he was overcome (ὅτι ἐάλω), by the miracles and secondly by this, that his thoughts are made manifest. Therefore he now takes himself a long way off, to Rome, thinking the Apostle would not soon come there.

“And they, when they had terrified, and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem. (v. 25.) “Testified,” probably because of him (Simon), that they may not be deceived; that thenceforth they may be safe. “Hating preached,” it says, “the word of the Lord, the), returned to Jerusalem.” Why do they go thither again where was the tyranny of the bad, where were those most bent upon killing them? Just as generals do in wars, they occupy that part of the scene of war which is most distressed. “And preached the Gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.” Observe them again, how they do not (προηγουμένως) of set purpose come to Samaria, but driven by stress of persecution, just as it was in the case of Christ; and how when the Apostles go thither, it is to men now believers, no longer Samaritans. “But when the Apostles,” it says, “which were at Jerusalem heard this, they sent unto them Peter and John. Sent” them, again, to rid them of magic. And besides, (the Lord) had given them a pattern at the time when the Samaritans believed. “And in many villages,” it says, “of the Samaritans, they preached the Gospel.” (John 4:39.) Observe how actively employed even their journeys were, how they do nothing without a purpose.

Such travels should we also make. And why do I speak of travels? Many possess villages and lands, and give themselves no concern, nor make any account of this. That baths may be provided, their revenues increased, courts and buildings erected, for this they take plenty of pains: but for the husbandry of souls, not so. When you see thorns — answer me — you cut them up, you burn, you utterly destroy them, to rid your land of the hurt thence arising. And seest thou the laborers themselves overrun with thorns, and dost not cut them up, and art thou not afraid of the Owner Who shall call thee to account? For ought not each individual believer to build a Church, to get a Teacher, to cooperate (συνάι• ρεσθαι) (with him), to make this above all his object, that all may be Christians? Say, how is it likely thy laborer should be a Christian, when he sees thee so regardless of his salvation? Thou canst not work miracles, and so convert (πείσαι) him. By the means which are in thy power, convert him; by kindness, by good offices, by gentleness, by courting (κολακεία) indeed, and baths, the most do provide; but him, by all other means. Market — places, indeed, and baths, the most do provide; but no Churches: nay, sooner everything than this! Wherefore I beseech and implore, as a favor I entreat, yea as a law I lay it down, that there be no estate to be seen destitute of a Church. Tell not me, There is one hard by; there is one in the neighboring properties; the expense is great, the income not great. If thou have anything to expend upon the poor, expend it there: better there than here. Maintain a Teacher, maintain a Deacon, and a sacerdotal body complete. As by a bride, whether a wife whom thou takest, or a daughter whom thou givest in marriage, so act by the Church: give her a dowry. So shall thy estate be filled with blessing. For what shall not be there of all that is good? Is it a small thing, tell me, that thy wine-press should be blessed; a small thing, tell me, that of thy fruits God is the first to taste, and that the first fruits are there (with Him)? And then even for the peace of the laboring people this is profitable. Then as one whom they must respect, there will be the presbyter among them and this will contribute to the security of the estate. There will be constant prayers there through thee (*infra*, note, p. 119) hymns and Communion through thee; the Oblation on each Lord's Day. For only consider what a praise it will be, that, whereas others have built splendid tombs, to have it said hereafter: "Such a one butt this," thou hast reared Churches! Bethink thee that even

until the coming of Christ thou shalt have thy reward, who hast reared up the altars of God.

Suppose an Emperor had ordered thee to build an house that he might lodge there, wouldest thou not have done everything to please him? And here now it is palace of Christ, the Church, the Church which thou buildest. Look not at the cost, but calculate the profit. Thy people yonder cultivate thy field: cultivate thou their souls: they bring to thee thy fruits, raise thou them to heaven. He that makes the beginning is the cause of all the rest: and thou wilt be the cause that the people are brought under Christian teaching (*κατηχουμένων*) both there, and in the neighboring estates. Your baths do but make the peasants less hardy, your taverns give them a taste for luxury, and yet you provide these for credit's sake. Your markets and fairs, (*πανηγύρεις*) on the other hand, promote covetousness. But think now what a thing it would be to see a presbyter, the moving picture of Abraham, gray-headed, girded up, digging and working with his own hands? What more pleasant than such a field! Their virtue thrives. No intemperance there, nay, it is driven away: no drunkenness and wantonness, nay, it is cast out: no vanity, nay, it is extinguished. All benevolent tempers shine out the brighter through the simplicity of manners. How pleasant to go forth and enter into the House of God, and to know that one built it himself: to fling himself on his back in his litter, and after the bodily benefit of his pleasant airing, be present both at the evening and the morning hymns, have the priest as a guest at his table, in associating with him enjoy his benediction, see others also coming thither! This is a wall for his field, this in security. This is the field of which it is said," The smell of a full field which the Lord hath blessed." (Genesis 27:27.) If, even without this, the country is pleasant, because it is so quiet, so free from distraction of business, what will it not be when this is added to it? The country with a Church is like the Paradise of God. No clamor there, no turmoil, no enemies at variance, no heresies: there you shall see all friends, holding the same doctrines in common. The very quiet shall lead thee to higher views, and receiving thee thus prepared by philosophy, the presbyter shall give thee an excellent cure. For here, whatever we may speak, the noise of the market drives it all out: but there, what thou shalt hear, thou wilt keep fixed in thy mind. Thou wilt be quite another man in the country through him: and moreover to the people there

he will be director, he will watch over them both by his presence and by his influence in forming their manners. And what, I ask, would be the cost? Make for a beginning a small house(ἐν τάξει ναοῦ) to serve as temple. Thy successor will build a porch, his successor will make other additions, and the whole shall be put to thy account. Thou givest little, and receivest the reward for the whole. At any rate, make a beginning: lay a foundation. Exhort one another, vie one with another in this matter. But now, where there is straw and grain and such like to be stored, you make no difficulty of building: but for a place where the fruits of souls may be gathered in, we below not a thought; and the people are forced to go miles and miles, and to make long journeys, that they may get to Church! Think, how good it is, when with all quietness the priest presents himself in the Church, that he may draw near unto God, and say prayers for the village, day by day, and for its owner! Say, is it a small matter, that even in the Holy Oblations evermore thy name is included in the prayers, and that for the village day by day prayers are made unto God? — How greatly this profits thee for all else! It chanceth that certain (great) persons dwell in the neighborhood, and have overseers: now to thee, being poor, one of them will not deign even to pay a visit: but the presbyter, it is likely, he will invite, and make him sit at his table. How much good results from this! The village will in the first place be free from all evil suspicion. None will charge it with murder, with theft: none will suspect anything of the kind. — They have also another comfort, if sickness befall, if death. — Then again the friendships formed there by people as they go side by side (to and from the Church) are not struck up at random and promiscuously: and the meetings there are far more pleasant than those which take place in marts and fairs. The people themselves also will be more respectable, because of their presbyter. How is it you hear that Jerusalem was had in honor in the old times above all other cities? Why was this? Because of the then prevailing religion. Therefore it is that where God is honored, there is nothing evil: as, on the contrary, where He is not honored, there is nothing good. It will be great security both with God and with men. Only, I beseech you, that ye be not remiss: only may you put your hand to this work. For if he who brings out “the precious from the the,” shall be “as the mouth of God” (Jeremiah 15:19); he who benefits and recovers so many souls, both that now are and that shall be even until the coming of Christ, what favor shall not that person reap from God! Raise thou a

garrison against the devil: for that is what the Church is. Thence as from headquarters let the hands go forth to work: first let the people hold them up for prayers, and then go their way to work. So shall there be vigor of body; so shall the tillage be abundant; so shall all evil be kept aloof. It is not possible to represent in words the pleasure thence arising, until it be realized. Look not to this, that it brings in no revenue: if thou do it at all in this spirit, then do it not at all; if thou account not the revenue thou gettest thence greater than from the whole estate beside; if thou be not thus affected, then let it alone; if thou do not account this work to stand thee more in stead than any work beside. What can be greater than this revenue, the gathering in of souls into the threshing-floor which is in heaven! Alas, that ye know not how much it is, to gain souls! Hear what Christ says to Peter, "Feed My sheep." (John 21:15-17.) If, seeing the emperors sheep, or herd of horses, by reason of having no fold or stable, exposed to depredation, thou wert to take them in hand, and build a fold or stables, or also provide a shepherd or herdsman to take charge of them, what would not the emperor do for thee in return? Now, thou gatherest the flock of Christ, and puttest a shepherd over them, and thinkest thou it is no great gain thou art earning? But, if for offending even one, a man shall incur so great a punishment, how can he that saves so many, ever be punished? What sin will he have thenceforth? for, though he have it, does not this blot it out? From the punishment threatened to him that offends, learn the reward of him that saves. Were not the salvation of even one soul a matter of great importance, to offend would not move God to so great angel

Knowing these things, let us apply ourselves forthwith to this spiritual work. And let each invite me, and we will together help to the best of our ability. If there be three joint-owners, let them do it by each beating his part: if but one, he will induce the others also that are near. Only be earnest to effect this, I beseech you, that in every way being well-pleasing unto God, we may attain unto the eternal blessings, by the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory, dominion, and honor, now and ever world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 19

ACTS 8:26, 27

“And the Angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, arise and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went.”

IT seems to me, this (Philip) was one of the seven; for from Jerusalem he would not have gone southwards, but to the north; but from Samaria it was “towards the south. The same is desert:” so that there is no fear of an attack from the Jews. And he did not ask, Wherefore? but “arose and went. And, behold,” it says, “a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.” (v. 27, 28.) High encomiums for the man, that he, residing in Ethiopia and beset with so much business, and when there was no festival going on, and living in that superstitious city, came “to Jerusalem for to worship.” Great also is his studiousness, that even “sitting in his chariot he read. And,” it says, “the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him reading the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me?” (v. 29-31.) Observe again his piety; that though he did not understand, he read, and then after reading, examines. “And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the Scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened He not His mouth: in His humiliation His judgment was taken away: and who shall declare His generation? for His life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.” (v. 32-35.) Observe how it is Providentially ordered. First he reads and does not understand; then he reads the very text in which was the Passion and the Resurrection and the Gift. “And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth

hinder me to be baptized?” (v. 36.) Mark the eager desire, mark the exact knowledge. “And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.” (v. 38, 39.) But why did the Spirit of the Lord bear him away? (Hereby) the occurrence was shown to be more wonderful. Even then, the eunuch did not know him. Consequently this was, done, that Philip might afterwards be a subject of wonder to him. “For,” it says, “he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.” (v. 40.) This (Philip, therefore) was one of the seven; for there in fact he is afterwards found at Caesarea. It was well and expedient therefore that the Spirit caught Philip away; else the eunuch would have desired to go with him, and Philip would have grieved him by declining to comply with his request, the time being not yet come. (a) But at the same time here was an encouraging assurance for them that they shall also prevail over the heathen: for indeed the high character (τὸ ἀξιόπιστον) of the (first) believers was enough to move them. If however the eunuch had stayed there, what fault could have been found? [But he knew him not]: for this is why it says, “he went on his way rejoicing:” so that had he known him, he would not have been (so) delighted.

“And the Angel of the Lord,” etc. (Recapitulation, 5:26.) (b) See Angels assisting the preaching, and not themselves preaching, but calling these (to the work), But the wonderful nature of the occurrence is shown also by this: that what of old was rare, and hardly done, here takes place with ease, and see with what frequency! (c) “An eunuch,” it says, “a man of great authority, under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians.” (v. 27.) For there women bore rule of old, and this was the law among them. Philip did not yet know for whose sake he had come into the desert: (d) but what was there to hinder his learning all (these particulars) accurately, while in the chariot? “Was reading the prophet Esaias.” (v. 28.) For the road was desert, and there was no display in the matter. Observe also at what time: in the most violent heat (of the day). (e) “And the Spirit said unto him.” (v. 29.) Not now the Angel but the Spirit urges him. Why is this? “Then,” the vision took place, in grosser form, through the Angel, for this is for

them that are more of the body, but the Spirit is for the more spiritual. And how did He speak to him? Of course, suggested it to him. Why does not the Angel appear to the other, and bring him to Philip? Because it is likely he would not have been persuaded, but rather terrified. Observe the wisdom of Philip: he did not accuse him, not say, "I know these things exactly:" did not pay court to him, and say, "Blessed art thou that readest." But mark his speech, how far it is from harshness alike and from adulation; the speech rather of a kind and friendly man. "Understandest thou what thou readest?" (v. 30.) For it was needful that he should himself ask himself have a longing desire. He plainly intimates, that he knows that the other knew nothing: and says, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" at the same time he shows him that great was the treasure that lay therein. It tells well also, that the eunuch looked not to the outward appearance (*σχήμα*) (of the man), said not, "Who art thou?" did not chide, not give himself airs, not say that he did know. On the contrary, he confesses his ignorance: wherefore also he learns. He shows his hurt to the physician: sees at a glance, that he both knows the matter, and is willing to teach. Look how free he is from haughtiness; the outward appearance announced nothing splendid. So desirous was he of learning, and gave heed to his words; and that saying, "He that seeketh, findeth," (Matthew 7:8.) was fulfilled in him. "And," it says, "he besought Philip, that he would come up and sit with him." (v. 31.) Do you mark the eagerness, the longing desire? But should any say he ought to have waited for Philip (to speak), (the answer is), he does not know what is the matter: he could not in the least tell what the other was going to say to him, but supposed merely that he was about to receive some (lesson of) prophecy. And moreover, this was more respectful, that he did not draw him into his chariot, but besought him. "And Philip," we have read, "ran to him, and heard him reading;" even the fact of his running, showed that he wished to say (something). "And the place," it says, "of the Scripture which he read was this: As a sheep He was led to the slaughter." (v. 32.) And this circumstance, also, is a token of his elevated mind, (*φιλοσοφίας*) that he had in hand this prophet, who is more sublime than all others. Philip does not relate matters to him just as it might happen, but quietly: nay, does not say anything until he is questioned. Both in the former instance he prayed him, and so he does now, saying, "I pray thee of whom speaketh the prophet this?" That he should at all know either that the Prophets

speak in different ways about different persons, or that they speak of themselves in another person — the question betokens a very thoughtful mind. Let us be put to shame, both poor and rich, by this eunuch. Then, it says, “they came to a certain water, and he said, Lo, here is water.” (v. 36.) Again, of his own accord he requests, saying, “What doth hinder me to be baptized?” And see again his modesty: he does not say, Baptize me, neither does he hold his peace; but he utters somewhat midway betwixt strong desire and reverent fear, saying, “What doth hinder me?”. Do you observe that he has the doctrines (of faith) perfect? For indeed the Prophet had the whole, Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, Judgment to come. And if he shows exceeding earnestness of desire, do not marvel. Be ashamed, all ye as many as are unbaptized. “And,” it says, “he commanded the chariot to stand still.” (v. 38.) He spoke, and gave the order at the same moment, before hearing (Philip’s answer). “And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip;” (v. 39) in order that the occurrence might be shown to be of God; that he might not consider it to be merely man. “And he went,” it says, “on his way rejoicing.” (P. 121, note ,) This hints, that he would have been grieved had he known: for the greatness of his joy, having had the Spirit also vouchsafed to him, he did not even see things present — “But Philip was found at Azotus.” (v. 40.) Great was the gain to Philip also: — that which he heard concerning the Prophets, concerning Habakkuk, concerning Ezekiel, and the rest, he saw done in his own person. (Bel. & Dr. 5:36; Ezekiel 3:12.) Thence it appears that he went a long distance, seeing he “was found at Azotus.” (The Spirit) set him there, where he was thenceforth to preach: “And passing through, he preached in all the cities, until he came to Caesarea.”

“And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.” (ch. 9:1, 2.) He fitly mentions Paul’s zeal, and shows that in the very midst of his zeal he is drawn. “Yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter,” and not yet sated with the murder of Stephen, he was not yet glutted with the persecution of the Church, and the dispersion. Lo, this was fulfilled which was spoken by Christ, that “they which kill you shall

think they offer worship to God.” (John 16:2.) He then in this wise did it, not as the Jews: God forbid! For that he did it through zeal, is manifest from his going abroad even to strange cities: whereas they would not have cared even for those in Jerusalem; they were for one thing only, to enjoy honor. But why went he to Damascus? It was a great city, a royal city: he was afraid lest that should be preoccupied. And observe his strong desire and ardor (and), how strictly according to the Law he went to work: he goes not to the governor, but “to the priest. That if he found any of this way:” for so the believers were called, probably because of their taking the direct way that leads to heaven. And why did he not receive authority to have them punished there, but brings them to Jerusalem! He did these things here with more authority. And mark on what a peril he casts himself. He was not afraid lest he should take any harm, but (yet) he took others also with him, “that if,” it says, “he found any of this way, whether they were men or women” — Oh, the ruthlessness! — “he might bring them bound.” By this journey of his, he wished to show them all (how he would act): so far were they from being earnest in this matter. Observe him also casting (people) into prison before this. The others therefore did not prevail: but this man did prevail, by reason of his ardent mind. “And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?” (v. 3, 4.) Why not in Jerusalem? why not in Damascus? That there might be no opening for different persons to relate the occurrence in different ways, but that he alone should be the authentic narrator (ἀξιόπιστος), he that went for this purpose. In fact, he says this [both in his oration on the stairs], and when pleading before Agrippa. “Fell to the earth”: (ch. 22:6; 26:12) for excess of light is wont to shock, because the eyes have their measure: it is said also that excess of sound makes people deaf and stunned (as in a fit) (ἀποπληγας). But him it only blinded, and extinguished his passion by fear, so that he should hear what was spoken. “Saul, Saul,” saith He, “why persecutest thou me?” And He tells him nothing: does not say, Believe, nor anything whatever of the kind: but expostulates with him, all but saying, What wrong, great or small, hast thou suffered from Me, that thou doest these things? “And he said, Who art Thou Lord?” (v. 5) thus in the first place confessing himself His servant. “And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest:” think

not thy warring is with men. And they which were with him heard the voice of Paul, but saw no person to whom he answered — for (the Lord) suffered them to be hearers of what was less important. Had they heard the other Voice, they would not have believed; but perceiving Paul answering (some person), they marveled. “But arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.” (v. 6.) Observe, how He does not immediately add all, but first softens his mind. In the same way He called the disciples also a second time. “It shall be told thee,” etc.: He gives him good hopes, and (intimates) that he shall recover his sight also. “And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus” (v. 7, 8): — the spoils of the devil (τὰ σκεύη αὐτοῦ), “his goods” (Matthew 13:29), as from some city, yea, some metropolis which has been taken. And the wonder of it is, the enemies and foes themselves brought him in, in the sight of all! “And for three days he neither did eat nor drink, being blinded.” (v. 9.) What could equal this? To compensate the discouragement in the matter of Stephen, here is encouragement, in the bringing in of Paul: though that sadness had its consolation in the fact of Stephen’s making such an end, yet it also received this further consolation: moreover, the bringing in of the villages of the Samaritans afforded very great comfort. — But why did this take place not at the very first, but after these things? That it might be shown that Christ was indeed risen. This furious assailant of Christ, the man who would not believe in His death and resurrection, the persecutor of His disciples, how should this man have become a believer, had not the power of His resurrection been great indeed? Be it so, that the other Apostles favored (His pretensions): what say you to this man? Why then not immediately after His resurrection? That his hostility might be more clearly shown as open war. The man who is so frantic as even to shed blood and cast men into prisons, all at once believes! It was not enough that he had never been in Christ’s company: the believers must be warred upon by him with vehement hostility: he left to none the possibility of going beyond him in fury: none of them all could be so violent. But when he was blinded, then he saw the proofs of His sovereignty and loving kindness: then he answers, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” that none may say that he played the hypocrite, he that was even eager for

blood, and went to the priests, and flung himself upon such dangers, in persecuting and bringing to punishment even them that were in foreign parts — under these circumstances he now acknowledges His sovereignty. And why was he shone upon by that light not within the city, but before it? The many would not have believed, since even there (at Jerusalem when the people heard the voice which came from above, they said that “it thundered” (John 12:29, *supra*, note , p. 123); but this man was authority enough in reporting what was his own affair. And bound he was brought in, though not with bonds upon him: and they drew him, who had expected to draw the others. “And he eat not, neither drank:” he condemned himself for the past, he confessed, prayed, besought God. But should any say, This was the effect of compulsion: (we answer) The same thing happened to Elymas: then how came it that he was not changed? (ch. 13. *de Laud. Pauli Hom.* 4: 1, t. 2:p. 491.) What (evidence) could be more compulsory than the earthquake at the Resurrection, the report of the soldiers, the other miracles, the seeing Himself risen? But these things do not compel (belief) they are calculated to teach (it) (οὐκ ἀναγκαστικά ἀλλὰ διδακτικά). Why did not the Jews believe when they were told of these things? That he spoke truth was manifest: for he would not have been changed, had this not happened; so that all were bound to believe. He was not inferior to them that preached the Resurrection, and was more credible, by being all at once converted. He had no intercourse with any of the believers; it was at Damascus that he was converted, or rather before he came to Damascus that this happened to him. I ask the Jew: Say, by what was Paul converted? He saw so many signs, and was not converted: his teacher (Gamaliel, *supra*, p. 87, note) was converted, and he remained unconverted. Who convinced him — and not only convinced, but all at once inspired him with such ardent zeal? Wherefore was it, that he wished even to go into hell itself for Christ’s sake? The truth of the facts is manifest.

But, as I said, for the present let us take: shame to ourselves (when we think of) the eunuch, both in his baptism and his reading. Do ye mark how he was in a station of great authority, how he was in possession of wealth, and even on his journey allowed himself no rest? What must he have been at home, in his leisure hours, this man who rested not even on his travels? What must he have been at night? Ye that are in stations of dignity, hear:

imitate his freedom from pride, (*de Lazaro, Conc.* 3: 3, t. 1:p. 748. c) his piety. Though about to return home, he did not say to himself: “I am going back to my country, there let me receive baptism;” those cold words which most men use! No need had he of signs, no need of miracles: from the Prophet merely, he believed. (b) But why is it (so ordered) that he sees (Philip) not before he goes to Jerusalem, but after he has been there? It was not meet that he should see the Apostles under persecution. Because he was yet weak, the Prophet was not easy; (but yet the Prophet) catechized him. For even now, if any of you would apply himself to the study of the Prophets, he would need no miracles. And, if you please, let us take in hand the prophecy itself. “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened He not His mouth: in His humiliation His judgment was taken away: and who shall declare His generation? for His life is taken from the earth. (v. 22, 23.) It is likely he had heard that He was crucified, [and now he learns], that “His life is taken away from the earth,” and the rest that “He did no sin, nor deceit in His mouth:” that He prevailed to save others also: [and] who He is, Whose generation is unutterable. It is likely he had seen the river rocks there (on the spot), and (had heard) how the veil was rent, and how there was darkness, and so forth: and all these things Philip mentioned, merely taking his text from the Prophet. It is a great thing, this reading of the Scriptures! That was fulfilled which was spoken by Moses, “Sitting, lying down, rising up, and walking, remember the Lord thy God.” (Deuteronomy 6:7.) For the roads, especially when they are lonely, give us opportunity for reflection, there being none to disturb us. Both this man is on the road and Paul on the road: howbeit the latter no than draws, but Christ alone. This was too great a work for the Apostles: and, greater still, in that, the Apostles being at Jerusalem, and no person of authority at Damascus, he nevertheless returned thence converted: yet those at Damascus knew that he did not come from Jerusalem converted, for he brought letters, that he might put the believers in bonds. Like a consummate Physician, when the fever was at its height, Christ brought help to him: for it was needful that he should be quelled in the midst of his frenzy. For then most of all would he be brought down, and condemn himself as one guilty of dreadful audacity. (a) For these things Paul deplores himself, saying, “Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all His long suffering. (1 Timothy 1:13-

16.) Verily one has reason to admire this eunuch. He did not see Christ, he saw no miracle: he beheld Jerusalem standing yet entire (**συνεστῶτα**): he believed Philipians How came he to behave thus? His soul was earnest (**μεμεριμνημένη**). Yet the thief (on the cross) had seen miracles: the wise men had seen a star; but this man, nothing of the kind. So great a thing is the careful reading of the Scriptures! What of Paul then! did he not study the law? But he, it seems to me, was specially reserved, for the purpose which I have already mentioned by anticipation, because Christ would fain draw to Himself the Jews by inducements from every quarter. For had they been in their right mind, nothing was so likely to do them good as this; for this, more than miracles and all else, was calculated to attract them: as, on the other hand, nothing is so apt to prove a stumbling block to men of duller minds. See then how, after the Apostle, we have God also doing miracles. They accused the Apostles after these [miracles of theirs]; they cast them into prison: see thereupon God doing the miracles. For instance, the bringing them out of prison, was His miracle: the bringing Philip, His miracle: the bringing Paul over, was His—Observe in what way Paul is honored, in what way the eunuch. There, Christ appears, probably because of his hardness, and because Ananias would not (else) have been persuaded. Conversant with these wonders, let us show ourselves worthy. But many in these times, even when they come to church, do not know what is read; whereas the eunuch, even in public (**ἐπ' ἀγορᾶς**) and riding in his chariot, applied himself to the reading of the Scriptures. Not so you: none takes the Bible in hand: nay, everything rather than the Bible.

Say, what are the Scriptures for? For as much as in you lies, it is all undone. What is the Church for? Tie up the Bibles: perhaps the judgment would not be such, not such the punishment: if one were to bury them in dung, that he might not hear them, he would not so insult them as you do now. For say, what is the insult there? That the man has buried them. And what here? That we do not hear them. Say, when is a person most insulted — when he is silent, and one makes no answer, or, when he does speak (and is unheeded)? So that the, insult is greater in the present case, when He does speak and thou wilt not hear: greater the contempt. “Speak not to us” (Isaiah 30:10), we read, they said of old to the Prophets: but ye do worse, saying, Speak: we will not do. For there they turned them away that they should not even speak, as feeling that from the voice itself they

got some sort of awe and obligation; whereas you, in the excess of your contempt, do not even this. Believe me, if you stopped our mouths by putting your hands over them, the insult would not be so great as it is now. For say, whether shows greater contempt, he that hears, even when hindering by this action, or, he that will not even hear? Say — if we shall look at it as a case of an insult offered — suppose one person to check the party insulting him, and to stop his mouth, as being hurt by the insults, and another person to show no concern, but pretend not even to hear them: whether will show most contempt? Would you not say the latter? For the former shows that he feels himself hit: the latter all but stops the mouth of God. Did ye shudder at what was said? Why, the mouth by which God speaks, is the mouth of God. Just as our mouth is the mouth of our soul, though the soul has no mouth, so the mouth of the Prophets is the mouth of God. Hear, and shudder. There, common (to the whole congregation) stands the deacon crying aloud, and saying, “Let us attend to the reading.” It is the common voice of the whole Church, the voice which he utters, and yet none does attend. After him begins the Reader, “The Prophecy of Esaias,” and still none attends, although Prophecy has nothing of man in it. Then after this, he says, “Thus saith the Lord, and still none attends. Then after this punishments and vengeance, and still even then none attends. But what is the common excuse? “It is always the same things over again.” This it is most of all, that ruins you. Suppose you knew the things, even so you certainly ought not to turn away: since in the theatres also, is it not always the same things acted over again, and still you take no disgust? How dare you talk about “the same things,” you who know not so much as the names of the Prophets? Are you not ashamed to say, that this is why you do not listen, because it is “the same things over again,” while you do not know the names of those who are read, and this, though always hearing the same things? You have yourself confessed that the same things are said. Were I to say this as a reason for finding fault with you, you would need to have recourse to quite a different excuse, instead of this which is the very thing you find fault with. — Do not you exhort your son? Now if he should say, “Always the same things!” would not you count it an insult? It would be time enough to talk of “the same things,” when we both knew the things, and exhibited them in our practice. Or rather, even then, the reading of them would not be superfluous. What equal to Timothy? tell me that: and yet to him says Paul, “Give attention

to reading, to exhortation. (Timothy 4:13.) For it is not possible, I say not possible, ever to exhaust the mind of the Scriptures. It is a well which has no bottom. "I said," saith the Preacher, "I am become wise: and then it departed from me." — (Ecclesiastes 7:24.) Shall I show you that the things are not "the same?" How many persons, do you suppose, have spoken upon the Gospels? And yet all have spoken in a way which was new and fresh. For the more one dwells on them, the more insight does he get, the more does he behold the pure light. Look, what a number of things I am going to speak of: — say, what is narrative? what is prophecy? what is parable? what is type? what is allegory? what is symbol? what are Gospels? Answer me only to this one point, which is plain: why are they called Gospels, "good tidings?" And yet ye have often heard that good news ought to have nothing sad in it: yet this "good news" has abundance of sadness in it. "Their fire," it saith, "shall never be quenched: their worm shall not die:" (Mark 9:44.) "Shall appoint his portion," it saith, "with the hypocrites," with them that are "cut asunder: then shall He say, I know you not: Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." (Matthew 24:51; 7:23.) Surely, we do not deceive ourselves, when we imagine that we tell you in your own mother-tongue (*Ελληνιστί*) these good tidings? *You* look downcast; you are stunned; *you* are struck all of a heap, unable to hold up your heads. "Good news" should have nothing in it of a duty to be done, but rather should counsel what is good: whereas these "Gospels" have endless duties to be done. And again, to mention other things, as for instance, Except a man hate father and mother, he is not worthy of Me" (Luke 14:26): and "I am not come to bring peace upon earth, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34; Luke 12:51): and "In the world ye shall have tribulation — (John 16:33.) excellent a good tidings these, are they not! For good news is such as this — "You shall have this and that good thing:" as in common life men say one to another, "What shall I have for my good news? Your father is coming, or, your mother:" he does not say, "You must do this or that." — Again, tell me, how do the Gospels differ from the Prophets? Why are not the Prophecies also called Gospels, good tidings? For they tell the same things: for instance, "The lame shall leap as an hart." (Isaiah 35:6.) "The Lord shall give the word to them that preach the Gospel" (Psalm 68:11): and, "A new heaven and a new earth." (Isaiah 65:17.) Why are not those also called Gospels? But if, while you do not so much as know what "Gospels" mean, you so despise the reading of the

Scriptures, what shall I say to you? — Let me speak of something else. Why four Gospels? why not, ten? why not twenty? If “many have taken in hand to set forth a narrative” (Luke 1:1), why not one person? Why they that were disciples (i.e. Apostles)? why they that were not disciples? But why any Scriptures at all? And yet, on the contrary, the Old Testament says, “I will give you a New Testament.” (Jeremiah 31:31.) Where are they that say, “Always the same things?” If ye knew these, that, though a man should live thousands of years, they are not “the same things,” ye would not say this. Believe me, I will not tell you the answers to any of these questions; not in private, not in public: only, if any find them out, I will nod assent. For this is the way we have made you good-for-nothing, by always telling you the things ready to your hands, and not refusing when we ought. Look, you have questions enough: consider them, tell me the reasons. Why Gospels? Why not Prophecies? Why duties, to be done, in the Gospels? If one is at a loss, let another seek the answer, and contribute each to the others from what he has: but now we will hold our peace. For if what has been spoken has done you no good, much less would it, should we add more. We only pour water into a vessel full of holes. And the punishment too is all the greater for you. Therefore, we will hold our peace. Which that we may not have to do, it rests with yourselves. For if we shall see your diligence, perhaps we will again speak, that both ye may be more approved, and we may rejoice over you, in all things giving glory to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: to Him be glory and dominion now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 20

ACTS 9:10, 12

“And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.”

WHAT may be the reason that He neither drew any one of high authority and importance, nor caused such to be forthcoming for the purpose of instructing Paul? It was, because it was not meet that he should be induced by men, but only by Christ Himself as in fact this man taught him nothing, but merely baptized him; for, as soon as baptized (φωτισθείς), he was to draw upon himself the grace of the Spirit, by his zeal and exceeding earnestness. And that Ananias was no very distinguished person, is plain. For, “the Lord,” it says, “spake unto him in a vision, and Ananias answered and said, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to Thy saints at Jerusalem.” (v. 13.) For if he spoke in objection to Him, much more would he have done so, had He sent an Angel. And this is why, in the former instance, neither is Philip told what the matter is; but he sees the Angel, and then the Spirit bids him go near to the chariot. But observe here how the Lord. relieves him of his fear: “He is blind,” saith He, “and prayeth, and art thou afraid?” In the same way Moses also is afraid: so that the words betokened that he was afraid, and shrunk from the task not that he did not believe. He said,” have heard from many concerning this man.” What sayest thou? God speaketh, and thou hesitatest? They, did not yet well know the power of Christ. “And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on Thy name.” (v. 14.) How was that known? It is likely that they, being in fear, made minute enquiries. He does not say this, as thinking that Christ does not know the fact, but, “such being the case, how,” says he, “can these things be?” As in fact those (in the Gospel) say, “Who can be saved?” — (Mark 10:26.) This is done, in order that Paul may believe him that shall come to him: “he hath seen in a vision:” it hath showed him beforehand: “he

prayeth,” saith (the Lord): fear not. And observe, He speaks not to him of the success achieved: teaching us not to speak of our achievements. And, though He saw him afraid, for all this He said it not. “Thou shall not be disbelieved:” “he hath seen,” saith He, “in a vision a man (named) Ananias:” for this is why it was “in a vision,” namely, because he was blind. And not even the exceeding wonderfulness of the thing took possession of the disciple’s mind, so greatly was he afraid But observe: Paul being blind, in this way He restored to. sight. “But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him bow great things he must suffer for My name’s sake.” (v. 15, 16.) “Not only,” saith He, “shall he be a believer, but even a teacher, and great boldness shall he show: before Gentiles and kings’ — such shall be the spread of the doctrine! — that just as He astonished (him) by the former, so He may (startle him even more) by the latter. “And Ananias went, and entered into the house, and laid his hands upon him, and said, Brother Saul” — he straightway addresses him as a friend by that name — “Jesus, Who appeared unto thee in the way in which thou camest” — and yet Christ had not told him this, but he learnt it from the Spirit — “hath sent me unto thee, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.” (v. 17.) As he said this, he laid his hands upon him. “And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales.” (v. 18.) Some say this was a sign of his blindness. Why did he not blind his eyes (entirely)? This was more wonderful, that, with his eyes open, he did not see: (v. 8) which was just his case in respect of the Law, until the Name of Jesus was put on him. “And he received sight forthwith, and. arose, and was baptized. And having taken food, he recovered strength.” (v. 19.) He was faint, therefore, both from his journey and from his fear; both from hunger, and from dejection of mind. Wishing therefore to deepen his dejection, He made the man blind until the coming of Ananias: and, that he might not imagine the blindness to be (only) fancy, this is the reason of the scales. He needed no other teaching: that which had befallen was made teaching (to him). “And he was with the disciples which were at Damascus certain days. And straightway in the synagogues he preached Jesus, that He is the Son of God.” (v. 20.) See, straightway he was: a teacher in the synagogues. He was not a ashamed of the change, was not afraid while the very things in which he was glorious afore-time, the same

he destroyed. Even from his first appearance on the stage here was a man, death-dealing, ready for deeds of blood: seest thou what a manifest sign (was here)? And with this very thing, he put all in fear: for, said they, Hither also is he come for this very thing. “But all that heard him were amazed, and said: Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.” (v. 21, 22.) As one learned in the Law, he stopped their mouths, and suffered them not to speak. They thought they were rid of disputation in such matters, in getting rid of Stephen, and they found another, more vehement than Stephen.

(Recapitulation.) But let us look at what relates to Ananias. The Lord said not to him, Converse with him, and catechize him. For if, when He said, “He prayeth, and hath seen a man laying his hands upon him.” (v. 11, 12.) He did not persuade him, much less had He said this. So that he shall not disbelieve thee, “he hath seen in a vision.” Observe how in the former instance neither is Philip told all immediately. Fear not, He saith: “for this man is a chosen vessel for Me. (v. 15.) He more than sufficiently released him of his fear, if the case be so that this man shall be so zealous in our cause, as even to suffer many things. And justly he is called “a vessel” (or, instrument) — for reason shows that evil is not a physical quality: “a vessel of election” (or, chosen instrument), He saith; for we choose that which is approved. And let not any imagine, that (Ananias) speaks in unbelief of what was told him, as imagining that Christ was deceived: far from it! but affrighted and trembling, he did not even attend to what was said, at hearing the name of Paul. Moreover, the Lord does not tell that He has blinded him: at the mention of his name fear had prepossessed his soul: “see,” he says, “to whom Thou art betraying me: ‘and hither for this very purpose is he come, to bind all that call upon Thy Name.’ I fear, test he take me to Jerusalem: why dost Thou cast me into the mouth of the lion?” He is terrified, even while he speaks these words; that from every quarter we may learn the energetic character (ἀρετήν) of the man. For that these things should be spoken by Jews, were nothing wonderful: but that these (the believers) are so terrified, it is a most mighty proof of the power of God. Both the fear is shown, and the obedience greater after the fear.

For there was indeed need of strength. Since He says, “a vessel of election,” that thou mayest not imagine that God is to do all, He adds, “to bear My Name before Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel. Ananias has heard what he most desired — that against the Jews also he will take his stand: this above all gave him courage. “For I,” saith He, “will show him how great things he must suffer for My Name’s sake.” At the same time also this is said by way of putting Ananias to the blush: If he, that was so frantic, shall suffer all things, and thou not willing even to baptize him! “It is well,” saith he: “let him continue blind” (this is why he says these words): “he is blind: why dost Thou at all bid me open his eyes, that he may bind (men) again?” Fear not the future: for that opening of his eyes he will use not against you, but for you (with reference to that saying, “That he may receive his sight” (v. 12), these words are spoken): for not only will he do you no harm, but he “will suffer many things.” And what is wonderful indeed is, that he shall first know “how great things he shall suffer,” and then shall take the field against the perils. — “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus” — he saith not, “Who made thee blind,” but, “Who appeared with thee in the way, hath sent me unto thee that thou mayest receive thy sight” (v. 17): observe this man also, how he utters nothing boastful, but just as Peter said in the case of the lame man, “Why look ye on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made him to walk,” (ch. 3:12) so here also he saith, “Jesus, Who appeared unto thee.” (b) Or, (he saith it) that the other may believe: and he saith not, He that was crucified, the Son of God, He that doeth wonders: but what? “He that appeared unto thee:” (speaking) from what the other knew: as Christ also added no more, neither said, I am Jesus, the Crucified, the Risen: but what? “Whom thou persecutest.” Ananias said not, “The persecuted,” that he may not seem as it were to rave over him (ἐπενθουσίαν), to deride him, “Who appeared unto thee in the way:” and yet He did not (visibly) appear, but was seen by the things done. And immediately he added, wishing to draw a veil over the accusation: “That thou mayest receive thy sight.” I came not to reprove the past, but to bestow the gift: “that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.” (a) With hands laid on, he spake these words. “And immediately there fell from his eyes,” etc. (v. 18:a double blindness is removed. — And why saith it, “Having taken food, he was strengthened?” (v. 19.) Because they that are in such case become relaxed: he had no heart to partake of food

before, until he obtained the mighty gifts. (c) It seems to me, that both Paul and Cornelius, at the very instant when the words were spoken, received the Spirit. And yet (in this case) the giver was no great one. So true is it, that there was naught of man's in the things done, nor aught was done by man, but God was present, the Doer of these things. And at the same time (the Lord) both teaches him to think modestly of himself, in that He does not bring him to the Apostles who were so admired, and shows that there is nothing of man here. He was not filled, however, with the Spirit which works signs: that in this way also his faith might be shown; for he wrought no miracles. "And straightway," it says, "in the synagogues he preached Jesus" — (v. 20) not that He is risen — not this: no, nor that He liveth: but what? immediately he strictly expounded the doctrine — "that this is the Son of God. And all that heard him were amazed," etc. (v. 21.) They were reduced to utter incredulity. And yet they ought not to have wondered only, but to worship and reverence. "Is not this he," etc. He had not merely been a persecutor, but "destroyed them which called on this Name" — they did not say, "on Jesus;" for hatred, they could not bear even to hear His name — and what is more marvelous still, "and came hither for this purpose," etc. "We cannot say, that he associated with the Apostles before." See by how many (witnesses) he is confessed to have been of the number of the enemies! But Paul not only was not confounded by these things, nor hid his face for shame, but "increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews" (v. 22), i.e. put them to silence, left them nothing to say for themselves, "proving, that this is very Christ." "Teaching," it says: for this man was a teacher.

"And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him." (v. 23.) The Jews again resort to that valid argument (ἰσχυρὸν συλλογισμὸν) of theirs, not now seeking false-accusers and false-witnesses; they cannot wait for these now: but what do they? They set about it by themselves. For as they see the affair on the increase, they do not even use the form of a trial. "But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him." (v. 24.) For this was more intolerable to them than the miracles which had taken place — than the five thousand, the three thousand, than everything, in short. And observe him, how he is delivered, not by (miraculous) grace, but by

man's wisdom — not as the apostles were — (ἐκεῖνοι ch. v. 19) that thou mayest learn the energetic (ἄρετήν) character of the man, how he shines even without miracles. “Then the disciples took him by night,” that the affair might not be suspected, “and let him down by the wall in a basket.” (v. 25.) What then? having escaped such a danger, does he flee? By no means, but goes where he kindled them to greater rage.

(Recapitulation, 5:20, 21.) “And straightway in the synagogues he preached Jesus” — for he was accurate in the faith — “that this is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed,” etc., for indeed it was incredible. “But Saul increased,” etc. Therefore “after many days” this happens: viz. the Jews “took counsel to kill him. And their laying await was known of Saul.” (v. 22-24.) What does this mean? It is likely that for awhile he did not choose to depart thence, though many, perhaps, besought him; but when he learnt it, then he permitted his disciples: for he had disciples immediately.

“Then the disciples,” etc. (v. 25.) Of this occurrence he says: “The ethnarch of Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to apprehend me.” (2 Corinthians 11:32.) But observe the Writer here, that he does not tell the story ambitiously, and so as to show what an important person Paul was, saying, “For they stirred up the king,” and so forth: but only, “Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall — in a basket:” for they sent him out alone, and none with him. And it was well they did this: the consequence being, that he showed himself to the Apostles in Jerusalem. Now they sent him out, as bound to provide for his safety by flight: but he did just the contrary — he leaped into the midst of those who were mad against him. This it is to be on fire, this to be fervent indeed! From that day forth he knew all the commands which the Apostles had heard: “Except a man take up his cross, and follow Me.” (Matthew 10:38.) The very fact that he had been slower to come than the rest made him more zealous: for “to whom much is forgiven” (Luke 7:47) the same will love more, so that the later he came, the more he loved: and having done ten thousand wrongs, he thought he could never do enough to cast the former deeds into the shade. “Proving” (v. 22), it says: i.e. with mildness teaching. And observe, they did not say to him, Thou art he that destroyed: why art thou changed? for they were ashamed: but they said it to themselves. For he would have said to them,

This very thing ought to teach you, as in fact he does thus plead in his speech before Agrippa. Let us imitate this, man: let us bear our souls in our hands ready to confront all dangers. — (That he fled from Damascus) this was no cowardice: he preserved himself for the preaching. Had he been a coward, he would not have gone to Jerusalem, would not immediately have commenced teaching: he would have abated somewhat of his vehemence: for he had been taught by the fate of Stephen. He was no coward, but he was also prudent (οἰκονομικός) (in husbanding himself). Wherefore he thought it no great thing to die for the Gospel's sake, unless he should do this to great advantage: willing not even to see Christ, Whom most of all he longed to see, while the work of his stewardship among men was not yet complete. (Philippians 1:23, 24). Such ought to be the soul of a Christian. From his first appearance from the very outset, the character of Paul declared itself: nay even before this, even in the things which he did “not according to knowledge” (Romans 10:2), it was not by man's reasoning that he was moved to act as he did. For if, so long afterwards, he was content not to depart, much more at the beginning of his trading voyage, when he had but just left the harbor! Many things Christ leaves to be done by (ordinary) human wisdom, that we may learn that (his disciples) were men, that it was not all everywhere to be done by grace: for otherwise they would have been mere motionless logs: but in many things they managed matters themselves. This is not less than martyrdom, — to shrink from no suffering for the sake of the salvation of the many. Nothing so delights God. Again will I repeat what I have often said: and I repeat it, because I do exceedingly desire it: as Christ also did the same, when discoursing concerning forgiveness: “When ye pray, forgive if ye have aught against any man:” (Mark 11:25.) and again to Peter He said, “I say not unto thee, Forgive until seven times, but until seventy-times seven.” (Matthew 18:22.) And Himself in fact forgives the transgressions against Him. So do we also, because we know that this is the very goal of Christianity, continually discourse thereof. Nothing is more frigid than a Christian, who cares not for the salvation of others. Thou canst not here plead poverty: for she that cast down the two mites, shall be thine accuser. (Luke 21:1.) And Peter said, “Silver and gold have I none.” (Acts 3:6.) And Paul was so poor, that he was often hungered, and wanted necessary food. Thou canst not plead lowness of birth: for they too were ignoble men, and of ignoble parents. Thou canst not allege want of

education: for they too were “unlearned men.” (Acts 4:13.) Even if thou be a slave therefore and a runaway slave, thou canst perform thy part: for such was Onesimus: yet see to what Paul calls him, and to how great honor he advances him: “that he may communicate with me,” he says, “in my bonds.” (Philemon 5:13.) Thou canst not plead infirmity, for such was Timothy, having often infirmities; for, says the apostle, “Use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake, and thine often infirmities.” (1 Timothy 5:23.) Every one can profit his neighbor, if he will fulfill his part. See ye not the unfruitful trees, how strong they are, how fair, how large also, and smooth, and of great height? But if we had a garden; we should much rather have pomegranates, or fruitful olive trees: for the others are for delight to the eye, not for profit, which in them is but small. Such are those men who only consider their own interest: nay, not such even since these persons are fit only for burning: whereas those trees are useful both for building and for the safety of those within. Such too were those Virgins, chaste indeed, and decent, and modest, but profitable to none (Matthew 25:1) wherefore they are burned. Such are they who have not nourished Christ. For observe that none of those are charged with particular sins of their own, with fornication, for instance, or with perjury; in short, with no sin but the having been of no use to another. Such was he who buried his talent, showing indeed a blameless life, but not being useful to another. (ib. 25.) How can such an one be a Christian? Say, if the leaven being mixed up with the flour did not change the whole into its own nature, would such a thing be leaven? Again, if a perfume shed no sweet odor on those who approach it, could we call it a perfume? Say not, “It is impossible for me to induce others (to become Christians)” — for if thou art a Christian, it is impossible but that it should be so. For as the natural properties of things cannot be gainsaid, so it is here: the thing is part of the very nature of the Christian. Do not insult God. To say, that the sun cannot shine, would be to insult Him: to say that a Christian cannot do good, is to insult God, and call Him a liar. For it is easier for the sun not to give heat, nor to shine, than for the Christian not to send forth light: it is easier for the light to be darkness, than for this to be so. Tell me not that it is impossible: the contrary is the impossible. Do not insult God. If we once get our own affairs in a right state, the other will certainly follow as a natural and necessary consequence. It is not possible for the light of a Christian to be hid; not possible for a lamp so conspicuous as that to be concealed. Let us

not be careless. For, as the profit from virtue reaches both to ourselves, and to those who are benefited by it: so from vice there is a twofold loss, reaching both to ourselves, and to I those who are injured by it. Let there be (if you will) some private man, who has suffered numberless ills from some one, and let no one take his part, yet let that man still return good offices; what teaching so mighty as this? What words, or what exhortations could equal it? What wrath were it not enough to extinguish and soften? Knowing therefore these things, let us hold fast to virtue, as knowing that it is not possible to be saved otherwise, than by passing through this present life in doing these good works, that we may also obtain the good things which are to come, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father together with the Holy Spirit be glory, might, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 21

ACTS 9:26, 27

“And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the Apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way.”

ONE may well be much at a loss here to understand how it is that, whereas in the Epistle to the Galatians Paul says, “I went not to Jerusalem,” but “into Arabia” and “to Damascus,” and, “After three years I went up to Jerusalem,” and “to see Peter” (Galatians 1:17), (ἱστορήσαι Cat.) here the writer says the contrary. (There, Paul says,) “And none of the Apostles saw I; but here, it is said (Barnabas), brought him to the Apostles.” — Well, then, either (Paul) means, “I went not up with intent to refer or attach myself to them (ἀναθέσθαι) — for what saith he? “I referred not myself, neither went I to Jerusalem to those who were Apostles before me:” or else, that the laying await for him in Damascus was after his return from Arabia; or else, again, that the visit to Jerusalem was after he came from Arabia. Certainly of his own accord he went not to the Apostles, but “assayed to join himself unto the disciples “ — as being a teacher, not a disciple — “ I went not,” he says, “for this purpose, that I should go to those who were Apostles before me: certainly, I learnt nothing from them.” Or, he does not speak of this visit, but passes it by, so that the order is, “I went into Arabia, then I came to Damascus, then to Jerusalem, then to Syria:” or else, again, that he went up to Jerusalem, then was sent to Damascus, then to Arabia, then again to Damascus, then to Caesarea. Also, the visit “after fourteen years,” probably, was when he brought up the [alms to the] brethren together with Barnabas: (Galatians 2:1) or else he means a different occasion. (Acts 11:30.) For the Historian for conciseness, often omits incidents, and condenses the times. Observe how unambitious the writer is, and how he does not even relate (related in c. 22:17-21) that vision, but passes it by. “He assayed,” it says, “to join himself to the disciples. And they were afraid of him.” By this again is shown the ardor of Paul’s character: not (only) from the mouth of Ananias, and of those who wondered at him there, but also of those in

Jerusalem: “they believed not that he was a disciple:” for truly that was beyond all human expectation. He was no longer a wild beast, but a man mild and gentle! And observe how he does not go to the Apostles, such is his forbearance, but to the disciples, as being a disciple. He was not thought worthy of credit. “But Barnabas” — “Son of Consolation” is his appellation, whence also he makes himself easy of access to the man: fox “he was a kind man” (ch. 11:24), exceedingly, and this is proved both by the present instance, and in the affair of John (Mark) — “having taken him, brought him to the Apostles, and related to them how he had seen the Lord in the way.” (15:39.) It is likely that at Damascus also he had heard all about him: whence *he* was not afraid but the others were, for he was a man whose glance inspired fear. “How,” it says, “he had seen the Lord in the way, and that He had spoken unto him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of the Lord. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem, and speaking boldly in the name of Jesus” (v. 28): these things were demonstrative of the former, and by his acts he made good what was spoken of him. “And he spake, and disputed with the Hellenists.” (v. 29.) So then the disciples were afraid of him, and the Apostles did not trust him; by this therefore he relieves them of their fear. “With the Hellenists:” he means those who used the Greek tongue: and this he did, very wisely; for those others, those profound Hebrews had no mind even to see him. “But they,” it says, “went about to slay him:” a token, this, of his energy, and triumphant victory, and of their exceeding annoyance at what had happened. Thereupon, fearing lest the issue should be the same as in the case of Stephen, they sent him to Caesarea. For it says, “When the brethren were aware of this, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus” (v. 30), at the same time to preach, and likely to be more in safety, as being in his own country. But observe, I pray you, how far it is from being the case that everything is done by (miraculous) grace; how, on the contrary, God does in many things leave them to manage for themselves by their own wisdom and in a human way; so to cut off the excuse of idle people for if it was so in the case of Paul, much more in theirs. “Then, it says, “the Church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace (they), being edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and abounded in the comfort of the Holy Ghost.” (v. 31.) He is about to relate that Peter goes down (from Jerusalem), therefore that you may not impute this to fear, he first says

this. For while there was persecution, he was in Jerusalem, but when the affairs of the Church are everywhere in security, then it is that he leaves Jerusalem. See how fervent and energetic he is! For he did not think, because there was peace, therefore there was no need of his presence. Paul departed, and there was peace: there is no war nor disturbance. Them, they respected most, as having often stood by them, and as being held in admiration by the multitude: but him, they despised, and were more savage against him. See, how great a war, and immediately, peace! See what that war effected. It dispersed the peace-makers. In Samaria, Simon was put to shame: in Judea, the affair of Sapphira took place. Not that, because there was peace, therefore matters became relaxed, but such was the peace as also to need exhortation. “And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.” (v. 32.) Like the commander of an army, he went about, inspecting the ranks, what part was compact, what in good order, what needed his presence. See how on all occasions he goes about, foremost. When an Apostle was to be chosen, he was the foremost: when the Jews were to be told, that these were “not drunken,” when the lame man was to be healed, when harangues to be made, he is before the rest: when the rulers were to be spoken to, he was the man; when Ananias, he (ch. 1:15; 2:15; 3:4-12; 4:8; 5:3-15.): when healings were wrought by the shadow, still it was he. And look: where there was danger, he was the man, and where good management (was needed); but where all is calm, there they act all in common, and he demands no greater honor (than the others). When need was to work miracles, he starts forward, and here again he is the man to labor and toil. “And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.” (v. 33-34.) And why did he not wait for the man’s faith, and ask if he wished to be healed? In the first place, the miracle served for exhortation to many: hear then how great the gain. “And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.” (v. 35.) For the man was notable. “Arise, and make thy bed:” he does well to give a proof of the miracle: for they not only released men of their diseases, but in giving the health they gave the strength also. Moreover, at that time they had given no proofs of their power, so that the man could not reasonably have been required to show his faith, as neither in the case

of the lame man did they demand it. (ch. 3:6.) As therefore Christ in the beginning of His miracles did not demand faith, so neither did these. For in Jerusalem indeed, as was but reasonable, the faith of the parties was first shown; “they brought out their sick into the streets, but as Peter passed by, his shadow at least might fall upon some of them” (ch. 5:15); for many miracles had been wrought there; but here this is the first that occurs. For of the miracles, some were wrought for the purpose of drawing others (to faith); some for the comfort of them that believed. “Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and alms-deeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them.” (v. 36-38). Why did they wait till she was dead? Why was not Peter solicited (ἐσκούλη) before this? So right-minded (φιλοσοφοῦντες) were they, they did not think it proper to trouble (σκούλλειν) the Disciples about such matters, and to take them away from the preaching: as indeed this is why it mentions that the place was near, seeing they asked this as a thing beside his mark, and not now in the regular course. “Not to delay to come unto them:” for she was a disciple. And Peter arose, and went with them. And when he was come, they led him into the upper chamber.” (v. 39.) They do not beseech, but leave it to him to give her life (σωτηρία.) See what a cheering inducement to alms is here! “And all the widows,” it says, “stood round him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.” Peter went into the apartment, as one who took it calmly, but see what an accession came of it! It is not without a meaning that the Writer has informed us of the woman’s name, but to show that the name she bore (φερόνυμος ἦν) matched her character; as active and wakeful was she as an antelope. For in many instances there is a Providence in the giving of names, as we have often told you. “She was full,” it says, “of good works:” not only of alms, but “of good works,” first, and then of this good work in particular. “Which,” it says, “Dorcas made while she was with them.” Great humility! Not as we do; but they were all together in common, and in company with them she made these things and worked. “But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning

him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.” (v. 40.) Why does he put them all out? That he may not be confused nor disturbed by their weeping. “And having knelt down, he prayed.” Observe the intentness of his prayer. “And he gave her his hand.” (v. 41.) So did Christ to the daughter of Jairus: “And (says the Evangelist) having taken her by the hand.” Mark severally, first the life, then the strength brought into her, the one by the word, the other by his hand — “And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive:” to some for comfort, because they received back their sister, and because they saw the miracle, and for kindly support (**προστασίαν**) to others. “And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord. And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.” (v. 42-43.) Mark the unassuming conduct, mark the moderation of Peter, how he does not make his abode with this lady, or some other person of distinction, but with a tanner: by all his acts leading men to humility, neither suffering the mean to be ashamed, nor the great to be elated! “Many days;” for they needed his instruction, who had believed through the miracles. — Let us look then again at what has been said.

“Assayed,” it says, “to join himself to the disciples.” (Recapitulation, 5:26.) He did not come up to them unabashed, but with a subdued manner. “Disciples “ they were all called at that time by reason of their great virtue, for there was the likeness of the disciples plainly to be seen. “But they were all afraid of him.” See how they feared the dangers, how the alarm was yet at its height in them. “But Barnabas,” etc. (v. 27.) — it seems to me that Barnabas was of old a friend of his — “and related,” etc.: observe how Paul says nothing of all this himself: nor would he have brought it forward to the others, had he not been compelled to do so. “And he was with them, coming in and going out at Jerusalem, and speaking boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus.” (v. 28, 29.) This gave them all confidence. “But they went about to slay him: which when the brethren knew” etc. (v. 30.) Do you observe how both there (at Damascus), and here, the rest take care for him, and provide for him the means of departure, and that we nowhere find him thus far receiving (direct supernatural) aid from God? So the energy of his character is betokened. “To Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus:” so that, I

suppose, he did not continue his journey by land, but sailed the rest of it. And this (departure) is Providentially ordered, that he might preach there also: and so likewise were the plots against him ordered by God's Providence, and his coming to Jerusalem, that the story about him might no longer be disbelieved. For there he was "speaking boldly," it says, "in the name of the Lord Jesus; and he spake and disputed against the Hellenists; and again, "he was with them coming in and going out. — So the Church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace" — i.e. it increased: and peace with itself, that peace which is peace indeed: for the war from without would have done them no harm — "they being edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and abounded in the consolation of the Holy Ghost." And the spirit consoled them both by the miracles and by the works, and independently of these in the person of each individual. "And it came to pass, etc. And Peter said unto him, Eneas," etc. (v. 32-34.) But before discourse, before exhortations, he says to the lame man himself, "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." This word he believed in any wise, and was made whole. Observe how unassuming he is: for he said not, "In the Name," but rather as a sign he narrates the miracle itself, and speaks as its Evangelist. "And having seen him," it says, "all that dwelt in Lydda, and Saron, turned unto the Lord. — Now there was at Joppa," etc. (v. 35, 36.) Observe everywhere the signs taking place. But let us so believe them, as if we were now beholding them. It is not simply said, that Tabitha died, but that she died, having been in a state of weakness. And (yet) they did not call Peter until she died; then "they sent and told him not to delay to come unto them." Observe, they send and call him by others. And he comes: he did not think it a piece of disrespect, to be summoned by two men: for, it says, "they sent two men unto him." — Affliction, my beloved, is a great thing, and rivets our souls together. Not a word of wailing there, nor of mourning. See how thoroughly matters are cleansed! "Having washed her," it says, "they laid her in an upper chamber:" that is, they did all (that was right) for the dead body. Then Peter having come, "knelt down, and prayed; and turning him to the body, said, Tabitha, arise." (v. 40.) They did not perform all their miracles with the same ease. But this was profitable for them: for truly God took thought not only for the salvation of others, but for their own. He that healed so many by his very shadow, how is it that he now has to do so much first? There are cases also in which the faith of the applicants

cooperated. This is the first dead person that he raises. Observe how he, as it were, awakes her out of sleep: first she opened her eyes: then upon seeing (Peter) she sat up: then from his hand she received strength. “And it was known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.” (v. 42.) Mark the gain, mark the fruit, that it was not for display. Indeed, this is why he puts them all out, imitating his Master in this also. For where tears are — or rather, where miracles are, there tears ought not to be; not where such a mystery is celebrating. Hear, I beseech you: although somewhat of the like kind does not take place now, yet in the case of our dead likewise, a great mystery is celebrating. Say, if as we sit together, the Emperor were to send and invite some one of us to the palace, would it be right, I ask, to weep and mourn? Angels are present, commissioned from heaven and come from thence, sent from the King Himself to call their fellow servant, and say, dost thou weep? Knowest thou not what a mystery it is that is taking place, how awful, how dread, and worthy indeed of hymns and lauds? Wouldest thou learn, that thou mayest know, that this is no time for tears? For it is a very great mystery of the Wisdom of God. As if leaving her dwelling, the soul goes forth, speeding on her way to her own Lord, and dost thou mourn? Why then, thou shouldst do this on the birth of a child: for this in fact is also a birth, and a better than that. For here she goes forth to a very different light, is loosed as from a prison-house, comes off as from a contest. “Yes,” say you, “it is all very well to say this, in the case of those of whose salvation we are assured.” Then, what ails thee, O man, that even in the case of such, thou dost not take it in this way? Say, what canst thou have to condemn in the little child? Why dost thou mourn for it? What in the newly baptized? for he too is brought into the same condition: why dost thou mourn for him? For as the sun arises clear and bright, so the soul, leaving the body with a pure conscience, shines joyously. Not such the spectacle of Emperor as he comes in state to take possession of the city (ἐπιβαίνοντα πόλει), not such the hush of awe, as when the soul having quitted the body is departing in company with Angels. Think what the soul must then be! in what amazement, what wonder, what delight! Why mournest thou? Answer me. — But it is only in the case of sinners thou doest this? Would that it were so, and I would not forbid your mournings, would that this were the object! This lamentation were Apostolic, this were after the pattern of the Lord; for even Jesus wept over Jerusalem. I would that your

mournings were discriminated by this rule. But when thou speakest the words of one that would call back (the dead), and speakest of thy long intimacy and his beneficence, it is but for this thou mournest (not because he was a sinner), thou dost but pretend to say it. Mourn, bewail the sinner, and I too will give a loose to tears; I, more than thou, the greater the punishment to which he is liable as such: I too will lament, with such an object. But not thou alone must lament him that is such; the whole city must do the same, and all that meet you on the way, as men bewail them that are led to be put to death. For this is a death indeed, an evil death, the death of sinners. But (with you) all is clean reversed. Such lamentation marks a lofty mind, and conveys much instruction; the other marks a littleness of soul. If we all lamented with this sort of lamentation, we should amend the persons themselves while yet living. For as, if it rested with thee to apply medicines which would prevent that bodily death, thou wouldest use them, just so now, if this death were the death thou lamentest, thou wouldest prevent its taking place, both in thyself and in him. Whereas now our behavior is a perfect riddle; that having it in our power to hinder its coming, we let it take place, and mourn over it when it has come. Worthy indeed of lamentations are they (when we consider), what time as they shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ, what words they shall then hear, what they shall suffer! To no purpose have these men lived: nay, not to no purpose, but to evil purpose! Of them too it may be fitly said, "It were good for them had they never been born." (Mark 14:21.) For what profit is it, I ask, to have spent so much time to the hurt of his own person? Had it been spent only to no purpose, were not that, I ask you, punishment enough! If one who has been an hired servant twenty years were to find that he has had all his labor in vain, would he not weep and lament, and think himself the most miserable of men? Why, here is a man who has lost all the labor of a whole life: not one day has he lived for himself, but to luxury, to debauchery, to covetousness, to sin, to the devil. Then, say, shall we not bewail this man? shall we not try to snatch him from his perils? For it is, yes, it is possible, if we will, to mitigate his punishment, if we make continual prayers for him, if for him we give alms. However unworthy he may be, God will yield to our importunity. For if Paul showed mercy on one (who had no claims on his mercy), and for the sake of others spared one (whom he would not have spared), much more is it right for us to do this. By means

of his substance, by means of thine own, by what means thou wilt, aid him: pour in oil, nay rather, water. Has he no alms-deeds of his own to exhibit? Let him have at least those of his kindred. Has he none done by himself? At least let him have those which are done for him, that his wife may with confidence beg him off in that day, having paid down the ransom for him. The more sins he has to answer for, the greater need has he of alms, not only for this reason, but because the alms has not the same virtue now, but far less: for it is not all one to have done it himself, and to have another do it for him; therefore, the virtue being less, let us by quantity make it the greatest. Let us not busy ourselves about monuments, not about memorials. This is the greatest memorial: set widows to stand around him. Tell them his name: bid them all make for him their prayers, their supplications: this will overcome God: though it have not been done by the man himself, yet because of him another is the author of the almsgiving. Even this pertains to the mercy of God: “widows standing around and weeping” know how to rescue, not indeed from the present death, but from that which is to come. Many have profited even by the alms done by others on their behalf: for even if they have not got perfect (deliverance), at least they have found some comfort thence. If it be not so, how are children saved? And yet there, the children themselves contribute nothing, but their parents do all: and often have women had their children given them, though the children themselves contributed nothing. Many are the ways God gives us to be saved, only let us not be negligent.

How then if one be poor? say you. Again I say, the greatness of the alms is not estimated by the quantity given, but by the purpose. Only give not less than thine ability, and thou hast paid all. How then, say you, if he be desolate and a stranger, and have none to care for him? And why is it that he has none, I ask you? In this very thing thou sufferest thy desert, that thou hast none to be thus thy friend, thus virtuous. This is so ordered on purpose that, though we be not ourselves virtuous, we may study to have virtuous companions and friends — both wife, and son, and friend — as reaping some good even through them, a slight gain indeed, but yet a gain. If thou make it thy chief object not to marry a rich wife, but to have a devout wife, and a religious daughter, thou shall gain this consolation; if thou study to have thy son not rich but devout, thou shall also gain this consolation. If thou make these thine objects then wilt thyself be such as

they. This also is part of virtue, to choose such friends, and such a wife and children. Not in vain are the oblations made for the departed, not in vain the prayers, not in vain the almsdeeds: all those things hath the Spirit ordered, wishing us to be benefited one by the other. See: he is benefited, thou art benefited: because of him, thou hast despised wealth, being set on to do some generous act: both thou art the means of salvation to him, and he to thee the occasion of thine almsgiving. Doubt not that he shall get some good thereby. It is not for nothing that the Deacon cries, "For them that are fallen asleep in Christ, and for them that make the memorials for them." It is not the Deacon that utters this voice, but the Holy Ghost: I speak of the Gift. What sayest thou? There is the Sacrifice in hand, and all things laid out duly ordered: Angels are there present, Archangels, the Son of God is there: all stand with such awe, and in the general silence those stand by, crying aloud: and thinkest thou that what is done, is done in vain? Then is not the rest also all in vain both the oblations made for the Church, and those for the priests, and for the whole body? God forbid! but all is done with faith. What thinkest thou of the oblation made for the martyrs, of the calling made in that hour, martyrs though they be, yet even "for martyrs?" It is a great honor to be named in the presence of the Lord, when that memorial is celebrating, the dread Sacrifice, the unutterable mysteries. For just as, so long as the Emperor is seated, is the time for the petitioner to effect what he wishes to effect, but when he is risen, say what he will, it is all in vain, so at that time, while the celebration of the mysteries is going on, it is for all men the greatest honor to be held worthy of mention. For look: then is declared the dread mystery, that God gave Himself for the world: along with that mystery he seasonably puts Him in mind of them that have sinned. For as when the celebration of Emperors' victories is in progress, then, as many as had their part in the victory receive their meed of praise, while at the same time as many as are in bonds are set at liberty in honor of the occasion; but when the occasion is past, he that did not obtain this favor then, no longer gets any: so is it here likewise: this is the time of celebration of a victory. For, saith it, "so often as ye eat this bread, ye do show forth the Lord's death." Then let us not approach indifferently, nor imagine that these things are done in any ordinary sort. But it is in another sense that we make mention of martyrs, and this, for assurance that the Lord is not dead: and this, for a sign that death has received its death's blow, that death itself is dead. Knowing

these things, let us devise what consolations we can for the departed, instead of tears, instead of laments, instead of tombs, our alms, our prayers, our oblations, that both they and we may attain unto the promised blessings, by the grace and loving-kindness of His only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory, dominion, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 22

ACTS 10:1-4

“There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.”

THIS man is not a Jew, nor of those under the Law, but he had already forestalled our manner of life. Observe, thus far, two persons, both of high rank, receiving the faith, the eunuch at Gaza and this man; and the pains taken on behalf of these men. But do not imagine that this was because of their high rank: God forbid! it was because of their piety. For that the Scripture mentions their dignified stations, is to show the greatness of their piety; since it is more wonderful when a person being in a position of wealth and power is such as these were. What makes the praise of the former is, his undertaking so long a journey, and this when there was no (festival) season to require it, and his reading on his road, and while riding in his chariot, and his beseeching Philip, and numberless other points: and the great praise of the latter is, that he makes alms and prayers, and is a just man, holding such a command. The reason why the writer describes the man so fully, is, that none may say that the Scripture history relates falsehoods: “Cornelius,” he says, “a centurion of the band called the Italian band.” (v. 1.) A “band,” **σπεῖρα**, is what we now call a “numerous.” “A devout man,” he says, “and one that feared God with all his house” (v. 2): that you may not imagine that it is because of his high station that these things are done. — When Paul was to be brought over, there is no angel, but the Lord Himself: and He does not send him to some great one, but to a very ordinary person: but here, on the contrary, He brings the chief Apostle (to these Gentiles), not sends them to him: herein condescending to their weakness, and knowing how such persons need to be treated. As indeed on many occasions we find Christ Himself hasting (to such), as being more infirm. Or (it may be) because (Cornelius) was not able himself to leave his home. But here again is a high commendation of alms, just as

was there given by means of Tabitha. "A devout man," it says, "and one that feared God with all his house." Let us hear this, whoever of us neglect them of our own house, whereas this man was careful of his soldiers also. "And that gave alms," it says, "to all the people." Both his doctrines and his life were right. "He saw in a vision evidently, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius." (v. 3.) Why does he see the angel? This also was in order to the full assurance of Peter, or rather, not of him, but of the others, the weaker ones. "At the ninth hour," when he was released from his cares and was at quiet, when he was engaged in prayers and compunction. "And when he looked on him, he was afraid." (v. 4.) Observe how what the angel speaks he does not speak immediately, but first rouses and elevates his mind. At the sight, there was fear, but a fear in moderation, just so far as served to fix his attention. Then also the words relieved him of his fear. The fear roused him: the praise mitigated what was unpleasant in the fear. "Thy prayers," saith he, "and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter. (v. 5.) Lest they should come to a different person, he designates the man not only by his surname, but by the place. "And the same," saith he, "is lodging with one Simon a tanner, who hath his house by the seaside." (v. 6.) Do you mark how the Apostles, for love of solitude and quiet, affected the retired quarters of the cities? "With one Simon a tanner:" how then if it chanced that there was another? Behold, there is another token, his dwelling by the seaside. All three tokens could not possibly coincide (elsewhere). He does not tell him for what purpose, that he may not take off the intense desire, but he leaves him to an eager and longing expectation of what he shall hear. "And when the Angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; and when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa." (v. 7, 8.) Do you see, that it is not without purpose that the writer says this? (it shows) that those also "who waited on him continually" were such as he. "And when he had declared the whole matter unto them:" observe the unassuming character of the man: for he does not say, Call Peter to me: but, in order also to induce him to come, he declared the whole matter: — this was so ordered by Providence; — for he did not choose to use the authority of his rank to fetch Peter to him; therefore "he

declared the matter;” such was the moderation of the man: and yet no great notion was to be formed of one lodging with a tanner. “And on the morrow, as they journeyed, and drew nigh to the city” 5:9. — observe how the Spirit connects the times: no sooner than this, and no later, He Causes this to take place — “ Peter about the sixth hour went up upon the housetop to pray:” that is, privately and quietly, as in an upper chamber. “And he became very hungry, and would have eaten; but while they made ready, there fell upon him a trance.” (v. 10.) What means this expression, ἔκστασις, “trance?” Rather, there was presented to him a kind of spiritual view (θεωρία): the soul, so to say, was caused to be out of the body (ἐξέστη). “And saw heaven opened, and, knit at the four corners, a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet, and let down to the earth: wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.” (v. 11-16.) What is this? It is a symbol of the whole world. The man was uncircumcised: and — for he had nothing in common with the Jews — they would all accuse him as a transgressor: “thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them: (ch. 11:3).” this was a thing altogether offensive to them: observe then what is providentially managed. He himself also says, “I have never eaten:” not being himself afraid — far be the thought from us — but it is so contrived by the spirit, in order that he may have it to say in answer to those accusing him, that he did object: for it was altogether necessary for them to observe the Law. He was in the act of being sent to the Gentiles: therefore that these also may not accuse him, see how many things are contrived (by the Providence of God). For, that it may not seem to be a mere fancy, “this was done thrice. I said,” saith he, “Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten aught common or unclean. — And the voice came unto him, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.” (ch. 11:8, with 10:14.) It seems indeed to be spoken to him, but the whole is meant for the Jews. For if the teacher is rebuked, much more these. The earth then, this is what the linen sheet denotes, and the wild beasts in it, are they of the Gentiles, and the command, “Kill and eat,” denotes that he must go to them also; and that

this thing is thrice done, denotes baptism. “What God hath cleansed,” saith it, “call not thou common.” Great daring! Wherefore did he object? That none may say that God was proving him, as in the case of Abraham, this is why he says, “Not so, Lord,” etc. not gainsaying — just as to Philip also He said, “How many loaves have ye?” Not to learn, but tempting, or “proving him.” And yet it was the same (Lord) that had discoursed above (in the Law) concerning things clean and unclean. But in that sheet were also all the four-footed beasts of the earth:” the clean with the unclean. And for all this, he knew not what it meant. “Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon’s house, and stood before the gate, and called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.—But while Peter,” it says, “doubted in himself” (v. 17, 18), the men come at the right moment to solve his doubt: just as (the Lord) suffered Joseph first to be perturbed in mind, and then sends the Angel: for the soul with ease accepts the solution, when it has first been in perplexity. His perplexity neither lasts long (when it did occur), nor (did it occur) before this, but just at the moment when they “asked whether he were lodging there. While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.” (*supra*, p. 142, and 145, note 7; 5:19, 20.) And this again is a plea for Peter in answer to the disciples, that he did doubt, and was instructed to doubt nothing. “For I,” saith He, “have sent them.” Great is the authority of the Spirit! What God doth, this the Spirit is said to do. Not so the Angel, but having first said, “Thy prayers and thine alms have ascended, for a memorial before God,” to show that he is sent from thence, then he adds, “And now send men,” etc.: the Spirit not so, but, “For I have sent them. Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.” (v. 21, 22.) They speak his praises, so as to persuade him that an Angel has in fact appeared unto him. “Then called he them in,” (b) that they may suffer no harm, “and lodged them:” thenceforth he without scruple takes his meals

with them. “And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Caesarea accompanied him. And the morrow after, they entered into Caesarea.” (v. 23, 24.) The man was a person of note, and it was in a city of note that he then was.

(a) But let us look over again what has been said. “There was a certain man in Caesarea,” etc. (Recapitulation, 5:1, 2.) Observe with whom the beginning of the Gentiles is made — with “a devout man,” and one proved to be worthy by his works. For if, though the case be so, they are still offended, if this had not been the case, what would not have been the consequence! But mark the greatness of the assurance. (c) To this end all is done (in the way it is done), and the affair takes its beginning from Judea. (d) “He saw in a vision, evidently,” etc. (v. 3). It was not in his sleep that the Angel appeared to him, but while he was awake, in the daytime, “about the ninth hour. He saw an Angel of God coming in unto him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid.” So occupied was he with himself. Implying, that it was in consequence of the Angel’s calling him by a voice that he saw him; as, had he not called him, he would not have seen him: so taken up was he with the act in which he was engaged. But the Angel says to him, “Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God, and now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, who is called Peter.” (v. 5.) So far, he signified that the sending for him would be for good consequences, but in what way good, he did not intimate. So, neither does Peter relate the whole matter, but everywhere, the narratives are in part only, for the purpose of making the hearers apply their minds to what is said. “Send and call for Simon:” in like manner the Angel only calls Philippians “And as they went on their journey, and drew nigh to the city” (v. 9): in order that Peter should not be in perplexity too long. “Peter went up upon the housetop,” etc. Observe, that not even his hunger forced him to have recourse to the sheet. “Rise, Peter,” saith the Voice, “kill and eat.” (v. 13.) Probably he was on his knees when he saw the vision. — To me it seems that this also denotes the Gospel (or, “the Preaching”). That the thing taking place was of God (the circumstances made evident, namely), both that he sees it (descending) from above, and that he is in a trance; and, that the voice comes from thence, and the thrice confessing that the creatures there were unclean, and its coming from thence, and being drawn back thither (all this), is a mighty

token of the cleanness (imparted to them). — But why is this done? For the sake of those thereafter, to whom he is about to relate it. For to himself it had been said, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles.” (Matthew 10:5.) For if Paul needed both (to give) circumcision, and (to offer) sacrifice, much more (was some assurance needed) then, in the beginning of the Preaching, while they were as yet weaker. (Acts 16:3; 21:16.) — Observe too how he did not at once receive them. For, it says, they “called, and asked, whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodging there.” (v. 18.) As it was a mean looking house, they asked below, they inquired of the neighbors. “And while Peter thought, the Spirit said unto him, Arise, get thee down, and go, nothing doubting, for I have sent them.” (v. 19, 20.) And he does not say, For to this end did the vision appear unto thee; but, “I have sent them. Then Peter went down” (v. 21) — this is the way the Spirit must be obeyed, without demanding reasons. For it is sufficient for all assurance to be told by Him, This do, this believe: nothing more (is needed) — “Then Peter went down, and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?” He saw a soldier, saw a man: it was not that he was afraid, on the contrary, having first confessed that he was the person whom they sought, then he asks for the cause (of their coming); that it may not be supposed that the reason of his asking the cause, was, that he wished to hide himself: (he asks it) in order, that if it be immediately urgent, he may also go forth with them, but if not, may receive them as guests. “And they said, etc. into his house.” (v. 22.) This he had ordered them. Do not think he has done this out of contempt: not as of contempt has he sent, but so he was ordered. “And Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.” (v. 24.) It was right that his kinsmen and friends should be gathered to him. But being there present, they would have heard from him (what had happened).

See how great the virtue of alms, both in the former discourse, and here! There, it delivered from death temporal; here, from death eternal; and opened the gates of heaven. Such are the pains taken for the bringing of Cornelius to the faith, that both an angel is sent, and the Spirit works, and the chief of the Apostles is fetched to him, and such a vision is shown, and, in short, nothing is left undone. How many centurions were there not besides, and tribunes, and kings, and none of them obtained what this man

did! Hear, all ye that are in military commands, all ye that stand beside kings. “A just man,” it says, “fearing God; devout (v. 2, and 22); and what is more than all, with all his house. Not as we (who): that our servants may be afraid of us, do everything. but not that they may be devout. And over the domestics too, so. Not so this man; but he was “one that feared God with all his house” (v. 2), for he was as the common father of those with him, and of all the others (under his command.) But observe what (the soldier) says himself. For, fearing, he adds this also: “well reported of by all the nation.” For what if he was uncircumcised? Nay, but those give him a good report. Nothing like alms: great is the virtue of this practice, when the alms is poured forth from pure stores; for it is like a fountain discharging mud, when it issues froth unjust stores, but when from just gains, it is as a limpid and pure stream in a paradise, sweet to the sight, sweet to the touch, both light and cool, when given in the noon-day heat. Such is alms. Beside this fountain, not poplars and pines, nor cypresses, but other plants than these, and far better, of goodly stature: friendship with God, praise with men, glory to Godward, goodwill from all; blotting out of sins, great boldness, contempt of wealth. This is the fountain by which the plant of love is nourished: for nothing is so wont to nourish love, as the being merciful: it makes its branches to lift themselves on high. This fountain is better than that in Paradise (Genesis 2:10); a fountain, not dividing into four heads, but reaching unto Heaven itself: this gives birth to that river “which springeth up into eternal life” (John 4:14): on this let Death light, and like a spark it is extinguished by the fountain: such, wherever it drops, are the mighty blessings it causes. This quenches, even as a spark, the river of fire: this so strangles that worm, as naught else can do. (Mark 9:44.) He that has this, shall not gnash his teeth. Of the water of this, let there be dropped upon the chains, and it dissolves them: let it but touch the firebrands, it quenches all. — A fountain does not give out streams for a while and anon run dry, — else must it be no more a fountain, — but ever gushes: so let our fountain give out more copiously of the streams of mercy (in alms). This cheers him that receives: this is alms, to give out not only a copious, but a perennial, stream. If thou wouldest that God rain down His mercy upon thee as from fountains, have thou also a fountain. And yet there is no comparison (between God’s fountain and thine): for if thou open the mouths of this fountain, such are the mouths of God’s Fountain as to surpass every abyss. God does but

seek to get an opportunity on our part, and pours forth from His storehouses His blessings. When He expends, when He lavishes, then is He rich, then is He affluent. Large is the mouth of that fountain: pure and limpid its water. If thou stop not up the fountain here, neither wilt thou stop up that fountain. — Let no unfruitful tree stand beside it, that it may not waste its spray. Hast thou wealth? Plant not poplars there: for such is luxury: it consumes much, and shows nothing for it in itself, but spoils the fruit. Plant not a pine-tree — such is wantonness in apparel, beautiful only to the sight, and useful for nothing — nor yet a fir-tree, nor any other of such trees as consume indeed, but are in no sort useful. Set it thick with young shoots: plant all that is fruitful, in the hands of the poor, all that thou wilt. Nothing richer than this ground. Though small the reach of the hand, yet the tree it plants starts up to heaven and stands firm. This it is to plant. For that which is planted on the earth will perish, though not now, at any rate a hundred years hence. Thou plantest many trees, of which thou shalt not enjoy the fruit, but ere thou canst enjoy it, death comes upon thee. This tree will give thee its fruit then, when thou art dead. — If thou plant, plant not in the maw of gluttony, that the fruit end not in the draught-house: but plant thou in the pinched belly, that the fruit may start up to heaven. Refresh the straightened soul of the poor, lest thou pinch thine own roomy soul. — See you not, that the plants which are overmuch watered at the root decay, but grow when watered in moderation? Thus also drench not thou thine own belly, that the root of the tree decay not: water that which is thirsty, that it may bear fruit. If thou water in moderation, the sun will not wither them, but if in excess, then it withers them: such is the nature of the sun. In all things, excess is bad; wherefore let us cut it off, that we also may obtain the things we ask for. — Fountains, it is said, rise on the most elevated spots. Let us be elevated in soul, and our alms will flow with a rapid stream: the elevated soul cannot but be merciful, and the merciful cannot but be elevated. For he that despises wealth, is higher than the root of evils. — Fountains are oftenest found in solitary places: let us withdraw our soul from the crowd, and alms will gush out with us. Fountains, the more they are cleaned, the more copiously they flow: so with us, the more we spend, the more all good grows. — He that has a fountain, has nothing to fear: then neither let us be afraid. For indeed this fountain is serviceable to us for drink, for irrigation, for building, for everything. Nothing better than this draught: it

is not possible for this to inebriate. Better to possess such a fountain, than to have fountains running with gold. Better than all gold-bearing soil is the soul which bears this gold. For it advances us, not into these earthly palaces, but into those above. The gold becomes an ornament to the Church of God. Of this gold is wrought “the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17), the sword by which the dragon is beheaded. From this fountain come the precious stones which are on the King’s head. Then let us not neglect so great wealth, but contribute our alms with largeness, that we may be found worthy of the mercy of God, by the grace and tender compassion of His only begotten Son, with Whom to the Father and Holy Ghost together be glory, dominion, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 23

ACTS 10:23, 24

“Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.”

“HE called them in, and lodged them.” Good, that first he gives the men friendly treatment, after the fatigue of their journey, and makes them at home with him; “and on the morrow,” sets out with them.” And certain accompany him: this too as Providence ordered it, that they should be witnesses afterwards when Peter would need to justify himself. “And Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.” This is the part of a friend, this the part of a devout man, that where such blessings are concerned, he takes care that his near friends shall be made partakers of all. Of course (his “near” friends), those in whom he had ever full confidence; fearing, with such an interest at stake, to entrust the matter to others. In my opinion, it was by Cornelius himself that both friends and kinsmen had been brought to a better mind. “And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.” (v. 25.) This, both to teach the others, and by way of giving thanks to God, and showing his own humility: thereby making it plain, that though he had been commanded, yet in himself he had great piety. What then did Peter? “But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.” (v. 26.) Do you mark how, before all else (the Apostles) teach them this lesson, not to think great things of them? “And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” (v. 27, 28.) Observe, he straightway speaks of the mercy of God, and points out to them that it is a great grace that God has shown them. Observe also how while he utters great things, at the same time he speaks modestly. For he does not say, We, being men who do not deign to keep company with any (such), have come to you: but what says he? “Ye

know” — God commanded this — “that it is against law to keep company with, or come Unto, one of another nation.” Then he goes on to say, “And to me God has shown” — this he says, that none may account the thanks due to him — “that I should call no man” — that it may not look like obsequiousness to him, “no human being,” says he — “common or unclean.” (v. 29.) “Wherefore also” — that they may not think the affair a breach of the law on his part, nor (Cornelius) suppose that because he was in a station of command therefore he had complied, but that they may ascribe all to God, — “wherefore also I came without gainsaying as soon as I was sent for:” (though) not only to keep company, but even to come unto (him) was not permitted. “I ask therefore, for what intent ye have sent for me.” Already Peter had heard the whole matter from the soldiers also, but he wishes them first to confess, and to make them amenable to the Faith. What then does Cornelius? He does not say, Why, did not the soldiers tell thee? but observe again, how humbly he speaks. For he says, “From the fourth day I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And at the ninth hour,” he says, “I was praying.” (v. 30, 31.) It seems to me, that this man had also fixed for himself set times of a life under stricter rule, and on certain days) For this is why he says, “From the fourth day.” See how great a thing prayer is! When he advanced in piety, then the Angel appears to him. “From the fourth day:” i.e. of the week; not “four days ago.” For, “on the morrow Peter went away with them, and on the morrow after they entered into Caesarea:” this is one day: and the day on which the persons sent came (to Joppa) one day: and on the third (the Angel) appeared: so that there are two days after that on which (Cornelius) had been praying. “And, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing:” he does not say, an Angel, so unassuming is he: “and said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter: he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the seaside: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.” (v. 31-33.) (b) See what faith, what piety! He knew that it was no word of man that Peter spake, when

he said, “God hath shown me.” Then says the man, “We are present to hear all things that are commanded thee of the Lord. (a) Therefore it was that Peter asked, “For what intent have ye sent for me?” on purpose that he might so speak these very words. (d) “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him.” (v. 34, 35.) That is, be he uncircumcised or circumcised. (c) This also Paul declaring, saith, “For there is no respect of persons with God.” (Romans 2:11.) (e) What then? (it may be asked) is the man yonder in Persia acceptable to Him? If he be worthy, in this regard he is acceptable, that it should be granted him to be brought unto faith (τῷ καταξιοθῆναι τῆς πίστεως). The Eunuch from Ethiopia He overlooked not. “What shall one say then of the religious men who have been overlooked?” It is not the case, that any (such) ever was overlooked. But what he says is to this effect, that God rejects no man. “In every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness:” (by righteousness) he means, all virtue. Mark, how he subdues all elation of mind in him. That (the Jews) may not seem to be in the condition of persons cast off (he adds), “The word which He sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: He is Lord of all (v. 36): this he says also for the sake of those present (of the Jews), that He may persuade them also: this is why he forces Cornelius to speak. “He,” saith he, “is Lord of ally But observe at the very outset, “The word,” says he, “which He sent unto the children of Israel;” he gives them the preeminence. Then he adduces (these Gentiles) themselves as witnesses: “ye know,” says he, “the matter which came to pass throughout all Judea, beginning at Galilee — then he confirms it from this also — “after the baptism which John preached (v. 37) — (“even Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power.” (v. 38.) He does not mean, Ye know Jesus, for they did not know Him, but he speaks of the things done by Him: “Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: by this he shows that many cases of lost senses or paralyzed limbs are the devil’s work, and a wrench given to the body by him: as also Christ said. “For God was with Him.” Again, lowly terms. “And we are witnesses of all things which He did, both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem” (v. 39): both “we,” saith he, and ye. Then the Passion, and the reason why they do not believe: “Whom also they slew, and hanged on a tree. Him God raised up

the third day, and showed Him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead. (v. 40, 41.) This is a proof of the Resurrection. “And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.” (v. 42.) This is great. Then he adduces the testimony from the Prophets: “To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. (v. 43.) This is a proof of that which was about to be this is the reason why he here cites the Prophets.

But let us look over again what relates to Cornelius. (Recapitulation.) He sent, it says, to Joppa to fetch Peter. “He was waiting for him,” etc.; see how fully he believed that Peter would certainly come: (b) “and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.” (v. 24, 25.) (a) Mark how on every side it is shown how worthy he is! (So) the Eunuch there desired Philip to come up and sit in the chariot (ch. 8:31), although not knowing who he was, upon no other introduction (ἐπαγγελίας) than that given by the Prophet. But here Cornelius fell at his feet. (c) “Stand up, I myself also am a man.” (v. 26.) Observe how free from adulation his speech is on all occasions, and how full of humility. “And conversing with him, he came in.” (a) (v. 27.) Conversing about what? I suppose saying these words: “I myself also am a man.” (e) Do you mark (Peter’s) unassuming temper? He himself also shows that his coming is God’s doing: “Ye know that it is unlawful for a man that is a Jew,” etc. (v. 28.) And why did he not speak of the linen sheet? Observe Peter’s freedom from all vainglory: but, that he is sent of God, this indeed he mentions; of the manner in which he was sent, he speaks not at present; when the need has arisen, seeing he had said, “Ye know that it is unlawful for a man that is a Jew to keep company with, or to come unto, one of another nation,” he simply adds, “but to me God hath shown,” etc. There is nothing of vainglory here. “All ye,” he says, “know.” He makes their knowledge stand surety for him. But Cornelius says, “We are present before God to hear all things that are commanded thee of the Lord” (v. 33): not, Before man, but, “Before God.” This is the way one ought to attend to God’s servants. Do you see his awakened mind? do you see how worthy he was of all these things? “And Peter,” it says, “opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that

God is no respecter of persons.” (v. 34.) This he said also by way of justifying himself with the Jews then present. For, being at the point to commit the Word to these (Gentiles), he first puts this by way of apology. What then? Was He “a respecter of persons” beforetime? God forbid! For beforetime likewise it was just the same: “Every one,” as he saith, “that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, would be acceptable to Him.” As when Paul saith, “For when the Gentiles which have not the Law, do by nature the things of the Law.” (Romans 2:14.) “That feareth God and worketh righteousness:” he assumes both doctrine and manner of life: is “accepted with Him;” for, if He did not overlook the Magi, nor the Ethiopian, nor the thief, nor the harlot, much more them that work righteousness, and are willing, shall He in anywise not overlook. “What say you then to this, that there are likely persons (ἐπιεικεῖς), men of mild disposition, and yet they will not believe?” (Above, p. 149, note .) Lo, you have yourself named the cause: they will not. But besides the likely person he here speaks of is not this sort of man, but the man “that worketh righteousness:” that is, the man who in all points is virtuous and irreproachable, when he has the fear of God as he ought to have it. But whether a person be such, God only knows. See how this man was acceptable: see how, as soon as he heard, he was persuaded. “Yes, and now too,” say you, “every one would be persuaded, be who he may.” But the signs that are now, are much greater than those, and more wonderful. — Then Peter commences his teaching, and reserves for the Jews the privilege of their birth. “The word,” he says, “which He sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace (v. 36), not bringing judgment. He is sent to the Jews also: yet for all this He did not spare them. “Preaching peace through Jesus Christ. He is Lord of all.” First he discourses of His being Lord and in exceeding elevated terms, seeing he had to deal with a soul more than commonly elevated, and that took all in with ardor. Then he proves how He was Lord of all, from the things which He achieved “throughout all Judea. For ye know,” saith he, “the matter which came to pass throughout all Judea:” and, what is the wonderful part of it, “beginning at Galilee: after the baptism which John preached.” (v. 37.) First he speaks of His success, and then again he says concerning Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Why, what a stumbling-block, this birthplace! “How God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power. (v. 38.) Then again the proof — how does that appear? — from the good that He did.

“Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil:” and the greatness of the power shown when He overcomes the devil; and the cause, “Because God was with Him.” Therefore also the Jews spake thus: “We know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for none can do these miracles except God be with him.” (John 3:2.) Then, when he has shown that He was sent from God, he next speaks of this, that He was slain: that thou mayest not imagine aught absurd. Seest thou how far they are from hiding the Cross out of view, nay, that together with the other circumstances they put also the manner? “Whom also,” it says, “they slew by hanging on a tree. And gave Him,” it is added, “to be made manifest not to all the people, but to witnesses before ordained of God, even unto us:” and yet it was (Christ) Himself that elected them; but this also he refers to God. “To the before-ordained,” he says, “even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after that He was risen from the dead. (v. 39, 41.) See whence he fetches his assurance of the resurrection. What is the reason that being risen he did no sign, but only ate and drank? Because the Resurrection itself was a great sign, and of this nothing was so much a sign as the eating and drinking. “To testify,” saith he — in a manner calculated to alarm — that they may not have it in their power to fall back upon the excuse of ignorance: and he does not say, “that He is the Son of God,” but, what would most alarm them, “that it is He which is ordained of God, to be the Judge of quick and dead.” (v. 42.) “To him give all the Prophets witness,” etc. (v. 43.) When by the terror he has agitated them, then he brings in the pardon, not spoken from himself but from the Prophets. And what is terrifying is from him, what is mild from the Prophets.

All ye that have received this forgiveness, all ye to whom it has been vouchsafed to attain unto faith, learn, I beseech you, the greatness of the Gift, and study not to be insolent to your Benefactor. For we obtained forgiveness, not that we should become worse, but to make us far better and more excellent. Let none say that God is the cause of our evil doings, in that He did not punish, nor take vengeance. If (as it is said) a ruler having taken a murderer, lets him go, say, is he (not) judged to be the cause of the murders afterwards committed? See then, how we expose God to the tongues of the wicked. For what do they not say, what leave unuttered? “(God) Himself,” say they, “allowed them; for he ought to

have punished them as they deserved, not to honor them, nor crown them, nor admit them to the foremost privileges, but to punish and take vengeance upon them: but he that, instead of this, honors them, has made them to be such as they are.” Do not, I beseech and implore you, do not let any man utter such speech as far as we are concerned. Better to be buried ten thousand times over, than that God through us should be so spoken of! The Jews, we read, said to (Christ) Himself, “Thou that destroyest the Temple, and in three days buildest it up, come down from the Cross” (Matthew 27:40): and again, “If Thou be the Son of God:” but the reproaches here are more grievous than those, that through us He should be called a teacher of wickedness! Let us cause the very opposite to be said, by having our conversation worthy of Him that calleth us, and (worthily) approaching to the baptism of adoption. For great indeed is the might of baptism (φωτίσματος): it makes them quite other men than they were, that partake of the gift; it does not let the men be men (and nothing more). Make thou the Gentile (τὸν Ἕλληνα), to believe that great is the might of the Spirit, that it has new-molded, that it has fashioned thee anew. Why waitest thou for the last gasp, like a runaway slave, like a malefactor, as though it were not thy duty to live unto God? Why dost thou stand affected to Him, as if thou hadst in Him a ruthless, cruel Master? What can be more heartless (ψυχρότερον), what more miserable, than those who make that the time to receive baptism? God made thee a friend, and vouchsafed thee all His good things, that thou mayest act the part of a friend. Suppose you had done some man the greatest of wrongs, had insulted him, and brought upon him disgraces without end, suppose you had fallen into the hands of the person wronged, and he, in return for all this, had honored you, made you partaker of all that he had, and in the assembly of his friends, of those in whose presence he was insulted, had crowned you, and declared that he would hold you as his own begotten son, and then straightway had died: say, would you not have bewailed him? would you not have deemed his death a calamity? would you not have said, Would that he were alive, that I might have it in my power to make the fit return, that I might requite him, that I might show myself not base to my benefactor? So then, where it is but man, this is how you would act; and where it is God, are you eager to be gone, that you may not requite your benefactor for so great gifts? Nay rather, choose the time for coming to Him so that you shall have it in your power to requite Him like

for like. True, say you, but I cannot keep (the gift). Has God commanded impossibilities? Hence it is that all is clean reversed, hence that, all the world over, every thing is marred — because nobody makes it his mark to live after God. Thus those who are yet Catechumens, because they make this their object, (how they may defer baptism to the last,) give themselves no concern about leading an upright life: and those who have been baptized (*φωτισθεντες*), whether it be because they received it as children, or whether it be that having received it in sickness, and afterwards recovered (*ἀνενεγκόντες*), they had no hearty desire to live on (to the glory of God), so it is, that neither do these make an earnest business of it: nay, even such as received it in health, have little enough to show of any good impression, and warmly affected for the time, these also presently let the fire go out. Why do you flee? why do you tremble? what is it you are afraid of? You do not mean to say that you are not permitted to follow your business? I do not part you from your wife! No, it is from fornication that I bar you. I do not debar you from the enjoyment of your wealth? No, but from covetousness and rapacity. I do not oblige you to empty out all your coffers? No, but to give some small matter according to your means to them that lack, your superfluities to their need, and not even this unrewarded. We do not urge you to fast? We do but forbid you to besot yourselves with drunkenness and gormandizing. The things we would retrench are but the very things which bring you disgrace; things which even here, on this side of hell-fire, you yourselves confess to be things to be shunned and hated. We do not forbid you to be glad and to rejoice? Nay, only rejoice not with a disgraceful and unbecoming merriment. What is it you dread, why are you afraid, why do you tremble? Where marriage is, where enjoyment of wealth, where food in moderation, what matter of sin is there in these things? And yet, they that are without enjoin the opposites to these, and are obeyed, For they demand not according to thy means, but they say, Thou must give thus much: and if thou allege poverty, they will make no account of that. Not so Christ: Give, saith He, of what thou hast, and I inscribe thee in the first rank. Again those say, If thou wilt distinguish thyself, forsake father, mother, kindred, friends, and keep close attendance on the Palace, laboring, toiling, slaving, distracted, suffering miseries without number. Not so Christ; but keep thou, saith He, at home with thy wife, with thy children, and as for thy daily occupations reform and regulate them on the plan of leading a

peaceable life, free from cares and from perils. True, say you, but the other promises wealth. Aye, but Christ a kingdom, and more, He promises wealth also with it. For, “Seek ye,” saith He, “the kingdom of Heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33): throwing in, by way of additional boon, what the other holds out as the main thing: and the Psalmist says, he has “never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.” (Psalm 37:25.) Let us set about practicing virtue, let us make a beginning; let us only lay hold on it, and you shall see what the good will be. For surely in these (worldly) objects you do not succeed so without labor, that you should be so faint-hearted for these (higher) objects — that you should say, Those are to be had without labor, these only with toil. Nay, — what need to tell. you what is the true state of the case? — those are had only with greater labor. Let us not recoil from the Divine Mysteries, I beseech you. Look not at this, that one who was baptized before thee, has turned out ill, and has fallen from his hope: since among soldiers also we see some not doing their duty by the service, while we see others distinguishing themselves, and we do not look only at the idle ones, but we emulate these, the men who are successful. But besides, consider how many, after their baptism, have of men become angels! Fear the uncertainty of the future. “As a thief in the night,” so death comes: and not merely as a thief, but while we sleep it sets upon us, and carries us off while we are idling. To this end has God made the future uncertain, that we may spend Our time in the practice of virtue, because of the uncertainty of expectation. But He is merciful, say you. How long shall we hear this senseless, ridiculous talk? I affirm not only that God is merciful, but that nothing can be more merciful than He, and that He orders all things concerning us for our good. How many all their life do you see afflicted with the worst form of leprosy! (ἐν ἐλέφαντι διάγοντας), “Elephantiasis,”) how many blind from their earliest youth even to old age! others who have lost their eyesight, others in poverty, others in bonds, others again in the mines, others entombed (καταχωσθέντας) together, others (slaughtered) in wars! These things say you, do not look like mercy. Say, could He not have prevented these things had He wished, yet He permits them? True, say you. Say, those who are blind from their infancy, why are they so? I will not tell you, until you promise me to receive baptism, and, being baptized, to live aright. It is not right to give you the solution of these questions. The preaching is not

meant just for amusement. For even if I solve this, on the back of this follows another question: of such questions there is a bottomless deep. Therefore do not get into a habit of looking to have them solved for you: else we shall never stop questioning. For look, if I solve this, I do but lead the way to question upon question, numberless as the snowflakes. So that this is what we learn, rather to raise questions, not to solve the questions that are raised. For even if we do solve them, we have not solved them altogether, but (only) as far as man's reasoning goes. The proper solution of such questions is faith: the knowing that God does all things justly and mercifully and for the best: that to comprehend the reason of them is impossible. This is the one solution, and another better than this exists not. For say, what is the use of having a question solved? This, that one needs no longer to make a question of the thing which is solved. And if thou get thyself to believe this, that all things are ordered by the Providence of God, Who, for reasons known to Himself, permits some things and actively works others, thou art rid of the need of questioning, and hast gotten the gain of the solution. But let us come back to our subject. Do you not see such numbers of men suffering chastisements? God (say you) permits these things to be. Make the right use of the health of the body, in order to the health of the soul. But you will say, What is the use to me of labors and toil, when it is in my power to get quit of all (my sins) without labor? In the first place, this is not certain. It may happen, that a person not only does not get quit of his sins without labor, but that he departs hence with all his sins upon him. However, even if this were certain, still your argument is not to be tolerated. He has drawn thee to the contests: the golden arms lie there. When you ought to take them, and to handle them, you wish to be ingloriously saved, and to do no good work! Say, if war broke out, and the Emperor were here, and you saw some charging into the midst of the phalanxes of the enemy, hewing them down, dealing wounds by thousands, others thrusting (with the sword's point), others hounding (now here, now there), others dashing on horseback, and these praised by the Emperor, admired, applauded, crowned: others on the contrary thinking themselves well off if they take no harm, and keeping in the hindmost ranks, and sitting idly there; then after the close of the war, the former sort summoned, honored with the greatest gifts, their names proclaimed by the heralds: while of the latter, not even the name becomes known, and their reward of the good obtained

is only that they are safe: which sort would you wish to belong to? Why, if you were made of stone, if you were more stupid even than senseless and lifeless things, would you not ten thousand times rather belong to the former? Yea, I beseech and implore you. For if need were to fall fighting, ought you not eagerly to choose this? See you not how it is with them that have fallen in the wars, how illustrious they are, how glorious? And yet they, die a death, after which there is no getting honor from the emperor. But in that other war, there is nothing of the kind, but thou shalt in any wise be presented with thy scars. Which scars, even without persecutions, may it be granted all us to have to exhibit, through Jesus Christ our Lord, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory, dominion, honor, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 24

ACTS 10:44, 46

“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.”

OBSERVE God’s providential management. He does not suffer the speech to be finished, nor the baptism to take place upon a command of Peter, but, when He has made it evident how admirable their state of mind is, and a beginning is made of the work of teaching, and they have believed that assuredly baptism is the remission of sins, then forthwith comes the Spirit upon them. Now this is done by God’s so disposing it as to provide for Peter a mighty ground of justification And it is not simply that the Spirit came upon them, but, “they spake with tongues:” which was the thing that astonished those who had come together. They altogether disliked the matter, wherefore it is that the whole is of God; and as for Peter, it may almost be said, that he is present only to be taught (with them) the lesson, that they must take the Gentiles in hand, and that they themselves are the persons by whom this must be done. For whereas after all these great events, still both in Caesarea and in Jerusalem a questioning is made about it, how would it have been if these (tokens) had not gone step by step with the progress of the affair? Therefore it is that this is carried to a sort of excess. Peter seizes his advantage, and see the plea he makes of it. “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” (v. 47.) Mark the issue to which he brings it; how he has been travailing to bring this forth. So (entirely) was he of this mind! “Can any one, he asks, “forbid water?” It is the language, we may almost say, of one triumphantly pressing his advantage (ἐπεμβάλλοντος) against such as would forbid, such as should say that this ought not to be. The whole thing, he says, is complete, the most essential part of the business, the baptism with which we were baptized. “And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.” (v. 48.) After he has cleared himself, then, and not before, he commands them to be baptized: teaching them by the facts themselves. Such was the

dislike the Jews had to it! Therefore it is that he first clears himself, although the very facts cry aloud, and then gives the command. “Then prayed they him” — well might they do so — “to tarry certain days:” and with a good courage thenceforth he does tarry.

“And the Apostles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.” (ch. 11:1-3.) After such great things, “they of the circumcision contended:” not the Apostles; God forbid It means, they took no small offense. And see what they allege. They do not say, Why didst thou preach? but, Why didst thou eat with them? But Peter, not stopping to notice this frigid objection — for frigid indeed it is — takes his stand (ἵσταται) on that great argument, If they had the Spirit Itself given them, how could one refuse to give them the baptism? But how came it that in the case of the Samaritans this did not happen, but, on the contrary, neither before their baptism nor after it was there any controversy, and there they did not take it amiss, nay, as soon as they heard of it, sent the Apostles for this very purpose? (ch. 8:14.) True, but neither in the present case is this the thing they complain of; for they knew that it was of Divine Grace: what they say is, Why didst thou eat with them? Besides, the difference is not so great for Samaritans as it is for Gentiles. Moreover, it is so managed (as part of the Divine plan) that he is accused in this way: on purpose that they may learn: for Peter, without some cause given, would not have related the vision. But observe his freedom from all elation and vainglory. For it says, “But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying, I was in the city of Joppa, praying:” he does not say why, nor on what occasion: “and in a trance I saw a vision, a certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me (v. 4, 5): upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And I heard a voice saying unto the, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.” (v. 6, 7.) As much as to say, This of itself was enough to have persuaded me — my having seen the linen sheet: but moreover a Voice was added. “But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time

entered into my mouth.” (v. 8.) Do you mark? “I did my part,” says he: “I said, that I have never eaten aught common or unclean.” with reference to this that they said, “Thou wentest in, and didst eat with them.” But this he does not say to Cornelius: for there was no need to mention it to him. “But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.” (v. 9, 10.) The essential points were those (that ensued at Caesarea); but by these he prepares the way for them. Observe how he justifies himself (by reasons), and forbears to use his authority as teacher. For the more mildly he expresses himself, the more tractable he makes them. “At no time,” says he, “has aught common or unclean entered into my mouth. — And, behold — this too was part of his defense — three men stood at the house in which I was, sent to me from Caesarea. And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting.” (v. 11, 12.) Do you mark that it is to the Spirit the enacting of laws belongs! “And these also accompanied me” — noticing can be more lowly, when he alleges the brethren for witnesses! — “these six men, and we entered into the man’s house: and he showed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.” (v. 13, 14.) And he does not mention the words spoken by the Angel to Cornelius, “Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God, that he may not disgust them; but what says he? “He shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved:” with good reason this is added. Also he says nothing of the man’s fitness (ἐπιεικής). “The Spirit,” he might say, “having sent (me), God having commanded, on the one part having summoned (me) through the Angel, on the other urging (me) on, and solving my doubt about the things, what was I to do?” He says none of these things, however: but makes his strong point of what happened last, which even in itself was an incontrovertible argument. “And as I began to speak,” etc. (v. 15.) Then why did not this happen alone? Of superabundance (ἐκ περισίας) this is wrought by God, that it might be shown that the beginning too was not from the Apostle. But had he set out of his own motion, without any of these things having taken place, they would have been very much hurt: so that from the beginning he disposes their minds in his favor: saying to them, “Who have received the Holy Ghost even as we.” And not content

with this, he reminds them also of the words of the Lord: “Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.” (v. 16.) He means, that no new thing has happened, but just what the Lord foretold. “But there was no need to baptize?” (Comp. p. 158.) But the baptism was completed already. And he does not say, I ordered them to be baptized: but what says he? “Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?” (v. 17.) He shows that he had himself done nothing: for the very thing which we have obtained, he says, that same did those men receive. That he may more effectually stop their mouths, therefore he says, “The like gift.” Do you perceive how he does not allow them to have less: when they believed, says he, the same gift did God give unto them, as He did to us who believed on the Lord, and Himself cleanses them. And he does not say, To you, but *to us*. Why do you feel aggrieved, when *we* call them partakers (with *us*?) “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” (v. 18.) Do you mark that it all came of Peter’s discourse, by his admirably skillful way of relating the facts? They glorified God that He had given repentance to themselves (καὶ αὐτοῖς) also: they were humbled by these words. Hence was the door of faith opened thenceforth to the Gentiles. But, if you please, let us look over again what has been said.

“While Peter yet spake,” etc. (Recapitulation.) He does not say that Peter was astonished, but, “They of the circumcision:” since he knew what was in preparation. And yet they ought to have marveled at this, how they themselves had believed. When they heard that they had believed, they were not astonished, but when God gave them the Spirit. Then “answered Peter and said,” etc. (v. 47.) And therefore it is that he says, “God hath shown that I should not call common or unclean any human being.” (v. 28.) He knew this from the first, and plans his discourse beforehand (with a view to it). Gentiles? What Gentiles henceforth? They were no longer Gentiles, the Truth being come. It is nothing wonderful, he says, if before the act of baptism they received the Spirit: in our own case this same happened. Peter shows that not as the rest either were they baptized, but in a much better way. This is the reason why the thing takes place in this

manner, that they may have nothing to say, but even in this way may account them equal with themselves. “And they besought him,” it says, “to tarry certain days.” (v. 48.) “And the Apostles and brethren, etc. And they of the circumcision contended with him.” (ch. 11:1. 2.) Do you remark how they, were not kindly disposed towards him? Saying Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.” (v. 3.) Do you note what zeal they had for the Law? Not Peter’s authority abashed them, not the signs which had taken place, not the success achieved, what a thing it was, the Gentiles having “received the word:” but they contended about those petty things. For if none of those (signs) had taken place, was not the success (itself) enough? But not so does Peter frame his defense: for he was wise, or rather it was not his wisdom, but the Spirit that spake the words. And by the matter of his defense, he shows that in no one point was he the author, but in every point God, and upon Him he casts the whole. “The trance,” he says — “it was He that caused me to fall into it, for “I was in Joppa,” etc.: the vessel — it was He that showed it; I objected: again, He spake, and even then I did not hear: the Spirit commanded me to go, and even then though I went, I did not run: I told that God had sent me, and after these things, even then I did not baptize, but again God did the whole. God baptized them, not I.” And he does not say, Was it not right then to add the water? but, implying that nothing was lacking, “What was I, that I should withstand God?” What a defense is here! For he does not say, Then knowing these things, hold your peace; but what? He stands their attack, and to their impeachment he pleads — “What was I, to be able to hinder God?” It was not possible for me to hinder — a forcible plea indeed, and such as might well put them to shame. Whence being at last afraid, “they held their peace and glorified God.”

In like manner ought we also to glorify God for the good things which befall our neighbors, only not in the way that the rest of the newly-baptized are insulted, when they see others receiving baptism, and immediately departing this life. It, is right to glorify God, even though all be saved: and as for thee, if thou be willing, thou hast received a greater gift (than they): I do not mean in respect of the baptism, for the gift there is the same for him as for thee, but in regard that thou hast received a set time for winning distinction. The other put on the robe, and was not suffered to exhibit himself therewith in the procession, whereas to thee,

God hath given full opportunity to use thine arms for the right purpose, thereby to make proof of them. The other goes his way, having only the reward of his faith: thou standest in the course, both able to obtain an abundant recompense for thy works, and to show thyself as much more glorious than he, as the sun is than the smallest star, as the general, nay rather as the Emperor himself, than the lowest soldier. Then blame thyself, or rather not blame, but correct: for it is not enough to blame thyself; it is in thy power to contend afresh. Hast thou been thrown? hast thou taken grievous hurt? Stand up, recover thyself: thou art still in the course, the meeting (θέατρον) is not yet broken up. Do you not see how many that have been thrown in the wrestling have afterwards resumed the combat? Only do not willingly come by thy fall. Dost thou count him a happy man for departing this life? Much rather count thyself happy. Was he released of his sins? But thou, if thou wilt, shalt not only wash away thy sins, but shalt also have achievements (of good works), which in his case is not possible. It is in our power to recover ourselves. Great are the medicinal virtues (φάρμακα) Of repentance: let none despair of himself. That man truly deserves to be despaired of, who despairs of himself; that man has no more salvation, nor any hopes. It is not the having fallen into a depth of evils, it is the lying there when fallen, that is dreadful, it is not the having come into such a condition, it is the making light of it that is impious. The very thing that ought to make thee earnest, say, is it this that makes thee reckless? Having received so many wounds, hast thou fallen back? Of the soul, there can be no incurable wound; for the body, there are many such, but none for the soul: and yet for those we cease not in our endeavors to cure them, while for these we are supine. Seest thou not the thief (on the cross), in how short a time he achieved (his salvation)? Seest thou not the Martyrs, in how short a time they accomplished the whole work? "But martyrdom is not to be had nowadays." True, but there are contests to be had, as I have often told you, if we had the mind. "For they that wish," says the Apostle, "to live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." (2 Timothy 3:12.) They that live godly are always undergoing persecution, if not from men, at any rate from evil spirits, which is a more grievous persecution. Yes, and it is in consequence, first and foremost, of ease and comfort, that those who are not vigilant undergo this. Or thinkest thou it is a trifling persecution to be living at ease? This is more grievous than all, this is worse than persecution. For, like a running flux, ease makes the soul

languid (*χαυνοῖ*): and as summer and winter, so persecution and ease. But to show you that this is the worse persecution, listen: it induces sleep in the soul, an excessive yawning and drowsiness, it stirs up the passions on every side, it arms pride, it arms pleasure, it arms anger, envy, vainglory, jealousy. But in time of persecution none of these is able to make a disturbance; but fear, entering in, and plying the lash vigorously, as one does to a barking dog, will not let any of these passions so much as attempt to give tongue. Who shall be able in time of persecution to indulge in vainglory? Who to live in pleasure? Not one: but there is much trembling and fear, making a great calm, composing the harbor into stillness, filling the soul with awe. I have heard from our fathers (for in our own time God grant it may not happen, since we are bidden not to ask for temptation), that in the persecution of old time one might see men that were indeed Christian. None of them cared for money, none for wife, none for children, nor home, nor country: the one great concern with all was to save their lives (or, souls). There were they hiding, some in tombs and sepulchers, some in deserts: yes tender and dainty women too, fighting all the while with constant hunger. Then think whether any longing for sumptuous and dainty living at all came into the mind of a woman, while in hiding beside a coffin (*παρὰ λάρνακι*), and waiting for her maid-servant to bring her meal, and trembling lest she should be taken, and lying in her terror as in a furnace: was she even aware that there ever was such a thing as dainty living, that such things as dress and ornaments exist at all (*ὅτι κόσμος ὅλως ἐστίν*)? Seest thou that now is the persecution, with our passions, like wild beasts, setting upon us on every side? Now is the trying persecution, both in this regard, and especially if it is not even thought to be persecution at all. For this (persecution) has also this evil in it, that being war, it is thought to be peace, so that we do not even arm ourselves against it, so that we do not even rise: no one fears, no one trembles. But if ye do not believe me, ask the heathen, the persecutors, at what time was the conduct of the Christians more strict, at what time were they all more proved? Few indeed had they then become in number, but rich in virtue. For say, what profit is it, that there should be hay in plenty, when there might be precious tones? The amount consists not in the sum of numbers, but in the proved worth. Elias was one: yet the whole world was not worth so much as he. And yet the world consists of myriads: but they are no myriads, when they do not even come up to that one. “Better

is one that doeth the will of God, than ten thousand who are transgressors:” for the ten thousands have not yet reached to the one. “Desire not a multitude of unprofitable children.” (Ecclus. 16:1.) Such bring more blasphemy against God, than if they were not Christians. What need have I of a multitude? It is (only) more food for the fire. This one might see even in the body, that better is moderate food with health, than a (fatted) calf with damage. This is more food than the other: this is food, but that is disease. This too one may see in war: that better are ten expert and brave men, than ten thousand of no experience. These latter, besides that they do no work, hinder also those that do work. The same too one may see to be the case in a ship, viz. that better are two experienced mariners, than ever so great a number of unskillful ones: for these will sink the ship. These things I say, not as looking with an evil eye upon your numbers, but wishing that all of you should be approved men, and not trust in your numbers. Many more in number are they who go down into hell: but greater than it is the Kingdom, however few it contain. As the sand of the sea was the multitude of the people (Israel) yet one man saved them. Moses was but one, and yet he availed more than they all: Joshua was one and he was enabled to do more than the six hundred thousand. Let us not make this our study merely, that (the people) may be many, but rather, that they may be excellent; when this shall have been effected, then will that other follow also. No one wishes at the outset to make a spacious house, but he first makes it strong and sure, then spacious: no one lays the foundations so that he may be laughed at. Let us first aim at this, and then at the other. Where this is, that also will be easy: but where this is not, the other, though it be, is to no profit. For if there be those who are able to shine in the Church, there will soon be also numbers: but where these are not, the numbers will never be good for anything. How many, suppose you, may there be in our city who are likely to be saved (τοὺς σωζομένους)? It is disagreeable, what I am going to say, but I will say it nevertheless. Among all these myriads, there are not to be found one hundred likely to be saved: nay, even as to these, I question it. For think, what wickedness there is in the young, what supineness in the aged! None makes it his duty to look after his own boy, none is moved by anything to be seen in his elder, to be emulous of imitating such an one. The patterns are defaced, and therefore it is that neither do the young become admirable in conduct. Tell not me, “We are a goodly multitude:” this is the speech of

men who talk without thought or feeling ($\psi\upsilon\chi\rho\acute{\omega}\nu$.) In the concerns of men indeed, this might be said with some show of reason: but where God is concerned, (to say this with regard to Him) as having need of us, can never be allowed. Nay, let me tell you, even in the former case, this is a senseless speech ($\psi\upsilon\chi\rho\acute{\omicron}\nu$). Listen. A person that has a great number of domestics, if they be a corrupt set what a wretched time will he have of it! For him who has none, the hardship, it seems, amounts to this, that he is not waited on: but where a person has bad servants, the evil is, that he is ruining himself withal, and the damage is greater (the more there are of them.) For it is far worse than having to be one's own servant, to have to fight with others, and take up a (continual) warfare. These things I say, that none may admire the Church because of its numbers, but that we may study to make the multitude proof-worthy; that each may be earnest for his own share of the duty — not for his friends only, nor his kindred as I am always saying, nor for his neighbors, but that he may attract the strangers also. For example, Prayer is going on; there they lie (on bended knees), all the young, stupidly unconcerned ($\psi\upsilon\chi\rho\acute{\omicron}\iota$), (yes,) and old too: filthy nuisances rather than young men; giggling, laughing outright, talking — for I have heard even this going on — and jeering one another as they lie along on their knees: and there stand you, young man or elder: rebuke them, if you see them (behaving thus): if any will not refrain, chide him more severely: call the deacon, threaten, do what is in your power to do: and if he dare do anything to you, assuredly you shall have all to help you. For who is so irrational, as, when he sees you chiding for such conduct, and them chidden not to take your part? Depart, having received your reward from the Prayer. — In a master's house, we count those his best-disposed servants, who cannot bear to see any part of his furniture in disorder. Answer me; if at home you should see the silver plate lie tossed out of doors, though it is not your business, you will pick it up and bring it into the house: if you see a garment flung out of its place, though you have not the care of it, though you be at enmity with him whose business it is, yet, out of goodwill to the master, will you not put it right? So in the present case. These are part of the furniture: if you see them lying about in disorder, put them to rights: apply to me, I do not refuse the trouble: inform me, make the offender known to me: it is not possible for me to see all: excuse me (in this). See, what wickedness overspreads the whole world! Said I without reason that we are (no better than) so much hay

(disorderly as) a troubled sea? I am not talking of those (young people), that they behave thus; (what I complain of, is) that such a sleepy indifference possesses those who come in here, that they do not even correct this misbehavior. Again I see others stand talking while Prayer is going on; while the more consistent of them (do this) not only during the Prayer, but even when the Priest is giving the Benediction. O, horror! When shall there be salvation? when shall it be possible for us to propitiate God? — Soldiers go to their diversion, and you shall see them, all keeping time in the dance, and nothing done negligently, but, just as in embroidery and painting, from the well-ordered arrangement in each individual part of the composition, there results at once an exceeding harmony and good keeping, so it is here: we have one shield, one head, all of us (in common): and if but some casual point be deranged by negligence, the whole is deranged and is spoilt, and the good order of the many is defeated by the disorder of the one part. And, fearful indeed to think of, here you come, not to a diversion, not to act in a dance, and yet you stand disorderly. Know you not that you are standing in company with angels? with them you chant, with them sing hymns, and do you stand laughing? Is it not wonderful that a thunderbolt is not launched not only at those (who behave thus), but at us? For such behavior might well be visited with the thunderbolt. The Emperor is present, is reviewing the army: and do you, even with His eyes upon you, stand laughing, and endure to see another laughing? How long are we to go on chiding, how long complaining? Ought not such to be treated as very pests and nuisances; as abandoned, worthless reprobates, fraught with innumerable mischiefs, to be driven away from the Church? When will these forebear laughing, who laugh in the hour of the dread Mystery (ἐν ᾧρα φρίκης)? when refrain from their trifling, who talk at the instant of the Benediction? Have they no sense of shame before those who are present? have they no fear of God? Are our own idle thoughts not enough for us, is it not enough that in our prayers we rove hither and thither, but laughter also must needs intrude, and bursts of merriment? Is it a theatrical amusement, what is done here? Aye, but, methinks, it is the theatres that do this: to the theatres we owe it that the most of you so refuse to be curbed by us, and to be reformed. What we build up here, is thrown down there: and not only so, but the hearers themselves cannot help being filled with other filthinesses besides: so that the case is just the same as if one should want

to clean out a place with a fountain above it discharging mire; for however much you may clean out, more runs in. So it is here. For when we clean people out, as they come here from the theatres with their filthiness, thither they go again, and take in a larger stock of filthiness, as if they lived for the purpose of only giving us trouble, and then come back to us, laden with ordure, in their manners, in their movements, in their words, in their laughter, in their idleness. Then once more we begin shoveling it out afresh, as if we had to do this only on purpose that, having sent them away clean, we may again see them clogging themselves with filth. Therefore I solemnly protest to you, the sound members, that this will be to you judgment and condemnation, and I give you over to God from this time forth, if any having seen a person behaving disorderly, if any having seen any person talking, especially in that part (of the Service), shall not inform against him, not bring him round (to a better behavior). To do this is better than prayer. Leave thy prayer and rebuke him, that thou mayst both do him good, and thyself get profit, and so we may be enabled all to be saved and to attain unto the Kingdom of Heaven, through the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory, dominion, honor, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 25

ACTS 11:19

“Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that rose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenice and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.”

THE persecution turned out to be no slight benefit as “to them that love God all things work together for good.” (Romans 8:28.) If they had made it their express study how best to establish the Church, they would have done no other thing than this — they dispersed the teachers. Mark in what quarters the preaching was extended. “They traveled,” it says, “as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch; to none however did they preach the word but to Jews only.” Dost thou mark with what wise purposes of Providence so much was done in the case of Cornelius? This serves both to justify Christ, and to impeach the Jews. When Stephen was slain, when Paul was twice in danger, when the Apostles were scourged, then the Gentiles received the word, then the Samaritans. Which Paul also declares: “To you it was necessary that the Word of God should first be spoken; but since ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy, lo, we turn unto the Gentiles.” (ch. 13:46.) Accordingly they went about, preaching to Gentiles also. “But some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks, preaching the Lord Jesus:” (v. 20.) for it is likely both that they could now speak Greek, and that there were such men in Antioch. “And the hand of the Lord,” it says, “was with them,” that is, they wrought miracles; “and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.” (v. 21.) Do you mark why now also there was heed of miracles (namely) that they might believe? “Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.” (v. 22.) What may be the reason that, when such a city received the word, they did not come themselves? Because of the Jews. But they send Barnabas. However, it is no small part of the providential management even so that Paul comes to be there. It is both natural, and it is wisely ordered, that they are averse to him, and (so) that Voice of the Gospel, that Trumpet of heaven, is not shut up in Jerusalem. Do you

mark how on all occasions, Christ turns their ill dispositions to needful account and for the benefit of the Church? Of their hatred to the man, He availed Himself for the building up of the Church. But observe this holy man — Barnabas, I mean — how he looked not to his own interests, but hasted to Tarsus. “Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart, they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.” (v. 23, 24.) He was a very kind man, and single-hearted, and considerate (**συγγνωμονικός**). “Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul.” (v. 25.) He came to the athletic wrestler, the general (fit to lead armies), the champion of single combat, the lion — I am at a loss for words, say what I will — the hunting-dog, killer of lions, bull of strength, lamp of brightness, mouth sufficing for a world. “And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch.” (v. 26.) Verily this is the reason why it was there they were appointed to be called Christians, because Paul there spent so long time! “And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the Church, and taught much people. And the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.” No small matter of praise to that city! This is enough to make it a match for all, that for so long a time it had the benefit of that mouth, it first, and before all others: wherefore also it was there in the first place that men were accounted worthy of that name. Do you observe the benefit resulting (to that city) from Paul, to what a height that name, like a standard (**σημεῖον**), exalted it? Where three thousand, where five thousand, believed, where so great a multitude, nothing of the sort took place, but they were called “they of the way:” here they were called Christians. “And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.” (v. 27.) It was need that the fruit of alms should also be planted there. And see how of necessity (**ἀναγκάτως**) (it comes about that) none of the men of note becomes their teacher. They got for their teachers, men of Cyprus, and Cyrene, and Paul — though he indeed surpassed (the Apostles) themselves — since Paul also had for teachers Ananias and Barnabas. But here of necessity (this was the case). “And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there would be great dearth throughout the world, which also came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.” (v. 28.) “By the Spirit,” it says: for; that they may not imagine that this was the reason why the famine came, (namely) because

Christianity was come in, because the demons were departed, the Holy Ghost foretells it: this, however, was nothing wonderful, for in fact Christ predicted it. Not this was the reason, else this must have been the case from the beginning: but it was because of the evils done to the Apostles — and God had born long with them; but, when they pressed upon them, a great famine ensues, betokening to the Jews the coming woes. “If it was because of them, in any vase it ought to have stopped (there), when it did exist. What harm had the Gentiles done, that they should have their share in the evils? They ought rather to have been marked as approved (εὐδοκίμησαι), because they were doing their part, were slaying, punishing, taking vengeance, persecuting on every side. And mark also at what time the famine comes: precisely when the Gentiles were thenceforth added to the Church. But if, as you say, it was because of the evils (done by the Jews), these ought to have been exempted.” How so? Christ, forestalling this objection, said, “Ye shall have tribulation.” (John 16:33.) (It is) just as if you should say, They ought not to have been scourged either. “Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea.” (v. 29.) Mark how the famine becomes to them the means of salvation, an occasion of almsgiving, a harbinger of many blessing. And (so it might have been) to you, one may say, if you were so minded, but ye would not. But it is predicted, that they might be prepared beforehand for almsgiving. “Unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea;” for they were enduring great hardships, but before this, they were not suffering from famine. “Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.” (v. 30.) Do you mark them, that no sooner do they believe than they bring forth fruit, not only for their own but for those afar off? And Barnabas is sent and Saul, to minister (the same.) Of this occasion (Ἐνταῦθα) he says (to the Galatians), “And James, Cephas, and John gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, only” (they would) “that we should remember the poor.” (Galatians 2:9.) James was yet living.

“Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution,” etc. (Recapitulation.) Do you mark how even in the tribulation instead of failing to lamentations and tears as we do, they give themselves up to a great and good work? “Traveled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch,” and there with more security preached the word. “And some of

them, which were men of Cyprus and Cyrene,” etc. (v. 20.) And they did not say, “(What), we, Cyrenians and Cyprians, to attack this splendid and great city!” but trusting in the grace of God, they applied themselves to the work of teaching, nor did these (Gentiles) themselves think scorn to learn anything of them. Mark how by small means all is brought about: mark the preaching how it spreads: mark those in Jerusalem, having like care for all, holding the whole world as one house. “They heard that Samaria had received the word, and” (ch. 8:14) to Samaria they send the Apostles: they heard what had befallen at Antioch, and to Antioch they send Barnabas: they also send again, and (these) prophets. For the distance was great, and it was not meet the Apostles at present should separate from thence, that they might not be thought to be fugitives, and to have fled from their own people. But then, almost precisely, is the time of their parting from Jerusalem, when the state (of the Jews) was shown to be past remedy, when the war was close at hand, and they must needs perish: when the sentence was made absolute. For, until Paul went to Rome, the Apostles were there (at Jerusalem). But they depart, not because afraid of the war — how should it be so? — seeing those they went to, were those that should bring the war: and moreover the war breaks out only after the Apostles were dead. For of them (the Apostles) says, “The wrath is come upon them unto the end.” (1 Thessalonians 2:16.) The more insignificant the persons, the more illustrious the grace, working great results by small means. — “And he exhorted them to cleave unto the Lord, for he was a good man.” (v. 23, 24.) By “good man,” I take it, he means one that is kind, (*χρηστὸν*) sincere, exceedingly desirous of the salvation of his neighbors — “for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. To cleave unto the Lord with purpose of heart” (this is said): with encomium and praise. “And much people was added unto the Lord:” for like rich land this city received the word, and brought forth much fruit. “Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus,” etc. (v. 25.) But why did he take him off from Tarsus and bring him here? Not without good reason; for here were both good hopes, and a greater city, and a great body of people. See how grace works all, not Paul: by small means the affair was taking its commencement. When it is become difficult the Apostles take it up. Why did they not before this seen Barnabas? Because they had enough to do (*ἡσχόληντο*) with Jerusalem. Again they justified themselves to the Jews, that the Gentiles were receiving (*προσελάμβανε*)

the word, even without enjoying so great attention. There is about to be a questioning: therefore the affair of Cornelius forestalled it. Then indeed they say, “That we to the Gentiles, and they to the Circumcision.” (Galatians 2:9.) Observe, henceforth the very stress of the famine introduces the fellowship on the part of the Gentiles, namely, from the alms. For they receive the offerings sent from them. “Now they which were scattered abroad,” etc. (v. 19) and not as we who pass our time in lamentations and tears, in our calamities; but with more fearlessness they passed their time, as having got to a distance from those hindering them, and as being among men not afraid of the Jews: which also helped. And they came to Cyprus, where they had the sea between them, and greater freedom from anxiety: so they made no account of the fear of men, but (still) they gave the precedence to the regard of the Law: “they spake to Jews only. But there were in Antioch certain men of Cyprus and Cyrene:” these, of all others, least cared for the Jews: “who spake unto the Greeks, preaching the Lord Jesus.” (v. 20.) Probably it was because of their not knowing Hebrew, that they called them Greeks. And “when” Barnabas, it says, “came and had seen the grace of God,” — not the diligence of men — “he exhorted them to cleave unto the Lord” (v. 23): and by this he converted more. “And much people was added unto the Lord.” Why do they not write to Paul, but send Barnabas? They did not yet know the virtue of the man: but it is providentially ordered that Barnabas should come. As there was a multitude, and none to hinder, well might the faith grow, and above all because they had no trials to undergo. Paul also preaches, and is no longer compelled to flee. And it is well ordered, that not they speak of the famine, but the prophets. The men of Antioch also did not take it amiss that they sent not the Apostles, but were content with their teachers so fervent were they all for the word. They did not wait for (the famine to come, but before this they sent: “according as each had the ability.” And observe, among the Apostles, others are put in charge with this trust but here Paul and Barnabas. For this was no small order (οἰκονομία) of Providence. Besides, it was the beginning, and it was not fit they should be offended.

“As each had the ability, they sent.” But now, none does this, although there is a famine more grievous than that. For the cases are not alike, for (all) to bear the calamity in common, and, while all (the rest) abound, for

the poorer to be famishing. And the expression shows that the givers also were poor, for, it says, “as each of them had the means.” A twofold famine, even as the abundance is twofold: a severe famine, a famine not of hearing the word of the Lord, but of being nourished by alms. Then, both the poor in Judea enjoyed the benefit, and so did those in Antioch who gave their money; yea, these more than those: but now, both we and the poor are famishing: they being in lack of necessary sustenance, and we in luxurious living, lacking the mercy of God. But this is a food, than which nothing can be more necessary. This is not a food, from which one has to undergo the evils of repletion: not a food, of which the most part ends in the draught. (ἀφεδρῶνα.) Nothing more beautiful, nothing more healthful, than a soul nurtured by this food: it is set high above all disease, all pestilence, all indigestion and distemper: none shall be able to overcome it, (ἐλεῖν) but just as, if one’s body were made of adamant, no iron, nor anything else, would have power to hurt it, even so when the soul is firmly compact by almsgiving, nothing at all shall be able to overcome it. For say, what shall spoil this? Shall poverty? It cannot be, for it is laid up in the royal treasuries. But shall robber and housebreaker? Nay, those are walls which none shall be able to break through. But shall the worm? Nay, this treasure is set far above the reach of this mischief also. But shall envy and the evil eye? Nay, neither by these can it be overcome. But shall false accusations and plottings of evil? No, neither shall this be, for safe as in an asylum is this treasure. But it were a shame should I make it appear as if the advantages which belong to almsgiving were only these (the absence of these evils), and not (the presence of) their opposites. For in truth it is not merely that it is secure from ill-will; it also gets abundant blessing from those whom it benefits. For as the cruel and unmerciful not only have for enemies those whom they have injured, but those also who are not themselves hurt, partake the grief and join in the accusation: so those that have done great good have not only those who are benefited, but those also who are not themselves affected, to speak their praises. Again (that), it is secure from the attacks of the evil-disposed, and robbers, and housebreakers — what, is this all the good, or is it this — that besides the not suffering diminution, it grows also and increases into multitude? What more shameful than Nebuchadnezzar, what more foul, what more iniquitous? The man was impious; after tokens and signs without number he refused to come to his senses (ἀνενεγκεῖν), but cast the servants of

God into a furnace: and (yet) after these doings, he worshipped. What then said the Prophet? “Wherefore,” saith he, “e king let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, ransom (λύτρωσαι) thy sins by alms, and thine iniquities by mercies to the poor: peradventure there shall be pardon for thy transgressions.” (Daniel 3:27;) In so speaking, he said it not doubting, nay, with entire confidence, but wishing to put him in greater fear, and to make a stronger necessity of doing these things. For if he had spoken it as a thing unquestionable, the king would have been more supine: just as it is with us, we then most urge some person (whom we wish to persuade), when they say to us, “Exhort such an one,” and do not add, “he will be sure to hear,” but only, “peradventure he will hear:” for by leaving it doubtful, the fear is made greater, and urges him the more. This is the reason why the Prophet did not make the thing certain to him. What sayest thou? For so great impieties shall there be pardon? Yes. There is no sin, which alms cannot cleanse, none, which alms cannot quench: all sin is beneath this: it is a medicine adapted for every wound. What worse than a publican? The very matter (ἰπόθεσις) (of his occupation) is altogether one of injustice: and yet Zaccheus washed away all these (sins). Mark how even Christ shows this, by the care taken to have a purse, and to bear the contributions put into it. And Paul also says, “Only that we remember the poor” (Galatians 2:10): and everywhere the Scripture has much discourse concerning this matter. “The ransom,” it saith, “of a man’s soul is his own wealth” (Proverbs 13, 8): and With reason: for, saith (Christ), “if thou wouldest be perfect, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and come, follow Me.” (Matthew 19:21.) This may well be part of perfection. But alms may be done not only by money, but by acts. For example: one may kindly stand (προστήναι) by a person (to succor and defend him), one may reach to him a helping hand: the service rendered (προστασία) by acts has often done more good even than money. Let us set to work all the different kinds of alms-giving. Can you do alms by money? Be not slack. Can you by good offices? Say not, Because I have no money, this is nothing. This is a very great point: look upon it as if you had given gold. Can you do it by kind attentions (θεραπείας)? Do this also. For instance, if you be a physician, (give) your skill: for this also is a great matter. Can you by counsel? This (service) is much greater than all: this (alms) is better than all, or it is also more, by how much the gain it has is greater. For in so doing you put away not starvation, but a grievous death. (ch.

3:6; 6:4.) With such alms the Apostles above measure abounded: therefore it was that the distribution of money they put into the hands of those after them, themselves exhibiting the (mercy) shown by words. Or is it, think you, a small alms, to a lost, castaway soul, a soul in uttermost jeopardy, possessed by a burning fever (**πυρώσεως**), to be able to rid it of its disease? For example, do you see one possessed by love of money? Pity the man. Is he in danger of suffocation? Quench his fire. “What if he will not be persuaded?” Do your part, and be not remiss. Have you seen him in bonds? — for wealth is indeed bonds. (Matthew 25:35 ff.) Go to him, visit him, console him, try to release him of his bonds. if he refuse, he shall bear the blame himself. Have you seen him naked, and a stranger? — for he is indeed naked, and a stranger to heaven. Bring him to your own inn, clothe him with the garment of virtue, give him the city which is in heaven. “What if I myself be naked?” say you. Clothe also yourself first: if you know that you are naked, assuredly you know that you need to be clothed; if you know what sort of nakedness this is. What numbers of women now wear silken apparel but are indeed naked of the garments of virtue! Let their husbands clothe these women. “But they will not admit those garments; they choose to have these.” Then do this also first: induce them to have a longing for those garments: show them that they are naked: speak to them of judgment to come: answer me, what is the clothing we shall need there? But if ye will bear with me, I also will show you this nakedness. He that is naked, when it is cold, shrinks and shudders, and stands there cowering, and with his arms folded: but in summer heat, not so. If then I shall prove to you that your rich men, and rich women, the more they put on, the more naked they are, do not take it amiss. How then, I ask you, when we raise the subject of hell-fire, and of the torments there? Do not these shrink and shudder more than those naked ones? Do they not bitterly groan and condemn themselves? What? when they come to this or that man, and say to him, Pray for me, do they not speak the same words as those (naked wretches)? Now indeed, after all that we can say, the nakedness is not yet apparent: but it will be plain enough there. How, and in what way? When these silken garments and precious stones shall have perished, and it shall be only by the garments of virtue and of vice that all men are shown, when the poor shall be clad with exceeding glory, but the rich, naked and in disgraceful sort, shall be baled away to their punishments. What more naked (Edd. “more dainty”) than that rich

man who arrayed himself in purple? What poorer than Lazarus? Then which of them uttered the words of beggars? which of them was in abundance? Say, if one should deck his house with abundance of tapestry hangings, and himself sit naked within, what were the benefit? So it is in the case of these women. Truly, the house of the soul, the body I mean, they hang round with plenty of garments: but the mistress of the house sits naked within. Lend me the eyes of the soul, and I will show you the soul's nakedness. For what is the garment of the soul? Virtue, of course. And what its nakedness? Vice. For just as, if one were to strip any decent person, that person would be ashamed, and would shrink and cower out of sight; just so the soul, if we wish to see it, the soul which has not these garments, blushes for shame. How many women, think you, at this moment feel ashamed, and would fain sink to the very depth, as if seeking some sort of curtain, or screen, that they may not hear these words? But those who have no evil conscience, are exhilarated, rejoice, find delight, and gayly deck themselves (*ἐγκαλλωπίζονται*) with the things said. Hear concerning that blessed Thekla, how, that she might see Paul, she gave even her gold: and thou wilt not give even a farthing that thou mayest see Christ: thou admirest what she did, but dost not emulate her. Hearest thou not that "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy?" (Matthew 5:7.) What is the gain of your costly garments? how long shall we continue agape for this attire? Let us put on the glory of Christ: let us array ourselves with that beauty, that both here we may be praised, and there attain unto the eternal good things, by the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom, to the Father and the Holy Ghost together, be glory, dominion, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 26

ACTS 12:1, 2

“Now at that time Herod the King stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. Then were the days of unleavened bread.”

“AT that time,” of course meaning the time immediately following: for this is the custom of Scripture. And he well says that Herod “the king” (did this): this was not he of Christ’s time. Lo, a different sort of trial — and mark what I said in the beginning, how things are blended, how rest and trouble alternate in the whole texture of the history — not now the Jews, nor the Sanhedrim, but the king. Greater the power, the warfare more severe, the more it was done to obtain favor with the Jews. “And,” it says, “he slew James the brother of John with the sword:” (taking him) at random and without selection. But, should any raise a question, why God permitted this, we shall say, that it was for the sake of these (Jews) themselves: thereby, first, convincing them, that even when slain (the Apostles) prevail, just as it was in the case of Stephen: secondly, giving them opportunity, after satiating their rage, to recover from their madness; thirdly, showing them that it was by His permission this was done. “And when he saw,” it says, “that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. O excessive wickedness! On whose behalf was it, that he gratified them by doing murders thus without plan or reason? “And it was the day of unleavened bread.” Again, the idle preciseness of the Jews: to kill indeed they forbade not, but at such a time they did such things! “Whom having arrested, he put in ward, having delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers.” (v. 4.) This was done both of rage, and of fear. “He slew,” it says, “James the brother of John with the sword.” Do you mark their courage? For, that none may say that without danger or fear of danger they brave death, as being sure of God’s delivering them, therefore he permits some to be put to death, and chief men too, Stephen and James, thereby convincing their slayers themselves, that not even these things make them fall away, and hinder them. “Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for

him.” (v. 5.) For the contest was now for life and death: both the slaying of the one made them fearful, and the casting of the other into prison. “And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains; and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.” (v. 6, 7.) In that night He delivered him. “And a light shined in the prison,” that he might not deem it fancy: and none saw the light, but he only. For if, notwithstanding this was done, he thought it a fancy, because of its unexpectedness; if this had not been, much more would he have thought this: so prepared was he for death. For his having waited there many days and not being saved caused this. Why then, say you, did He not suffer him to fall into the hands of Herod, and then deliver him? Because that would have brought people into astonishment, whereas this was credible: and they would not even have been thought human beings. But in the case of Stephen, what did He not do? Did He not show them his face as it had been the face of an angel? But what in short did He leave undone here also? “And the angel said to him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals.” (v. 8.) Here again it shows, that it was not done of craft: for one that is in haste and wishes to break out (of prison), is not so particular as to take his sandals, and gird himself. “And he did so And he said unto him, Put on thy cloak, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him and wist not that it was true which was done by the Angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of its own accord.” (v. 9, 10.) Behold, a second miracle. “And they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent His Angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.” (v. 10, 11.) When the angel departed, then Peter understood: “Now I perceive,” says he, not then. But why is this so, and why is Peter not sensible of the things taking place, although he had already experienced a like deliverance when all were released? (ch. 5:18.) (The Lord) would have the pleasure come to him all at once, and that he should first be at liberty, and then be sensible of what had happened. The

circumstance also of the chains having fallen off from his hands, is a strong argument of his not having fled. “And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.” (v. 12.) Observe how Peter does not immediately withdraw, but first brings the good tidings to his friends. “And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter’s voice, she opened not the gate for gladness,” — Mark even the servant-girls, how full of piety they are, — “but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.” (v. 13-15.) But they, though it was so, shook their heads (incredulously): “And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. And they said, It is his angel. “But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished. But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go show these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.” (v. 16, 17.) But let us review the order of the narrative.

(Recapitulation.) “At that time,” it says, “Herod the king stretched forth his hands to afflict certain of the Church.” (v. 1.) Like a wild beast, he attacked all indiscriminately and without consideration. This is what Christ said: “My cup indeed ye shall drink, and with the baptism wherewith I am baptized, shall ye be baptized.” (Mark 10:39.) (b) “And he killed James the brother of John.” (v. 2.) For there was also another James, the brother of the Lord: therefore to distinguish him, he says, “The brother of John.” Do you mark that the sum of affairs rested in these three, especially Peter and James? (a) And how was it he did not kill Peter immediately? It mentions the reason: “it was the day of unleavened bread:” and he wished rather to make a display (ἐκπομπεύσαι) with the killing of him. “And when he saw it pleased the Jews.” (v. 3.) For their own part, they now in consequence of Gamaliel’s advice, abstained from bloodshedding: and besides, did not even invent accusations; but by means of others they compassed the same results. (c) This (counsel of Gamaliel’s) above all was their condemnation: for the preaching was shown to be no longer a thing of men. “He proceeded further to kill Peter also.” (ch. 5:8.) In very deed was that fulfilled, “We are accounted as

sheep for the slaughter.” (Psalm 44:13.) “Seeing,” it says, “it was a pleasing thing to the Jews.” (Romans 8:36.) A pleasing thing, bloodshed, and unrighteous bloodshed, wickedness, impiety! He ministered to their senseless (ἀτόποις) lusts: for, whereas he ought to have done the contrary, to check their rage, he made them more eager, as if he were an executioner, and not a physician to their diseased minds. (And this) though he had numberless warnings in the case of both his grandfather and his father Herod, how the former in consequence of his putting the children to death suffered the greatest calamities, and the latter by slaying John raised up against himself a grievous war. But as they thought He feared lest Peter, in consequence of the slaying of James, should withdraw; and wishing to have him in safe keeping, he put him in prison: “and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers” (v. 4): the Stricter the custody, the more wondrous the display. “Peter therefore was kept in prison.” (v. 5.) But this was all the better for Peter, who was thereby made more approved, and evinced his own manly courage. And it says, “there was earnest prayer making.” It was the prayer of (filial) affection: it was for a father they asked, a father mild. “There was,” it says, “earnest prayer.” Hear how they were affected to their teachers. No factions, no perturbation: but they betook them to prayer, to that alliance which is indeed invincible, to this they betook them for refuge. They did not say, “What? I, poor insignificant creature that I am, to pray for him!” for, as they acted of love, they did not give these things a thought. And observe, it was during the feast, that (their enemies) brought these trials upon them, that their worth might be the more approved. “And when Herod,” etc. (v. 6.) See Peter sleeping, and not in distress or fear! That same night, after which he was to be brought forth, he slept, having cast all upon God. “Between two soldiers, bound with two chains.” (comp. 1 Peter 5:7.) Mark, how strict the ward! “And says, Arise.” (v. 7.) The guards were asleep with him, and therefore perceived nothing of what was happening. “And a light shined.” What was the light for? In order that Peter might see as well as hear, and not imagine it to be all fancy. And the command, “Arise quickly,” that he may not be remiss. He also smote him; so deeply did he sleep. (a) “Rise,” says he, “quickly:” this is not to hurry him (θουρβοῦντος) but to persuade him not to delay. (c) “And” immediately “his chains fell off from his hands.” (b) How? answer me: where are the heretics? — let them answer. “And the Angel said unto him,” etc. (v. 8) by

this also convincing him that it is no fancy: to this end he bids him gird himself and put on his shoes, that he may shake off his sleep, and know that it is real. (a) (e) “And he wist not that it was true that was done by the Angel, but thought he saw a vision” (v. 9): (e) well he might, by reason of the excessive greatness (ὕπερβολήν) of the things taking place. Do you mark what a thing it is for a miracle to be excessive (ὕπερβολή σημείου)? how it amazes (ἐκπλήττει) the beholder? how it will not let the thing be believed? For if Peter “thought he saw a vision,” though he had girded himself and put on his shoes, what would have been the case with another? “And,” it says, “when they had passed the first and the second ward, they came to the iron gate, which opened unto them of its own accord” (v. 10): and yet the things that had happened within (the prison) were more marvelous: but this was now more after the manner of man. “And having gone out, they went along one street and immediately (all ‘until’) the Angel departed from him.” (v. 11.) When there was no hindrance, then the Angel departed. For Peter would not have gone along (προῆλθεν), there being so many hindrances. “And when he came to himself;” for in very truth, it was indeed an amazement (ἐκπληξίς). “Now,” saith he, “I know” — now, not then, when I was in the prison, — “that the Lord hath sent His Angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. And when he had considered” (v. 12), it says: viz. where he was, or, that he must not without more ado depart but requite his Benefactor: “he came to the house of Mary the mother of John.” Who is this John? Probably he that was always with them: for this is why he adds his distinctive name (τὸ παράσημον), “whose surname was Mark.” But observe, “praying” in the night, how much they got by it: what a good thing affliction is; how wakeful it made them! Do you see how great the gain resulting from the death of Stephen? do you see how great the benefit accruing from this imprisonment? For it is not by taking vengeance upon those who wronged them that God shows the greatness of the Gospel: but in the wrong-doers themselves, without any harm happening to those, he shows what a mighty thing the afflictions in themselves are, that we may not seek in any wise deliverance from them, nor the avenging of our wrongs. And mark how the very servant-girls were henceforth upon an equality with them. “For joy,” it says, “she opened not.” (v. 13, 14.) This too is well done, that they likewise may not be amazed by seeing him at once, and that they

may be incredulous, and their minds may be exercised. “But ran in,” etc. just as we are wont to do, she was eager to be herself the bringer of the good tidings, for good news it was indeed. “And they said unto her, Thou art mad: but she constantly affirmed that it was even so: then said they, It is his Angel.” (v. 15.) This is a truth, that each man has an Angel. And what would the Angel? It was from the time (of night) that they surmised this. But when he “continued knocking, and when they had opened, and saw him, they were astonished. But he beckoning to them with his hand” (v. 16, 17), made them keep quiet, to hear all that had happened to him. He was now an object of more affectionate desire to the disciples, not only in consequence of his being saved, but by his sudden coming in upon them and straightway departing. Now, both his friends learn all clearly; and the aliens also learn, if they had a mind, but they had not. The same thing happened in the case of Christ. “Tell these things,” he says, “to James, and to the brethren.” How free from all vainglory! Nor did he say, Make known these things to people everywhere, but, “to the brethren. And he withdrew to another place:” for he did not tempt God, nor fling himself into temptation: since, when they were commanded to do this, then they did it. “Go,” it was said, “speak in the temple to the people.” (ch. 5:20.) But this the Angel said not (here); on the contrary, by silently removing him and bringing him out by night, he gave him free permission to withdraw — and this too is done, that we may learn that many things are providentially brought about after the manner of men — so that he should not again fall into peril. — For that they may not say, “It was his Angel,” after he was gone, they say this first, and then they see himself overthrowing their notion of the matter. Had it been the Angel, he would have knocked at the door, would not have retired to another place. And what followed in the day, make them sure.

“So Peter was kept in the prison,” etc. (v. 5.) They, being at large, were at prayer: he, bound, was in sleep. “And he wist not that it was true.” (v. 9.) If he thought it was true that was happening, he would have been astonished, he would not have remembered (all the circumstances): but now, seeming to be in a dream, he was free from perturbation. “When,” it says, “they were past the first and the second ward” — see also how strong the guard was — “they came unto the iron gate.” (v. 10.) “Now know I that the Lord hath sent His Angel.” (v. 11.) Why is not this

effected by themselves? (I answer,) By this also the Lord honors them, that by the ministry of His Angels he rescues them. Then why was it not so in the case of Paul? There with good reason, because the jailer was to be converted, whereas here, it was only that the Apostle should be released. (ch. 16:25.) And God disposes all things in divers ways. And there too, it is beautiful, that Paul sings hymns, while here Peter was asleep. “And when he had considered, he came to the house of Mary,” etc. (v. 12.) Then let us not hide God’s marvels, but for our own good let us study to display these abroad for the edifying of the others. For as he deserves to be admired for choosing to be put into bonds, so is he worthy of more admiration, that he withdrew not until he had reported all to his friends. “And he said, Tell James and the brethren.” (v. 17.) That they may rejoice: that they may not be anxious. Through these those learn, not those through him: such thought had he for the humbler part! —

Truly, nothing better than affliction not above measure (*συμμέτρου*). What think you must have been their state of mind — how full of delight! Where now are those women, who sleep the whole night through? Where are those men, who do not even turn themselves in their bed? Seest thou the watchful soul? With women, and children, and maidservants, they sang hymns to God, made purer than the sky by affliction. But now, if we see a little danger, we fall back. Nothing ever was more splendid than that Church. Let us imitate these, let us emulate them. Not for this was the night made, that we should sleep all through it and be idle. To this bear witness the artisans, the carriers, and the merchants (to this), the Church of God rising up in the midst of the night. Rise thou up also, and behold the quire of the stars, the deep silence, the profound repose: contemplate with awe the order (*οἰκονομίαν*) of thy Master’s household. Then is thy soul purer: it is lighter, and subtler, and soaring disengaged: the darkness itself, the profound silence, are sufficient to lead thee to compunction. And if also thou look to the heavens studded with its stars, as with ten thousand eyes, if thou bethink thee that all those multitudes who in the daytime are shouting, laughing, frisking, leaping, wronging, grasping, threatening, inflicting wrongs without number lie all one as dead, thou wilt condemn all the self-willedness of man. Sleep hath invaded and defeated (*ἤλεγξεν*) nature: it is the image of death, the image of the end of all things. If thou (look out of window and) lean over into the street, thou

wilt not hear even a sound: if thou look into the house, thou wilt see all lying as it were in a tomb. All this is enough to arouse the soul, and lead it to reflect on the end of all things.

Here indeed my discourse is for both men and women. Bend thy knees, send forth groans, beseech thy Master to be merciful: He is more moved by prayers in the night, when thou makest the time for rest a time for mourning. Remember what words that king uttered: "I have been weary with my groaning: every night will I wash my bed, I will water my couch with my tears." (Psalm 6:6.) However delicate a liver thou mayest be, thou art not more delicate than he: however rich thou mayest be, thou art not richer than David. And again the same Psalmist saith, "At midnight I rose to give thanks unto Thee for the judgments of Thy righteousness." (Psalm 119:62.) No vainglory then intrudes upon thee: how can it, when all are sleeping, and not looking at thee? Then neither sloth nor drowsiness invades thee: how can they, when thy soul is aroused by such great things? After such vigils come sweet slumbers and wondrous revelations. Do this, thou also the man, not the woman only. Let the house be a Church, consisting of men and women. For think not because thou art the only man, or because she is the only woman there, that this is any hindrance. "For where two," He saith, "are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20.) Where Christ is in the midst, there is a great multitude. Where Christ is, there needs must Angels be, needs must Archangels also and the other Powers be there. Then ye are not alone, seeing ye have Him Who is Lord of all. Hear again the prophet also saying, "Better is one that doeth the will of the Lord, than ten thousand transgressors." (comp. Eccus. 16:3.) Nothing more weak than a multitude of unrighteous men, nothing more strong than one man who lives according to the law of God. If thou hast children wake up them also, and let thy house altogether become a Church through the night: but if they be tender, and cannot endure the watching, let them stay for the first or second prayer, and then send them to rest: only stir up thyself, establish thyself in the habit. Nothing is better than that storehouse which receives such prayers as these. Hear the Prophet speaking: "If I remembered Thee upon my bed, I thought upon Thee in the dawn of the morning." (Psalm 63:7.) But you will say: I have labored much during the day, and I cannot. Mere pretext this and subterfuge. For however much thou hast labored,

thou wilt not toil like the smith, who lets fall such a heavy hammer from a great height upon the (metal flying off in) sparks, and takes in the smoke with his whole body: and yet at this work he spends the greater part of the night. Ye know also how the women, if there is need for us to go into the country, or to go forth unto a vigil, watch through the whole night. Then have thou also a spiritual forge, to fashion there not pots or cauldrons, but thine own soul, which is far better than either coppersmith or goldsmith can fashion. Thy soul, waxen old in sins, cast thou into the smelting-furnace of confession: let fall the hammer from on high: that is, the condemnation of thy words (**τῶν ῥημάτων τὴν κατάγνωσιν**): light up the fire of the Spirit. Thou hast a far mightier craft (than theirs). Thou art beating into shape not vessels of gold, but the soul, which is more precious than all gold, even as the smith hammers out his vessel. For it is no material vessel that thou art working at, but thou art freeing thy soul from all imaginations belonging to this life. Let a lamp be by thy side, not that one which we burn, but that which the prophet had, when he said, "Thy law is a lamp unto my feet." (Psalm 119:105.) Bring thy soul to a red heat, by prayer: when thou seest it hot enough, draw it out, and mold it into what shape thou wilt. Believe me, not fire so effectual to burn off rust, as night prayer to remove the rust of our sins. Let the night-watchers, if no one else, shame us. They, by man's law, go their rounds in the cold, shouting loudly, and walking through lanes (**στενωπῶν**) and alleys, oftentimes drenched with rain and (all) congealed with cold, for thee and for thy safety, and the protection of thy property. There is he taking such care for thy property, while thou takest none even for thy soul. And yet I do not make thee go thy rounds in the open air like him, nor shout loudly and rend thy sides: but in thy closet itself, or in thy bedchamber, bend thy knees, and entreat thy Lord. Why did Christ Himself pass a whole night on the mountain? Was it not, that He might be an ensample to us? Then is it that the plants respire, in the night, I mean: and then also does the soul take in the dew even more than they. What the sun has parched by day becomes cool again at night. More refreshing than all dew, the tears of the night descend upon our lusts and upon all heat and fever of the soul, and do not let it be affected in any such way. But if it do not enjoy the benefit of that dew, it will be burnt up in the daytime. But God forbid (it should be so)! Rather, may we all, being refreshed, and enjoying the mercy of God, be freed from the burden of our sins, through the grace and mercy of

our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father together with the Holy Spirit be glory, might, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 27

ACTS 12:18, 19

“Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and there abode.”

SOME persons, it is likely, are at a loss how to explain it, that God should quietly look on while (His) champions are put to death, and now again the soldiers on account of Peter: and yet it was possible for Him after (delivering) Peter to rescue them also. But it was not yet the time of judgment, so as to render to each according to his deserts. And besides, it was not Peter that put them into his hands. For the thing that most annoyed him was the being mocked; just as in the case of his grandfather when he was deceived by the wise men, that was what made him (feel) cut to the heart — the being (eluded and) made ridiculous. “And having put them to the question,” it says, “he ordered them to be led away to execution.” (Matthew 2:16.) And yet he had heard from them — for he had put them to the question — both that the chains had been left, and that he had taken his sandals, and that until that night he was with them. “Having put them to the question:” but what did they conceal? Why then did they not themselves also flee? “He ordered them to be led away to execution:” and yet he ought to have marveled, ought to have been astonished at this. The consequence is, by the death of these men (the thing), is made manifest to all: both his wickedness is exposed to view, and (it is made clear that) the wonder (is) of God. “And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and there abode: and Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king’s chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king’s country. And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, ‘It is the voice of a God, and not of a man,’ And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.” (v. 20.: 23.) But see how (the writer) here does not

hide these things. Why does he mention this history? Say, what has it to do with the Gospel, that Herod is incensed with the Tyrians and Sidonians? It is not a small matter, even this, how immediately justice seized him; although not because of Peter, but because of his arrogant speaking. And yet, it may be said, if those shouted, what is that to him? Because he accepted the acclamation, because he accounted himself to be worthy of the adoration. Through him those most receive a lesson, who so thoughtlessly flattered him (al. οἱ κολακεύοντες). Observe again, while both parties deserve punishment, this man is punished. For this is not the time of judgment, but He punishes him that had most to answer for, leaving the others to profit by this man's fate. "And the word of God," it says, "grew," i.e. in consequence of this, "and multiplied." (v. 24.) Do you mark God's providential management? "But Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark." (v. 25.) "Now there were in the Church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul." (ch. 13:1.) He still mentions Barnabas first: for Paul was not yet famous, he had not yet wrought any sign. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." (v. 2, 3.) What means, "Ministering?" Preaching. "Separate for Me," it says, "Barnabas and Saul." What means, "Separate for Me?" For the work, for the Apostleship. See again by what persons he is ordained (γυμνοτέρα. Cat. σεμνοτέρα, "more awful.") By Lucius the Cyrenean and Manaen, or rather, by the Spirit. The less the persons, the more palpable the grace. He is ordained henceforth to Apostleship, so as to preach with authority. How then does he himself say, "Not from men, nor by man?" (Galatians 1:1.) Because it was not man that called or brought him over: this is why he says, "Not from men. Neither by man," that is, that he was not sent by this (man), but by the Spirit. Wherefore also (the writer) thus proceeds: "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus." (v. 4.) But let us look over again what has been said.

(Recapitulation.) “And when it was day,” etc. (v. 18.) For if the Angel had brought out the soldiers also, along with Peter, it would have been thought a case of flight. Then why, you may ask, was it not otherwise managed? Why, Where is the harm? Now, if we see that they who have suffered unjustly, take no harm, we shall not raise these questions. For why do you not say the same of James? Why did not (God) rescue him? “There was no small stir among the soldiers.” So (clearly) had they perceived nothing (of what had happened). Lo, I take up the plea in their defense. The chains were there, and the keepers within, and the prison shut, nowhere a wall broken through, all told the same tale: the man had been carried off: why dost thou condemn them? Had they wished to let him off, they would have done it before, or would have gone out with him. “But he gave them money?” (ch. 3:6.) And how should he, who had not to give even to a poor man, have the means to give to these? And then neither had the chains been broken, nor were they loosed. He ought to have seen, that the thing was of God, and no work of man. “And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and there abode. And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon,” etc. (v. 19.) He is now going to mention (a matter of) history: this is the reason why he adds the names, that it may be shown how he keeps to the truth in all things. “And,” it says, “having made Blastus the king’s chamberlain their friend, they desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king’s country.” (v. 20, 21.) For probably there was a famine. “And on a set day,” etc. (Joseph. Ant. 19.) Josephus also says this, that he fell into a lingering disease. Now the generality were not aware of this, but the Apostle sets it down: yet at the same time their ignorance was an advantage, in regard that they imputed what befell (Agrippa) to his putting James and the soldiers to death. Observe, when he slew the Apostle, he did nothing of this sort but when (he slew) these; in fact he knew not what to say about it: as being at a loss, then, and feeling ashamed, “he went down from Judea to Caesarea.” I suppose it was also to bring those (men of Tyre and Sidon) to apologize, that he withdrew (from Jerusalem.): for with those he was incensed, while paying such court to these. See how vainglorious the man is: meaning to confer the boon upon them, he makes an harangue. But Josephus says, that he was also arrayed in a splendid robe made of silver. Observe both what flatterers those were, and what a high spirit was shown by the Apostles: the man whom the whole nation so courted, the same they held

in contempt. (v. 24.) But observe again a great refreshing granted to them, and the numberless benefits accruing from the vengeance inflicted upon him. But if this man, because it was said to him, “It is the voice of God and not of a man (v. 22) although he said nothing himself, suffered such things: much more should Christ, had He not Himself been God (have suffered) for saying always as He did, “These words of mine are not Mine” (John 14:10; 18:36) and, “Angels minister to Me,” and such like. But that man ended His life by a shameful and miserable death, and thenceforth no more is seen of him. And observe him also, easily talked over even by Blastus, like a poor creature, soon incensed and again pacified, and on all occasions a slave of the populace, with nothing free and independent about him. But mark also the authority of the Holy Ghost: “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul.” (ch. 13:2.) What being would have dared, if not of the same authority, to say this? “Separate,” etc. But this is done, that they may not keep together among themselves. The Spirit saw that they had greater power, and were able to be sufficient for many. And how did He speak to them? Probably by prophets: therefore the writer premises, that there were prophets also. And they were fasting and ministering: that thou mayest learn that there was need of great sobriety. In Antioch he is ordained, where he preaches. Why did He not say, Separate for the Lord, but, “For me?” It shows that He is of one authority and power. “And when they had fasted,” etc. Seest thou what a great thing fasting is? “So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost:” it shows that the Spirit did all.

A great, yes a great good is fasting: it is circumscribed by no limits. When need was to ordain, then they fast: and to them while fasting, the Spirit spake. Thus much only do I enjoin: (I say) not fast, but abstain from luxury. Let us seek meats to nourish, not things to ruin us; seek meats for food, not occasions of diseases, of diseases both of soul and body: seek food which hath comfort, not luxury which is full of discomfort: the one is luxury, the other mischief; the one is pleasure, the other pain; the one is agreeable to nature, the other contrary to nature. For say, if one should give thee hemlock juice to drink, would it not be against nature? if one should give thee logs and stones, wouldest thou not reject them? Of course, for they are against nature. Well, and so is luxury. For just as in a

city, under an invasion of enemies when there has been siege and tumult, great is the uproar, so is it in the soul, under invasion of wine and luxury. “Who hath woe? who hath tumults? who hath discomforts and babblings? Are they not they that tarry long at the wine? Whose are bloodshot eyes?” (Proverbs 23:29, 30,) But yet, say what we will, we shall not bring off those who give themselves up to luxury, unless we bring into conflict therewith a different affection. And first, let us address ourselves to the women. Nothing uglier than a woman given to luxury, nothing uglier than a woman given to drink. The bloom of her complexion is faded: the calm and mild expression of the eyes is rendered turbid, as when a cloud intercepts the rays of the sunshine. It is a vulgar, (ἀνελεύθερον) slave-like, thoroughly low-lived habit. How disgusting is a woman when from her breath you catch sour whiffs of fetid wine: a woman belching, giving out a fume (χυμόν) of decomposing meats; herself weighed down, unable to keep upright; her face flushed with an unnatural red; yawning incessantly, and everything swimming in a mist before her eyes! But not such, she that abstains from luxurious living: no (this abstinence makes her look) a more beautiful, well-bred (σωφρονεστέρα) woman. For even to the body, the composure of the soul imparts a beauty of its own. Do not imagine that the impression of beauty results only from the bodily features. Give me a handsome girl, but turbulent (τεταραγμένην), loquacious, railing, given to drink, extravagant, (and tell me) if she is not worse-looking than any ugly woman? But if she were bashful, if she would hold her peace, if she learnt to blush, if to speak modestly (συμμέτρως), if to find time for fastings; her beauty would be twice as great, her freshness would be heightened, her look more engaging, fraught with modesty and good breeding (σωφροσύνης καὶ κοσμιότητος). Now then, shall we speak of men? What can be uglier than a man in drink? He is an object of ridicule to his servants, of ridicule to his enemies, of pity to his friends; deserving condemnation without end: a wild beast rather than a human being; for to devour much food is proper to panther, and lion, and bear. No wonder (that they do so), for those creatures have not a reasonable soul. And yet even they, if they be gorged with food more than they need, and beyond the measure appointed them by nature, get their whole body ruined by it: how much more we? Therefore hath God contracted our stomach into a small compass; therefore hath He marked out a small measure of sustenance, that He may instruct us to attend to the soul.

Let us consider our very make, and we shall see there is in us but one little part that has this operation — for our mouth and tongue are meant for singing hymns, our throat for voice — therefore the very necessity of nature has tied us down, that we may not, even involuntarily, get into much trouble (*πραγματείαν*) (in this way). Since, if indeed luxurious living had not its pains, nor sickness and infirmities, it might be tolerated: but as the case is, He hath stinted thee by restrictions of nature, that even if thou wish to exceed, thou mayest not be able to do so. Is not pleasure thine object, beloved? This thou shalt find from moderation. Is not health? This too thou shalt so gain. Is not easiness of mind? This too. Is not freedom? is not vigor and good habit of body, is not sobriety and alertness of mind? (All these thou shalt find); so entirely are all good things there, while in the other are the contraries to these, discomfort, distemper, disease, embarrassment — waste of substance (*ἀνελευθερία*). Then how comes it, you will ask, that we all run eagerly after this? It comes of disease. For say, what is it that makes the sick man hanker after the thing that does him harm? Is not this very hankering a part of his disease? Why is it that the lame man does not walk upright? This very thing, does it come of his being lazy, and not choosing to go to the physician? For there are some things, in which the pleasure they bring with them is temporary, but lasting the punishment: others just the contrary, in which the endurance is for a time, the pleasure perpetual. He, therefore, that has so little solidity and strength of purpose as not to slight present sweets for future, is soon overcome. Say, how came Esau to be overcome? how came he to prefer the present pleasure to the future honor? Through want of solidity and firmness of character. (Genesis 25:33.) And this fault itself, say you, whence comes it? Of our ourselves: and it is plain from this consideration. When we have the mind, we do rouse ourselves, and become capable of endurance. Certain it is, if at any time necessity comes upon us, nay, often only from a spirit of emulation, we get to see clearly what is useful for us. When therefore thou art about to indulge in luxury, consider how brief the pleasure, consider the loss — for loss it is indeed to spend so much money to one's own hurt — the diseases, the infirmities: and despise luxury. How many shall I enumerate who have suffered evils from indulgence? Noah was drunken, and was exposed in his nakedness, and see what evils came of this. (Genesis 9:20.) Esau through greediness abandoned his birthright, and was set upon fratricide. The people of Israel

“sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.” (Exodus 32:6.) Therefore saith the Scripture, “When thou hast eaten and drunken, remember the Lord thy God.” (Deuteronomy 6:12.) For they fell over a precipice, in failing into luxury. “The widow,” he saith, “that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth” (1 Timothy 5:6): and again, “The beloved waxed sleek, grew thick, and kicked” (Deuteronomy 32:15): and again the Apostle, “Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.” (Romans 13:14.) I am not enacting as a law that there shall be fasting, for indeed there is no one who would listen; but I am doing away with daintiness, I am cutting off luxury for the sake of your own profit: for like a winter torrent, luxury overthrows all: there is nothing to stop its course: it casts out from a kingdom: what is the gain of it (τί τὸ πλεόν)? Would you enjoy a (real) luxury? Give to the poor; invite Christ, so that even after the table is removed, you may still have this luxury to enjoy. For now, indeed, you have it not, and no wonder: but then you will have it. Would you taste a (real) luxury? Nourish your soul, give to her of that food to which she is used: do not kill her by starvation. — It is the time for war, the time for contest: and do you sit enjoying yourself? Do you not see even those who wield scepters, how they live frugally while abroad on their campaigns? “We wrestle not against flesh and blood” (Ephesians 6:12); and are you fattening yourself when about to wrestle? The adversary stands grinding his teeth, and are you giving a loose to jollity, and devoting yourself to the table? I know that I speak these things in vain, yet not (in vain) for all. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” (Luke 8:8.) Christ is pining through hunger, and are you frittering yourself away (διασπῶς) with gluttony? Two inconsistencies (Δύο ἀμετρίαι). For what evil does not luxury cause? It is contrary to itself: so that I know not. how it gets its name: but just as that is called glory, which is (really) infamy, and that riches, which in truth is poverty, so the name of luxury is given to that which in reality is nauseousness. Do we intend ourselves for the shambles, that we so fatten ourselves? Why cater for the worm that it may have a sumptuous larder? Why make more of their humors (ἰχῶρας)? Why store up in yourself sources of sweat and rink smelling? Why make yourself useless for everything? Do you wish your eye to be strong? Get your body well strung? For in musical strings, that which is coarse and not refined, is not fit to produce musical tones, but that which has been well scraped, stretches well, and vibrates with full harmony. Why do you bury

the soul alive? why make the wall about it thicker? Why increase the reek and the cloud, with fumes like a mist steaming up from all sides? If none other, let the wrestlers teach you, that the more spare the body, the stronger it is: and (then) also the soul is more vigorous. In fact, it is like charioteer and horse. But there you see, just as in the case of men giving themselves to luxury, and making themselves plump, so the plump horses are unwieldy, and give the driver much ado. One may think one's self (ἀγαπητὸν) well off, even with a horse obedient to the rein and well-limbed, to be able to carry off the prize: but when the driver is forced to drag the horse along, and when the horse falls, though he goad him ever so much, he cannot make him get up, be he ever so skillful himself, he will be deprived of the victory. Then let us not endure to see our soul wronged because of the body, but let us make the soul herself more clear-sighted, let us make her wing light, her bonds looser: let us feed her with discourse, with frugality, (feeding) the body only so much that it may be healthy, that it may be vigorous, that it may rejoice and not be in pain: that having in this sort well ordered our concerns, we may be enabled to lay hold upon the highest virtue, and to attain unto the eternal good things by the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom, to the Father and Holy Ghost together, be glory, dominion, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 28

ACTS 13:4, 5

“So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.”

As soon as they were ordained they went forth, and hasted to Cyprus, that being a place where was no ill-design hatching against them, and where moreover the Word had been sown already. In Antioch there were (teachers) enough, and Phoenice too was near to Palestine; but Cyprus not so. However, you are not to make a question of the why and wherefore, when it is the Spirit that directs their movements: for they were not only ordained by the Spirit, but sent forth by Him likewise. “And when they were come to Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews.” Do you mark how they make a point of preaching the word to them first, not to make them more contentious? The persons mentioned before “spake to none but to Jews only” (ch. 11:19), and so here they betook them to the synagogues. “And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.” (v. 6-8.) Again a Jew sorcerer, as was Simon. And observe this man, how, while they preached to the others, he did not take it much amiss, but only when they approached the proconsul. And then in respect of the proconsul the wonder is, that although prepossessed by the man’s sorcery, he was nevertheless willing to hear the Apostles. So it was with the Samaritans: and from the competition (**συγκρίσεως**) the victory appears, the sorcery being worsted. Everywhere, vainglory and love of power are a (fruitful) source of evils! “But Saul, who is also Paul,” — (v. 9) here his name is changed at the same time that he is ordained, as it was in Peter’s case, — “filled with the Holy Ghost, looked upon him, and said, O full of all guile and all villany, thou child of the devil:” (v. 10) and

observe, this is not abuse, but accusation: for so ought forward, impudent people to be rebuked “thou enemy of all righteousness;” here he lays bare what was in the thoughts of the man, while under pretext of saving he was ruining the proconsul: “wilt thou not cease,” he says, “to pervert the ways of the Lord?” (He says it) both confidently (αξιοπίστως), It is not with us thou art warring, nor art thou fighting (with us), but “the ways of the Lord” thou art perverting, and with praise (of these, he adds) “the right” ways. “And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind.” (v. 11.) It was the sign by which he was himself converted, and by this he would fain convert this man. As also that expression, “for a season,” puts it not as an act of punishing, but as meant for his conversion: had it been for punishment, he would have made him lastingly blind, but now it is not so, but “for a season” (and this), that he may gain the proconsul. For, as he was prepossessed by the sorcery, it was well to teach him a lesson by this infliction (and the sorcerer also), in the same way as the magicians (in Egypt) were taught by the boils. (Exodus 9:11.) “And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness: add he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.” (v. 12.) But observe, how they do not linger there, as (they might have been tempted to do) now that the proconsul was a believer, nor are enervated by being courted and honored, but immediately keep on with their work, and set out for the country on the opposite coast. “Now when Paul and his company loosed froth Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem. But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.” (v. 13, 14.) And here again they entered the synagogues, in the character of Jews, that they might not be treated as enemies, and be driven away: and in this way they carried the whole matter successfully. “And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.” (v. 15.) From this point, we learn the history of Paul’s doings, as in what was said above we have learned not a little about Peter. But let us review what has been said.

(Recapitulation.) “And when they were come to Salamis,” the metropolis of Cyprus, “they preached the word of God.” (v. 5.) They had spent a year in Antioch: it behooved that they should go hither also (to Cyprus) and not sit permanently where they were (the converts in Cyprus): needed greater teachers. See too how they remain no time in Seleucia, knowing that (the people there) might have reaped much benefit from the neighboring city (of Antioch): but they hasten on to the more pressing duties. When they came to the metropolis of the island, they were earnest to disabuse ($\delta\iota\omicron\rho\theta\omega\sigma\alpha\iota$) the proconsul. But that it is no flattery that (the writer) says, “he was with the proconsul, a prudent man” (v. 7), you may learn from the facts; for he needed not many discourses, and himself wished to hear them. And he mentions also the names. Observe, how he said nothing to the sorcerer, until he gave him an occasion: but they only “preached the word of the Lord.” Since (though Elymas) saw the rest attending to them, he looked only to this one object, that the proconsul might not be won over. Why did not (Paul) perform some other miracle? Because there was none equal to this, the taking the enemy captive. And observe, he first impeaches, and then punishes, him. He shows how justly the man deserved to suffer, by his saying, “e full of all deceit” (v. 10): (“full of all,”) he says: nothing wanting to the full measure: and he well says, of all “deceit,” for the man was playing the part of a hypocrite. — “Child of the devil,” because he was doing his work: “enemy of all righteousness,” since this (which they preached) was the whole of righteousness (though at the same time): I suppose in these words he reproves his manner of life. His words were not prompted by anger, and to show this, the writer premises, “filled with the Holy Ghost,” that is, with His operation. “And now behold the hand of the Lord is upon thee.” (v. 11.) It was not vengeance then, but healing: for it is as though he said: “It is not I that do it, but the hand of God.” Mark how unassuming! No “light,” as in the case of Paul, “shone round about him.” (ch. 9:3.) “Thou shalt be blind,” he says, “not seeing the sun for a season,” that he may give him opportunity for repentance: for we nowhere find them wishing to be made conspicuous by the more stern (exercise of their authority), even though it was against enemies that this was put forth: in respect of those of their own body (they used severity,) and with good reason, but in dealing with those without, not so; that (the obedience of faith) might not seem to be matter of compulsion and fear. It is a proof of his blindness, his

“seeking some to lead him by the hand.” (ch. 5:1. ff.) And the proconsul sees the blindness inflicted, “and when he saw what was done, he believed:” and both alone believed not merely this, but, “being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord” (v. 12): he saw that these things were not mere words, nor trickery. Mark how he loved to receive instruction from his teachers, though he was in a station of so high authority. And (Paul) said not to the sorcerer, “Wilt thou not cease to pervert” the proconsul? What may be the reason of John’s going back from them? For “John,” it says, “departing from them returned to Jerusalem” (v. 13): (he does it) because they are undertaking a still longer journey: and yet he was their attendant, and as for the danger, they incurred it (not he). — Again, when they were come to Perga, they hastily passed by the other cities, for they were in haste to the metropolis, Antioch. And observe how concise the historian is. “They sat down in the synagogue,” he says, and, “on the sabbath day” (v. 14, 15): that they might prepare the way beforehand for the Word. And they do not speak first, but when invited: since as strangers, they called upon them to do so. Had they not waited, there would have been no discourse. Here for the first time we have Paul preaching. And observe his prudence: where the word was already sown, he passes on: but where there was none (to preach), he makes a stay: as he himself writes: “Yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named.” (Romans 15:20.) Great courage this also. Truly, from the very outset, a wonderful man! crucified, ready for all encounters (*παρατεταγμένος*), he knew how great grace he had obtained, and he brought to it zeal equivalent. He was not angry with John: for this was not for him: but he kept to the work, he quailed not, he was unappalled, when shut up in the midst of a host. Observe how wisely it is ordered that Paul should not preach at Jerusalem: the very hearing that he is become a believer, this of itself is enough for them; for him to preach, they never would have endured, such was their hatred of him: so he departs far away, where he was not known. But it is well done, that “they entered the synagogue on the sabbath day” when all were collected together. “And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word or exhortation for the people, say on.” (v. 15.) Behold how they do this without grudging, but no longer after this. If ye did wish this (really), there was more need to exhort.

He first convicted the sorcerer (and showed), what he was; and that he was such, the sign showed: “thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun” this was a sign of the blindness of his soul: “for a season” (v. 11): he says, to bring him to repentance. But, oh that love of rule! oh, that lust of vainglory! how it does overturn and ruin everything; makes people stand up against their own, against each other’s salvation; renders them blind indeed, and dark, insomuch that they have even to seek for some to lead them by the hand! Oh that they did even this, oh that they did seek were it but some to lead them by the hand! But no, they no longer endure this, they take the whole matter into their own hands. (This vice) will let no man see: like a mist and thick darkness it spreads itself over them, not letting any see through it. What pleas shall we have to offer, we who for one evil affection, overcome another evil affection (*supra* p. 176), but not for the fear of God! For example, many who are both lewd and covetous, have for their niggardliness put a bridle upon their lust, while other such, on the contrary, have for pleasure’s sake, despised riches. Again, those who are both the one and the other, have by the lust of vainglory overcome both, lavishing their money unsparingly, and practicing temperance to no (good) purpose; others again, who are exceedingly vainglorious, have despised that evil affection, submitting to many vile disgraces for the sake of their amours, or for the sake of their money: others again, that they may satiate their anger, have chosen to suffer losses. without end, and care for none of them, provided only they may work their own will. And yet, what passion can do with us, the fear of God is impotent to effect! Why speak I of passion? What shame before men can do with us, the fear of God has not the strength to effect! Many are the things we do right and wrong, from a feeling of shame before men; but God we fear not. How many have been shamed by regard to the opinions of men into flinging away money! How many have mistakenly made it a point of honor to give themselves up to the service of their friends (only), to their hurt! How many from respect for their friendships have been shamed into numberless wrong acts! Since then both passion and regard for the opinion of men are able to put us upon doing wrong things and right, it is idle to say, “we cannot:” we can, if we have the mind: and we ought to have the mind. Why canst not thou overcome the love of glory, when others do overcome it, having the same soul as thou, and the same body; bearing the same form, and living the same life? Think of God,

think of the glory that is from above: weigh against that the things present, and thou wilt quickly recoil from this worldly glory. If at all events thou covet glory, covet that which is glory, indeed. What kind of glory is it, when it begets infamy? What kind of glory, when it compels one to desire the honor of those who are inferior, and stands in need of that? Real honor is the gaining the esteem of those who are greater than one's self. If at all events thou art enamored of glory, be thou rather enamored of that which comes from God. If enamored of that glory thou despisest this world's glory, thou shall see how ignoble this is: but so long as thou seest not that glory, neither wilt thou be able to see this, how foul it is, how ridiculous. For as those who are under the spell of some wicked, hideously ugly woman, so long as they are in love with her, cannot see her ill-favoredness, because their passion spreads a darkness over their judgment: so is it here also: so long as we are possessed with the passion, we cannot perceive what a thing it is. How then might we be rid of it? Think of those who (for the sake of glory) have spent countless sums, and now are none the better for it: think of the dead, what glory they got, and (now) this glory is nowhere abiding, but all perished and come to naught: bethink thee how it is only a name, and has nothing real in it. For say, what is glory? give me some definition. "The being admired by all," you will say. With justice, or also not with justice? For if it be not with justice, this is not admiration, but crimination (**κατηγορία**), and flattery, and misrepresentation (**διαβολή**). But if you say, With justice, why that is impossible: for in the populace there are no right judgments; those that minister to their lusts, those are the persons they admire. And if you would (see the proof of this), mark those who give away their substance to the harlots, to the charioteers, to the dancers. But you will say, we do not mean these, but those who are just and upright, and able to do great and noble good acts. Would that they wished it, and they soon would do good: but as things are, they do nothing of the kind. Who, I ask you, now praises the just and upright man? Nay, it is just the contrary. Could anything be more preposterous than for a just man, when doing any such good act, to seek glory of the many — as if an artist of consummate skill, employed upon an Emperor's portrait, should wish to have the praises of the ignorant! Moreover, a man who looks for honor from men, will soon enough desist from the acts which virtue enjoins. If he will needs be gaping for their praises, he will do just what they wish, not what himself wishes. What

then would I advise you? You must look only to God, to the praise that is from Him, perform all things which are pleasing to Him, and go after the good things (that are with Him), not be gaping for anything that is of man: for this mars both fasting and prayer and alms-giving, and makes all our good deeds void. Which that it be not our case, let us flee this passion. To one thing alone let us look, to the praise which is from God, to the being accepted of Him, to the commendation from our common Master; that, having passed through our present life virtuously, we may obtain the promised blessings together with them that love Him, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom to the Father, together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, might, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 29

ACTS 13:16, 17

“Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience. The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought He them out of it.”

BEHOLD Barnabas giving place to Paul — how should it be otherwise? — to him whom he brought from Tarsus; just as we find John on all occasions giving way to Peter: and yet Barnabas was more looked up to than Paul: true, but they had an eye only to the common advantage. “Then Paul stood up,” it says; — this was a custom of the Jews — “and beckoned with his hand.” And see how he prepares the way beforehand for his discourse: having first praised them, and showed his great regard for them in the words, “ye that fear God,” he so begins his discourse. And he says not, Ye proselytes, since it was a term of disadvantage. “The God of this people chose our fathers: and the people” — See, he calls God Himself *their* God peculiarly, Who is the common God of men; and shows how great from the first were His benefits, just as Stephen does. This they do to teach them, that now also God has acted after the same custom, in sending His own Son; (Luke 20:13): as (Christ) Himself (does) in the parable of the vineyard — “And the people,” he says, “He exalted when it sojourned in the land of Egypt” — and yet the contrary was the case: true, but they increased in numbers; moreover, the miracles were wrought on their account: “and with an high arm brought He them out of it.” Of these things (the wonders) which were done in Egypt, the prophets are continually making mention. And observe, how he passes over the times of their calamities, and nowhere brings forward their faults, but only God’s kindness, leaving those for themselves to think over. “And about the time of forty years suffered He their manners in the wilderness.” (v. 18.) Then the settlement. “And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He divided their land to them by lot.” (v. 19.) And the time was long; four hundred and fifty years. “And after that He gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.” (v. 20.) Here he shows that God varied His dispensations

towards them (at divers times). “And afterward they desired a king:” and (still) not a word of their ingratitude, but throughout he speaks of the kindness of God. “And God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.” (v. 21.) “And when he had removed him, He raised up unto them David to be their king: to whom also He gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after Mine own heart, which shall fulfill all My will. Of this man’s seed hath God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Savior, Jesus.” (v. 22, 23.) This was no small thing that Christ should be from David. Then John bears witness to this: “When John had first preached before His coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not He. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of His feet I am not worthy to loose.” (v. 24, 25.) And John too not merely bears witness (to the fact), but (does it in such sort that) when men were bringing the glory to him, he declines it: for it is one thing (not to affect) an honor which nobody thinks of offering; and another, to reject it when all men are ready to give it, and not only to reject it, but to do so with such humility. “Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him. And though they found no cause of death in Him, yet desired they Pilate that He should be slain.” (v. 26-28.) On all occasions we find them making a great point of showing this, that the blessing is peculiarly theirs, that they may not flee (from Christ), as thinking they had nothing to do with Him, because they had crucified Him. “Because they knew Him not,” he says: so that the sin was one of ignorance. See how he gently makes an apology even on behalf of those (crucifiers). And not only this: but he adds also, that thus it must needs be. And how so? “By condemning Him, they fulfilled the voices of the prophets.” Then again from the Scriptures. “And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulcher. But God raised Him from the dead. And He was seen many days of them which came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses unto the people —” (v. 29-31) that He rose again. “And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was

made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. And as concerning that He raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another Psalm, Thou shall not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: but He, Whom God raised again, saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” (v. 32-39.) Observe how Paul here is more vehement in his discourse: we nowhere find Peter saying this. Then too he adds the terrifying words: “Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.” (v. 40, 41. 0 (a) Observe how he twines (the thread of) his discourse (alternately) from things present, from the prophets. Thus, “from (this man’s) seed according to the promise “ — (v. 23): (c) the name of David was dear to them; well then, is it not (a thing to be desired) that a son of his, he says, should be their king? — (b) then he adduces John: then again the prophets, where he says, “By condemning they fulfilled,” and gain, “All that was written:” then the Apostles as witnesses of the Resurrection: then David bearing witness. For neither the Old Testament proofs seemed so cogent when taken by themselves as they are in this way, nor yet the latter testimonies apart from the former: wherefore he makes them mutually confirm each other. “Men and brethren,” etc. (v. 26.) For since they were possessed by fear, as having slain Him, and conscience made them aliens (the Apostles), discourse not with them as unto Christicides, neither as putting into their hands a good which was not theirs, but one peculiarly their own. (d) “For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers:” as much as to say, not ye, but they: and again, apologizing even for those, “Because they knew Him not, and the voices of the Prophets which are read every sabbath day, in condemning Him, they fulfilled them.” A great charge it is against them that they continually hearing heeded not. But no marvel: for what was said

above concerning Egypt and the wilderness, was enough to show their ingratitude. And observe how this Apostle also, as one moved by the Spirit Himself, continually preaches the Passion, the Burial. (g) “Having taken Him down from the tree.” Observe, what a great point they make of this. He speaks of the manner of His death. Moreover they bring Pilate (conspicuously) forward, that (the fact of) the Passion may be proved by the mention of the tribunal (by which he was condemned), but at the same time, for the greater impeachment of those (His crucifiers), seeing they delivered Him up to an alien. And he does not say, They made a complaint (against Him), (*ἐνέτυχον*, al. *ἐντυγχάνει*) but, “They desired, though having found no cause of death” (in Him), “that He should be slain. (e) Who appeared,” he says, “for many days to them that came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem.” (Romans 11:2.) Instead of he says, “Who are His witnesses unto the people,” to wit, “The men which came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem.” Then he produces David and Esaias bearing witness. “The faithful (mercies),” the abiding (mercies), those which never perish. (h) Paul loved them exceedingly. And observe, he does not enlarge on the ingratitude of the fathers, but puts before them what they must fear. For Stephen indeed with good reason does this, seeing he was about to be put to death, not teaching them; and showing them, that the Law is even now on the point of being abolished: (ch. 7.) but not so Paul; he does but threaten and put them in fear. (f) And he does not dwell long on these, as taking it for granted that the word is of course believed; nor enlarge upon the greatness of their punishment, and assail that which they affectionately love, by showing the Law about to be cast out: but dwells upon that which is for their good (telling them), that great shall be the blessings for them being obedient, and great the evils being disobedient.

But let us look over again what has been said. “Ye men of Israel,” etc. (v. 16-21.) The Promise then, he says, the fathers received; ye, the reality. (j) And observe, he nowhere mentions right deeds of theirs, but (only) benefits on God’s part: “He chose: Exalted: Suffered their manners:” these are no matters of praise to them: “They asked, He gave.” But David he does praise (and him) only, because from him the Christ was to come. “I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after Mine own heart, which shall fulfill all My will.” (v. 22.) (i) Observe also; it is with praise (that he says of him), “David after that he had served the will of God:” just as

Peter — seeing it was then the beginning of the Gospel — making mention of him, said, “Let it be permitted me to speak freely of the patriarch David.” (ch. 2:29.) Also, he does not say, Died, but, “was added to his fathers. (k) Of this man’s seed,” etc. “When John,” he says, “had first preached before His entry” — by entry he means the Incarnation — “the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.” (v. 23-25.) Thus also John, writing his Gospel, continually has recourse to him: for his name was much thought of in all parts of the world. And observe, he does not say it “Of this man’s seed,” etc. from himself, but brings John’s testimony.

“Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham” — he also calls them after their father — “unto you was the word of this salvation sent.” (v. 26.) Here the expression, “Unto you,” does not mean, Unto (you) Jews. but it gives them a right to sever themselves from those who dared that murder. And what he adds, shows this plainly. “For,” he says, “they that dwell at Jerusalem, because they know Him not.” (v. 27.) And how, you will say, could they be ignorant, with John to tell them? What marvel, seeing they were so, with the prophets continually crying aloud to them? Then follows another charge: “And having found no cause of death in Him:” in which ignorance had nothing to do. For let us put the case, that they did not hold Him to be the Christ: why did they also kill Him? And “they desired of Pilate, he says, that He should be slain.” (v. 28.) “And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him.” (v. 29.) Observe what a point he makes of showing that the (whole) thing was a (Divine) Dispensation. See, by saying what did they persuade men? (By telling them) that He was crucified? Why, what could be less persuasive than this? That He was buried — by them to whom it was promised that He should be salvation? that He who was buried forgives sins, yea, more than the Law (has power to do)? And (observe), he does not say, From which ye would not but, “from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses.” (v. 39.) “Every one,” he says: be who he may. For those (ordinances) are of no use, unless there be some benefit (accruing therefrom.) This is why he brings in forgiveness later: and shows it to be greater, when, the thing being (otherwise) impossible, yet this is effected. “Who are His witnesses,” he says, “unto the people” — the people that slew Him. Who would never have been so, were they not strengthened by

a Divine Power: for they would never have born such witness to blood-thirsty men, to the very persons that killed Him. But, “He hath raised up Jesus again: This day,” he says, “I have begotten thee.” (v. 33.) Aye, upon this the rest follows of course. Why did he not allege some text by which they would be persuaded that forgiveness of sins is by Him? Because the great point with them was to show, in the first place, that He was risen: this being acknowledged, the other was unquestionable. “Through this man,” nay more, by Him, “is remission of sins.” (v. 38.) And besides, he wished to bring them to a longing desire of this great thing. Well then, His death was not dereliction, but fulfilling of Prophecy. — For the rest, he puts them in mind of historical facts, wherein they through ignorance suffered evils without number. And this he hints in the conclusion, saying, “Look, ye despisers, and behold.” And observe how, this being harsh, he cuts it short. Let not that, he says, come upon you, which was spoken for the others, that “I work a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though one declare it unto you.” (v. 41.) Marvel not that it seems incredible: this very thing was foretold from the first — (that it would not be believed). “Behold, ye despisers,” as regards those who disbelieve in the Resurrection.

This too might with reason be said to us: “Behold ye despisers.” For the Church indeed is in very evil case, although ye think her affairs to be in peace. For the mischief of it is, that while we labor under so many evils, we do not even know that we have any. “What sayest thou? We are in possession of our Churches, our Church property, and all the rest, the services are held, the congregation comes to Church every day.” True, but one is not to judge of the state of a Church from these things. From what then? Whether there be piety, whether we return home with profit each day, whether reaping some fruit, be it much or little, whether we do it not merely of routine and for the formal acquittance of a duty (ἄφοσιούμενοι). Who has become a better man by attending (daily) service for a whole month? That is the point: otherwise the very thing which seems to bespeak a flourishing condition (of the Church,) does in fact bespeak an ill condition, when all this is done, and nothing comes of it. Would to God (that were all), that nothing comes of it: but indeed, as things are, it turns out even for the worse. What fruit do ye get from your services? Surely if you were getting any profit by them, ye ought to have

been long leading the life of true wisdom (τῆς φιλοσοφίας), with so many Prophets twice in every week discoursing to you, so many Apostles, and Evangelists, all setting forth the doctrines of salvation, and placing before you with much exactness that which can form the character aright. The soldier by going to his drill, becomes more perfect in his tactics: the wrestler by frequenting the gymnastic ground becomes more skillful in wrestling: the physician by attending on his teacher becomes more accurate, and knows more, and learns more: and thou — what hast thou gained? I speak not to those who have been members of the Church only a year, but to those who from their earliest age have been attending the services. Think you. that to be religious is to be constant in Church-going (παραβάλλειν τῇ συνάξει)? This is nothing, unless we reap some fruit for ourselves: if (from the gathering together in Church) we do not gather (συνάγωμεν) something for ourselves, it were better to remain at home. For our forefathers built the Churches for us, not just to bring us together from our private houses and show us one to another: since this could have been done also in a market-place, and in baths, and in a public procession: — but to bring together learners and teachers, and make the one better by means of the other. With us it has all become mere customary routine, and formal discharge of a duty: a thing we are used to; that is all. Easter comes, and then great the stir, great the hubbub, and crowding of — I had rather not call them human beings, for their behavior is not commonly human. Easter goes, the tumult abates, but then the quiet which succeeds is again fruitless of good. “Vigils, and holy hymn-singing.” — And what is got by these? Nay, it is all the worse. Many do so merely out of vanity. Think how sick at heart it must make me, to see it all like (so much water) poured into a cask with holes in it! But ye will assuredly say to me, We know the Scriptures. And what of that? If ye exemplify the Scriptures by your works, that is the gain, that the profit. The Church is a dyer’s vat: if time after time perpetually ye go hence without receiving any dye, what is the use of coming here continually? Why, the mischief is all the greater. Who (of you) has added ought to the customary practices he received from his fathers? For example: such an one has a custom of observing the memorial of his mother, or his wife, or his child: this he does whether he be told or whether he be not told by us, drawn to it by force of habit and conscience. Does this displease thee, you ask? God forbid: on the contrary, I am glad of it with all my heart: only, I would wish that he had

gained some fruit also from our discoursing, and that the effect which habit has, were also the effect as regards us (your teachers) — the superinducing of another habit. Else why do I weary myself in vain, and talk uselessly, if ye are to remain in the same state, if the Church services work no good in you? Nay, you will say, we pray. And what of that? “Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 7:21.)

Many a time have I determined to hold my peace, seeing no benefit accruing to you from my words; or perhaps there does accrue some, but I, through insatiableness and strong desire, am affected in the same way as those that are mad after riches. For just as they, however much they may get, think they have nothing; so I, because I ardently desire your salvation, until I see you to have made good progress, think nothing done, because of my exceeding eager desire that you should arrive at the very summit. I would that this were the case, and that my eagerness were in fault, not your sloth: but I fear I conjecture but too rightly. For ye must needs be persuaded, that if any benefit had arisen in all this length of time, we ought ere now to have done speaking. In such case, there were no need to you of words, since both in those already spoken there had been enough said for you, and you would be yourselves able to correct others. But the fact, that there is still a necessity of our discoursing to you, only shows, that matters with you are not in a state of high perfection. Then what would we have to be brought about? for one must not merely find fault. I beseech and entreat you not to think it enough to have invaded the Church, but that ye also withdraw hence, having taken somewhat, some medicine, for the curing of your own maladies: and, if not from us, at any rate from the Scriptures, ye have the remedies suitable for each. For instance, is any passionate? Let him attend to the Scripture-readings, and he will of a surety find such either in history or exhortation. In exhortation, when it is said, “The sway of his fury is his destruction” (Ecclus. 1:22); and, “A passionate man is not seemly” (Proverbs 11:25); and such like: and again, “A man full of words shall not prosper” (Psalm 140:11); and Christ again, “He that is angry with his brother without a cause (Matthew 5:22); and again the Prophet, “Be ye angry, and sin not” (Psalm 4:4); and, “Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce.” (Genesis 49:7.) And in histories, as when thou hearest of Pharaoh filled with much wrath, and the Assyrian. Again, is any one taken captive by love of money? let him hear, that “There is

not a more wicked thing than a covetous man: for this man setteth even his own soul for sale (Ecclus. 9:9); and how Christ saith, “Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24); and the Apostle, that “the love of money is a root of all evils” (1 Timothy 6:10); and the Prophet, “If riches flow in, set not your heart upon them” (Psalm 62:10); and many other like sayings. And from the histories thou hearest of Gehazi, Judas, the chief scribes, and that “gifts blind the eyes of the wise.” (Exodus 23:8 and Deuteronomy 16:19.) Is another proud? Let him hear that “God resisteth the proud” (James 4:6); and, “Pride is the beginning of sin” (Ecclus. 10:14) and, “Every one that hath a high heart, is impure before the Lord.” (Proverbs 16:5.) And in the histories, the devil, and all the rest. In a word, since it is impossible to recount all, let each choose out from the Divine Scriptures the remedies for his own hurts. So wash out, if not the whole at once, a part at any rate, part today, and part tomorrow, and then the whole. And with regard to repentance too, and confession, and almsgiving, and justice also, and temperance, and all other things, thou wilt find many examples. “For all these things,” says the Apostle, “were written for our admonition.” (1 Corinthians 10:11.) If then Scripture in all its discoursing is for our admonition, let us attend to it as we ought. Why do we deceive ourselves in vain? I fear it may be said of us also, that “our days have fallen short in vanity, and our years with haste.” (Psalm 77:33.) Who from hearing us has given up the theatres? Who has given up his covetousness? Who has become more ready for almsgiving? I would wish to know this, not for the sake of vainglory, but that I may be inspirited to more zeal, seeing the fruit of my labors to be clearly evident. But as things now are, how shall I put my hand to the work, when I see that for all the rain of doctrine pouring down upon you shower after shower, still our crops remain at the same measure, and the plants have waxed none the higher? Anon the time of threshing is at hand (and) He with the fan. I fear me, lest it be all stubble: I fear, lest we be all cast into the furnace. The summer is past, the winter is come: we sit, both young and old, taken captive by our own evil passions. Tell not me, I do not commit fornication: for what art thou the better, if though thou be no fornicator thou art covetous? It matters not to the sparrow caught in the snare that he is not held tight in every part, but only by the foot: he is a lost bird for all that; in the snare he is, and it profits him not that he has his wings free, so long as his foot is held tight. Just so, thou art caught, not by fornication, but by love of

money: but caught thou art nevertheless; and the point is, not how thou art caught, but that thou art caught. Let not the young man say, I am no money-lover: well, but perchance thou art a fornicator: and then again what art thou the better? For the fact is, it is not possible for all the passions to set upon us at one and the same time of life: they are divided and marked off, and that, through the mercy of God, that they may not by assailing us all at once become insuperable, and so our wrestling with them be made more difficult. What wretched inertness it shows, not to be able to conquer our passions even when taken one by one, but to be defeated at each several period of our life, and to take credit to ourselves for those which (let us alone) not in consequence of our own hearty endeavors, but merely because, by reason of the time of life, they are dormant? Look at the chariot-drivers, do you not see how exceedingly careful and strict they are with themselves in their training-practice, their labors, their diet, and all the rest, that they may not be thrown down from their chariots, and dragged along (by the reins)? — See what a thing art is. Often even a strong man cannot master a single horse: but a mere boy who has learnt the art shall often take the pair in hand, and with ease lead them and drive them where he will. Nay, in India it is said that a huge monster of an elephant shall yield to a stripling of fifteen, who manages him with the utmost ease. To what purpose have I said all this? To show that, if by dint of study and practice we can throttle into submission (ἄγχομεν) even elephants and wild horses, much more the passions within us. Whence is it that throughout life we continually fail (in every encounter)? We have never practiced this art: never in a time of leisure when there is no contest, talked over with ourselves what shall be useful for us. We are never to be seen in our place on the chariot, until the time for the contest is actually come. Hence the ridiculous figure we make there. Have I not often said, Let us practice ourselves upon those of our own family before the time of trial? With our servants (παῖδας) at home we are often exasperated, let us there quell our anger, that in our intercourse with our friends we may come to have it easily under control. And so, in the case of all the other passions, if we practiced ourselves beforehand, we should not make a ridiculous figure in the contests themselves. But now we have our implements and our exercises and our trainings for other things, for arts and feats of the palaestra, but for virtue nothing of the sort. The husbandman would not venture to meddle with a vine, unless he had first

been practiced in the culture of it: nor the pilot to sit by the helm, unless he had first practiced himself well at it: but we, in all respects unpracticed, wish for the first prizes! It were good to be silent, good to have no communication with any man in act or word, until we were able to charm (κατεπάρδειν) the wild beast that is within us. The wild beast, I say: for indeed is it not worse than the attack of any wild beast, when wrath and lust make war upon us? Beware of invading the market-place (Μὴ ἐμβάλης εἰς ἀγοράν) with these beasts, until thou have got the muzzle well upon their mouths, until thou have tamed and made them tractable. Those who lead about their tame lions in the market-place, do you not see what a gain they make of it, what admiration they get, because in the irrational beast they have succeeded in producing such tameness — but, should the lion suddenly take a savage fit, how he scares all the people out of the market-place, and then both the man that leads him about is himself in danger, and if there be loss of life to others, it is his doing? Well then do thou also first tame thy lion, and so lead him about, not for the purpose of receiving money, but that thou mayest acquire a gain, to which there is none equal. For there is nothing equal to gentleness, which both to those that possess it, and to those who are its objects, is exceeding useful. This then let us follow after, that having kept in the way of virtue, and with all diligence finished our course therein, we may be enabled to attain unto the good things eternal, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory, might, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 30

ACTS 13:42

“And as they were going out (text rec. ‘from the syn. of the Jews,’ they besought (the Gentiles) that these words might be spoken unto them on the following sabbath.”

Do you mark Paul’s wisdom? He not only gained admiration at the time, but put into them a longing desire for a second hearing, while in what he said he dropped some seeds (εἰπὼν τινα σπέρματα) as it were, and forbore to solve (the questions raised), or to follow out the subject to its conclusion, his plan being to interest them and engage their goodwill to himself, and not make (people) listless and indifferent by casting all at once into the minds of those (who first heard him). He told them the fact, that “through this Man is remission of sins announced unto you,” but the how, he did not declare. “And when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and worshipping proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas” — after this point he puts Paul first — “who, speaking unto them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.” (v. 43.) Do you observe the eagerness, how great it is? They “followed” them, it says. Why did they not baptize them immediately? It was not the proper time: there was need to persuade them in order to their steadfast abiding therein. “And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.” (v. 44.) “But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and contradicted the things spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.” (v. 45.) See malice wounded in wounding others: this made the Apostles more conspicuous — the contradiction which those offered. In the first instance then they of their own accord besought them to speak (and now they opposed them): “contradicting,” it says, “and blaspheming.” O recklessness! “Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” (v. 46.) Do you mark how by their contentious behavior they the more extended the preaching, and (how the Apostles here) gave themselves the more to the Gentiles, having (by this very thing) pleaded their justification, and made themselves clear of all

blame with their own people (at Jerusalem)? (c) See how by their “envy” they bring about great things, other (than they looked for): they brought it about that the Apostles spake out boldly, and came to the Gentiles! For this is why he says, “And speaking out boldly, Paul and Barnabas said.” They were to go out to the Gentiles: but observe the boldness coming with measure: for if Peter pleaded in his justification, much more these needed a plea, none having called them there. (ch. 11:4.) But by saying “To you first,” he showed that to those also it was their duty (to preach), and in saying “Necessary,” he showed that it was necessary to be preached to them also. “But since ye turn away from it” — he does not say, “Woe unto you,” and “Ye are punished,” but “We turn unto the Gentiles.” With great gentleness is the boldness fraught! (a) Also he does not say, “Ye are unworthy,” but “Have judged yourselves unworthy. Lo, we turn unto the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have sent thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.” (v. 47.) For that the Gentiles might not be hurt at hearing this, as 8 if the case were so that, had the Jews been in earnest, they themselves would not have obtained the blessings, therefore he brings in the prophecy, saying, “A light of the Gentiles,” and, “for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And hearing” (this) “the Gentiles” (v. 48) — this, while it was more cheering to them, seeing the case was this, that whereas those were of right to hear first, they themselves enjoy the blessing, was at the same time more stinging to those — “and the Gentiles,” it says, “hearing” (this) “were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and believed, as many as were ordained unto eternal life”: i.e., set apart for God. Observe how he shows the speediness of the benefit: “And the word of the Lord was born through all the region,” (v. 49) **διεφέρετο**, instead of **διεκομίζετο**, “was carried or conveyed through (it).” (d) “But the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.” (v. 50.) “The devout women,” (b) instead of the proselyte-women. They did not stop at “envy,” but added deeds also. (e) Do you see what they effected by their opposing the preaching? to what dishonor they brought these (“honorable women”)? “But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.” (v. 51.) Here now they used that terrible sign. which Christ enjoined, “If any receive you not, shake off the dust from your feet” (Matthew 10:14; Mark 6:11); but these

did it upon no light ground, but because they were driven away by them. This was no hurt to the disciples; on the contrary, they the more continued in the word: “And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost” (v. 32) for the suffering of the teacher does not check his boldness, but makes the disciple more courageous.

“And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews.” (ch. 14:1.) Again they entered into the synagogues. See how far they were from becoming more timid! Having said, “We turn unto the Gentiles,” nevertheless (by going into the synagogues) they superabundantly fortify their own justification (with their Jewish brethren). “So that,” it says, “a great multitude both of Jews and Greeks believed.” For it is likely they discoursed as to Greeks also. “But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.” (v. 2.) Together (with themselves) now they took to stirring up the Gentiles too, as not being themselves sufficient. Then why did the Apostles not go forth thence? Why, they were not driven away, only attacked. “Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of His grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.” (v. 3.) This caused their boldness; or rather, of their boldness indeed their own hearty goodwill was the cause — therefore it is that for a long while they work no signs — while the conversion of the hearers was (the effect) of the signs,” though their boldness also contributed somewhat. “But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the Apostles.” (v. 4.) No small matter this dividing. And this was what the Lord said, “I am not come to bring peace, but a sword.” (Matthew 10:34.) “And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them, they were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: and there they preached the Gospel.” (v. 5-7.) Again, as if they purposely wished to extend the preaching after it was increased, they once more sent them out. See on all occasions the persecutions working great good, and defeating the persecutors, and making the persecuted illustrious. For having come to Lystra, he works a great miracle, by raising the lame man. “And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his

mother's womb, who never had walked: the same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice" — why with a loud voice? that the multitude should believe — "Stand upright on thy feet." (v. 8, 9.) But observe, he gave heed, it says, to the things spoken by Paul. Do you mark the elevation of the man's mind (*φιλοσοφίαν*)? He was nothing defeated (*παρεβλάβη*) by his lameness for earnestness of hearing. "Who fixing his eyes upon him, and perceiving," it says, "that he had faith to be made whole." He was already predisposed in purpose of mind. And yet in the case of the others, it was the reverse: for first receiving healing in their bodies, they were then taken in hand for cure of their souls, but this man not so. It seems to me, that Paul saw into his soul. "And he leaped," it says, "and walked." (v. 10.) It was a proof of his perfect cure, the leaping. "And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. (v. 11-13.) But this purpose was not yet manifest, for they spake in their own tongue, saying, "The gods in the likeness of men are come down to us:" therefore the Apostle said nothing to them as yet. But when they saw the garlands, then they went out, and rent their garments, "Which when the Apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you." (v. 14, 15.) See how on all occasions they are clean from the lust of glory, not only not coveting, but even repudiating it when offered: just as Peter also said, "Why gaze ye on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made him to walk" (ch. 3:12)? so these also say the same. And Joseph also said of he dreams, "Is not their interpretation of God?" (Genesis 60:8.) And Daniel in like manner, "And to me also, not through the wisdom that is in me was it revealed." (Daniel 2:30.) And Paul everywhere says this, as when he says, "And for these things who is sufficient? Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think (ought) as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." (2 Corinthians 2:16; 3:5.) But let us look over again what has been said.

(Recapitulation.) “And when they were gone out,” etc. (v. 42). Not merely were the multitudes drawn to them, but how? they besought to have the same words spoken to them again, and by their actions they showed their earnestness. “Now when the congregation,” etc. (v. 43.) See the Apostles on all occasions exhorting, not merely accepting men, nor courting them, but, “speaking unto them,” it says, “they persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. But when the Jews,” etc. (v. 45.) Why did they not contradict before this? Do you observe who on all occasions they were moved by passion? And they not only contradicted, but blasphemed also. For indeed malice stops at nothing. But see what boldness of speech! “It was necessary,” he says, “that the word should have been spoken first to you, but since ye put it from you,” — (v. 46) it is not put as affronting (though) it is in fact what they did in the case of the prophets: “Talk not to us,” said they, “with talk” — (Isaiah 30:10): “but since ye put it from you” — it, he saith, not us: for the affront on your part is not to us. For that none may take it as an expression of their piety (that he says,) “Ye judge not yourselves worthy,” therefore he first says, “Ye put it from you,” and then, “We turn unto the Gentiles.” The expression is full of gentleness. He does not say, We abandon you, but so that it is possible — he would say — that we may also turn hither again: and this too is not the consequence of the affront from you, “for so hath (the Lord) commanded us.” — (v. 47.) “Then why have ye not done this?” It was indeed needful that the Gentiles should hear, and this not before you: it is your own doing, the “before you.” “For so hath the Lord commanded us: I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation,” i.e. for knowledge which is unto salvation, and not merely of the Gentiles, but of all men, “unto the ends of the earth — As many as were ordained unto eternal life” (v. 48.): this is also a proof, that their having received these Gentiles was agreeable with the mind of God. But “ordained,” not in regard of necessity: “whom He foreknew,” saith the Apostle, “He did predestinate.” (Romans 8:29.) “And the word of the Lord,” etc. (v. 49.) No longer in the city (only) were (their doctrines) disseminated, but also in the (whole) region. For when they of the Gentiles had heard it, they also after a little while came over. “But the Jews stirred up the devout women, and raised persecution” — observe even of what is done by the women, they are the authors — “and cast them,” it says, “out of their coasts” (v. 50), not from the city merely. Then, what is more terrible, “they shook off

the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. But the disciples, it says, were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.” (v. 51, 52.) The teachers were suffering persecution, and the disciples rejoiced.

“And so spake, that a great multitude,” etc. (ch. 14:1.) Do you mark the nature of the Gospel, the great virtue it has? “Made their minds evil-affected,” it says, “against the brethren:” (v. 2.) i.e. slandered the Apostles, raised numberless accusations against them: (these people, being simple, they “made evil-affected,” disposed them to act a malignant part. And see how on all occasions he refers all to God. “Long time,” he says, “abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of His grace.” (v. 3.) Think not this (expression, “Gave testimony,”) hath aught derogatory (to the Lord’s Divine Majesty): “Who witnessed,” it is said, “before Pontius Pilate.” (1 Timothy 6:13.) Then the boldness — “and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.” Here he speaks it as concerning their own nation. “And the multitude of the city,” etc. (v. 4, 5.) Accordingly they did not wait for it, but saw the intention of attacking them, and fled, on no occasion kindling their wrath, “to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra, and Derbe, and the adjacent region.” (v. 6.) They went away into the country, not into the cities only. — Observe both the simplicity of the Gentiles, and the malignity of the Jews. By their actions they showed that they were worthy to hear: they so honored them from the miracles only. The one sort honored them as gods, the other persecuted them as pestilent fellows: and (those) not only did not take offense at the preaching, but what say they? “The gods, in the likeness of men, are come down to us; but the Jews were offended. “And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius.” (v. 11, 12.) I suppose Barnabas was a man of dignified appearance also. Here was a new sort of trial, from immoderate zeal, and no small one: but hence also is shown the virtue of the Apostles, (and) how on all occasions they ascribe all to God.

Let us imitate them: let us think nothing our own, seeing even faith itself is not our own, but more God’s (than ours). “For by grace. are ye saved through faith; and this,” saith he, “not of ourselves; it is the gift of God.” (Ephesians 2:8.) Then let us not think great things of ourselves, nor be puffed up, being as we are, men, dust and ashes, smoke and shadow. For say, Why dost thou think great things of thyself? Hast thou given alms, and lavished thy substance? And what of that? Think, what if God had

chosen not to make thee rich? think of them that are impoverished, or rather, think how many have given (not their substance only, but) their bodies moreover, and after their numberless sacrifices, have a felt still that they were miserable creatures! Thou gavest for thyself, Christ (not for Himself, but) for thee: thou didst but pay a debt, Christ owed thee not. — See the uncertainty of the future, and “be not high-minded, but fear” (Romans 11:20); do not lessen thy virtue by boastfulness. Wouldest thou do something truly great? Never let a surmise of thy attainments as great enter thy mind. But thou art a virgin? So were those in (the Gospel) virgins, but they got no benefit from their virginity, because of their cruelty and inhumanity. (Matthew 25:12.) Nothing like humility: this is mother, and root, and nurse, and foundation, and bond of all good things: without this we are abominable, and execrable, and polluted. For say — let there be some man raising the dead, and healing the lame, and cleansing the lepers, but with proud self-complacency: than this there can be nothing more execrable, nothing more impious, nothing more detestable. Account nothing to be of thyself. Hast thou utterance and grace of teaching? Do not for this account thyself to have aught more than other men. For this cause especially thou oughtest to be humbled, because thou hast been vouchsafed more abundant gifts. For he to whom more was forgiven, will love more (Luke 7:47): if so, then oughtest thou to be humbled also, for that God having passed by others, took notice of thee. Fear thou because of this: for often this is a cause of destruction to thee, if thou be not watchful. Why thinkest thou great things of thyself? Because thou teachest by words? But this is easy, to philosophize in words: teach me by thy life: that is the best teaching. Sayest thou that it is right to be moderate, and dost thou make a long speech about this thing, and play the orator, pouring forth thy eloquence without a check? But “better than thou is he” shall one say to thee, “who teaches me this by his deeds” — for not so much are those lessons wont to be fixed in the mind which consist in words, as those which teach by things: since if thou hast not the deed, thou not only hast not profited him by thy words, but hast even hurt him the more — “better thou wert silent.” Wherefore? “Because the thing thou proposest to me is impossible: for I consider, that if thou who hast so much to say about it, succeedest not in this, much more am I excusable.” For this cause the Prophet says, “But unto the sinner said God. Why declarest thou My statutes?” (Psalm 60:16.) For this is a worse

mischief, when one who teaches well in words, impugns the teaching by his deeds. This has been the cause of many evils in the Churches. Wherefore pardon me, I beseech you, that my discourse dwells long on this evil affection (πάθει). Many take a deal of pains to be able to stand up in public, and make a long speech: and if they get applause from the multitude, it is to them as if they gained the very kingdom (of heaven): but if silence follows the close of their speech, it is worse than hell itself, the dejection that falls upon their spirits from the silence! This has turned the Churches upside down, because both you desire not to hear a discourse calculated to lead you to compunction, but one that may delight you from the sound and composition of the words, as though you were listening to singers and minstrels (κιθαρωδῶν καὶ κιθαριστῶν, *supra* p. 68): and we too act a preposterous and pitiable part in being led by your lusts, when we ought to root them out. And so it is just as if the father of a poor cold-blooded child (already, more delicate than it ought to be, should, although it is so feeble, give it cake and cold (drink) and whatever only pleases the child, and take no account of what might do it good; and then, being reproved by the physicians, should excuse himself by saying, “What can I do? I cannot bear to see the child crying.” Thou poor, wretched creature, thou betrayer! for I cannot, call such a one a father: how much better were it for thee, by paining him for a short time, to restore him to health forever, than to make this short-lived pleasure the foundation of a lasting sorrow? Just such is our case, when we idly busy ourselves about beautiful expressions, and the composition and harmony of our sentences, in order that we may please, not profit: (when) we make it our aim to be admired, not to instruct; to delight, not prick to the heart; to be applauded and depart with praise, not to correct men’s manners! Believe me, I speak not other than I feel — when as I discourse I hear myself applauded, at the moment indeed I feel it as a man (for why should I not own the truth?): I am delighted, and give way to the pleasurable feeling: but when I get home, and bethink me that those who applauded received no benefit from my discourse, but that whatever benefit they ought to have got, they lost it while applauding and praising, I am in pain, and groan, and weep, and feel as if I had spoken all in vain. I say to myself: “What profit comes to me from my labors, while the hearers do not choose to benefit by what they hear from us?” Nay, often have I thought to make a rule which should prevent all applauding, and persuade you to listen with silence and

becoming orderliness. But bear with me, I beseech you, and be persuaded by me, and, if it seem good to you, let us even now establish this rule, that no hearer be permitted to applaud in the midst of any person's discourse, but if he will needs admire, let him admire in silence: there is none to prevent him: and let all his study and eager desire be set upon the receiving the things spoken. — What means that noise again? I am laying down a rule against this very thing, and you have not the forbearance even to hear me! — Many will be the good effects of this regulation: it will be a discipline of philosophy. Even the heathen philosophers — we hear of their discoursing, and nowhere do we find that noisy applause accompanied their words: we hear of the Apostles, making public speeches, and yet nowhere do the accounts add, that in the midst of their speeches the hearers interrupted the speakers with loud expressions of approbation. A great gain will this be to us. But let us establish this rule: in quiet let us all hear, and speak the whole (of what we have to say). For if indeed it were the case that we departed retaining what we had heard, what I insist upon is, that even so the praise is not beneficial — but not to go too much into particulars (on this point); let none tax me with rudeness — but since nothing is gained by it, nay, it is even mischievous, let us loose the hindrance, let us put a stop to the boundings, let us retrench the gambolings of the soul. Christ spoke publicly on the Mount: yet no one said aught, until He had finished His discourse. I do not rob those who wish to be applauded: on the contrary, I make them to be more admired. It is far better that one's hearer, having listened in silence, should by his memory throughout all time applaud, both at home and abroad, than that having lost all he should return home empty, not possessed of that which was the subject of his applauses. For how shall the hearer be otherwise than ridiculous? Nay, he will be deemed a flatterer, and his praises no better than irony, when he declares that the teacher spoke beautifully, but what he said, this he cannot tell. This has all the appearance of adulation. For when indeed one has been hearing minstrels and players, it is no wonder if such be the case with him, seeing he knows not how to utter the strain in the same manner: but where the matter is not an exhibition of song or of voice, but the drift and purport of thoughts and wise reflection (*φιλοσοφίας*), and it is easy for every one to tell and report what was said, how can he but deserve the accusation, who cannot tell what the matter was for which he praised the speaker? Nothing so becomes a

Church as silence and good order. Noise belongs to theatres, and baths, and public processions, and market-places: but where doctrines, and such doctrines, are the subject of teaching, there should be stillness, and quiet, and calm reflection, and a haven of much repose (**φιλοσοφία καὶ πολὺς ὁ λιμήν**). These things I beseech and entreat: for I go about in quest of ways by which I shall be enabled to profit your souls. And no small way I take this to be: it will profit not you only, but us also. So shall we not be carried away with pride (**ἐκτραχηλίζεσθαι**), not be tempted to love praises and honor, not be led to speak those things which delight, but those which profit: so shall we lay the whole stress of our time and diligence not upon arts of composition and beauties of expression, but upon the matter and meaning of the thoughts. Go into a painter's study, and you will observe how silent all is there. Then so ought it to be here: for here too we are employed in painting portraits, royal portraits (every one of them), none of any private man, by means of the colors of virtue — How now? Applauding again? This is a reform not easy, but (only) by reason of long habit, to be effected — The pencil moreover is the tongue, and the Artist the Holy Spirit. Say, during the celebration of the Mysteries, is there any noise? any disturbance? when we are baptizing (**βαπτίζόμεθα**), when we are doing all the other acts? Is not all Nature decked (as it were) with stillness and silence? Over all the face of heaven is scattered this charm (of repose). — On this account are we evil spoken of even among the Gentiles, as though we did all for display and ostentation. But if this be prevented, the love of the chief seats also will be extinguished. It is sufficient, if any one be enamored of praise, that he should obtain it after having been heard, when all is gathered in. Yea, I beseech you, let us establish this rule, that doing all things according to God's will, we may be found worthy of the mercy which is from Him, through the grace and compassion of His only begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father together with the Holy Spirit be glory, dominion, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 31

ACTS 14:14, 15

“Which when the Apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.”

MARK the vehemence with which all this is done by the Apostles: “rent their clothes, ran in, cried out,” all from strong affection of the soul, revolted by the things that were done. For it was a grief, indeed a grief inconsolable, that they should needs be thought gods, and introduce idolatry, the very thing which they came to destroy! This also was a contrivance of the devil — but he did not prevail. But what say they? “We also are men of like passions with you.” At the very outset they overthrew the evil. They said not simply, “Men,” but “As ye.” Then, that they may not seem to honor the gods, hear what they add: “Preaching unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, Who made heaven, the sea, and all things that are therein.” Observe how they nowhere mention things invisible (b) For they had learnt that one should study not so much to say somewhat worthy of God, as to say what is profitable for the hearers. (a) What then? if He be Maker of all things, why does He not also attend to these things by His Providence? — “Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways” (v. 16) but wherefore He suffered them, this he does not say, for at present he keeps to the matter of immediate importance, nowhere bringing in the name of Christ. Observe, he does not wish to swell the accusation against them, but rather that they themselves should refer all to God.

“Nevertheless, He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, giving you rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness.” (v. 17.) (c) See how covertly he puts the accusation “in that He did good,” etc. And yet if God did this, He could not have “let them alone;” on the contrary, they ought to be punished, for that, enjoying so great benefits, they had not acknowledged Him, not even as their feeder. “From heaven,” he says, “giving you rain.” Thus also David said, “From

the fruit of their corn and wine and oil were they made to abound” (Psalm 4:7), and in many places speaking of Creation, he brings forward these benefits: and Jeremiah mentions first Creation, then Providence (shown by the rains, so that the Apostle here discourses as taught from those Scriptures. “Filling,” he says, “with food and gladness.” (Jeremiah 5:24.) With large liberality (φιλοτιμίας) the food is given, not merely for a frugal sufficiency, nor stinted by the need. “And saying these things, they scarcely stopped the multitudes” (v. 18) — indeed by this very thing they gained most admiration — “from sacrificing to them.” Do you observe that this was the point with them to put an end to that madness? “But there came,” it says, “certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium” (v. 19). — Indeed children of the devil, that not in their own cities only, but also beyond them, they did these things, and as much made it their study to make an end of the preaching, as the Apostles were in earnest to establish it! — “and having persuaded the multitude and stoned Paul, they dragged him out of the city.” (e) So then, the Gentiles regarded them as gods, but these “dragged” him, “out of the city, supposing he had been dead. Having persuaded the multitude” — for it is not likely that all thus revered them. In the very city in which they received this reverence, in the same were they thus terribly ill treated. And this also profited the beholders. “Lest any man,” he says, “should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth aught from me.” (v. 20.) — “Howbeit as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up and came into the city.” (d) Here is fulfilled that saying, “My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9.) Greater this than the raising of the lame man! (f) “Came into the city.” Do you mark the zeal, do you mark how fervent he is, how set on fire! He came into the city itself again: for proof that if on any occasion he did retire, it was because he had sown the word, and because it was not right to inflame their wrath. (h) Then they went over all the cities in which they had been in danger. “And on the morrow,” it says, “he went forth with Barnabas to Derbe. And when they had preached the Gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” (v. 21, 22.) This they said, this they showed. But it is purposely so done, not only by the Apostles, but by the disciples also, that they may

learn from the very outset both the might of the preaching, and that they must themselves also suffer such things, that they may stand nobly, not idly gaping for the miracles, but much more (ready) for the trials. Therefore also the Apostle himself said, “Having the same conflict which ye saw in me and heard.” (Philippians 1:30.) Persecutions succeeded to persecutions: wars, fightings, stonings. (g) These things, not less than the miracles, both made them more illustrious, and prepared for them a greater rejoicing. The Scripture nowhere says that they returned rejoicing because they had done miracles, but (it does say that they rejoiced), that “they were counted worthy for that Name to suffer shame.” (ch. 5:41.) And this they were taught of Christ, saying, “Rejoice not that the devils obey you.” (Luke 10:20.) For the joy indeed and without alloy is this, to suffer aught for Christ’s sake. (i) “And that through much tribulation:” what sort of cheering (προτροπή) is this? how did they persuade them, by telling them at the outset of tribulations? Then also another consolation. “And when they had appointed for them elders in every Church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. (v. 23.) Do you mark Paul’s ardor? — Then other consolation: “Commended them,” it says, “to the Lord. And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia (v. 24, 25): (l) and thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.” (v. 26.) Why do they come back to Antioch? To report what had taken place yonder. And besides, there is a great purpose of Providence concerned: for it was needful that they should thenceforth preach with boldness to the Gentiles. They come therefore, reporting these things, that they may be able to know them: and it is providentially ordered, that just then came those who forbade to keep company with the Gentiles in order that from Jerusalem they might obtain great encouragement, and so go their ways with boldness. And besides, it shows that in their temper there was nothing of self-will: for they come, at the same time showing their boldness, in that without the authority of those (at Jerusalem) they had preached to the Gentiles, and their obedience, in that they refer the matter to them: for they were not made arrogant, as (ἀπεινοήθησαν) having achieved so great successes. “Whence,” it says, “they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled.” And yet moreover the Spirit had said,

“Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” (ch. 13:2.) “And when they were come, and had gathered the Church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. And there they abode long time with the disciples.” (v. 27, 28.) For the city being great had need of teachers. — But let us look over again what has been said.

(Recapitulation.) “Which when the Apostles,” etc. (v. 14). First by the sight they checked them, by rending their garments. This did Joshua the son of Nun upon the occasion of the defeat of the people. Then think not that this action was unworthy of them: for such was the eagerness, they would not otherwise have restrained it would not otherwise have quenched the conflagration (πύρραν). Therefore when need is to do something that is fit to be done, let us not decline it. For if even after all this they hardly persuaded them, if they had not acted thus, what might have been the consequence? For if they had not done thus, they would have been thought to make a show of humility (ταπεινοφρονεῖν), and to be all the more desirous of the honor. And observe their language, how in rebuking it is moderated, alike full of wonder and of rebuke. This above all it was that hindered them, the saying, “Preaching unto you to turn from these vanities unto God.” (v. 15.) We are men indeed, they say, but greater than these: for these are dead things, Mark how they not only subvert (the false), but teach (the true), saying nothing about things invisible — “Who made,” say they, “heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein. Who in times past,” etc. (v. 16, 17.) He names as witnesses even the years (in their courses). “And there came thither certain Jews,” etc. (v. 19.) O that Jewish madness! Among a people [that had so honored the Apostles, they had the hardihood to come, and to stone Paul. “And they dragged him out of the city,” being afraid of those (others), — “Supposing he had been dead.” (k) “Howbeit,” etc. “and came into the city.” (v. 20.) For that the spirits of the disciples might not be downcast because they who were accounted gods suffered such treatment, they came in unto them and discoursed. “Then on the morrow,” etc. And observe, first he goes forth to Derbe, and then comes back to Lystra and Iconium and Antioch, (v. 21) giving way to them while their passions are roused, but when they have ceased, then attacking them again. Do you mark, that it was not by (supernatural) grace that they managed all that they did, but by their own

diligence? “Confirming,” it says “the souls of the disciples:”

ἐπιστηρίζοντες, “further establishing;” so that they were established, but they added more thereto. “And that we must,” etc. (v. 22): they foretold (this), that they might not be offended. “And when they had appointed for them,” etc. Again the ordinations accompanied with fastings: and again fasting, that purifying of our souls. (m) “And having prayed,” it says, “with fastings, they commended them unto the Lord” (v. 23): they taught them to fast also in their trials. (o) Why did they not make elders in Cyprus nor in Samaria? Because the latter was near to Jerusalem, the former to Antioch, and the word was strong there; whereas in those parts they needed much consolation, especially they of the Gentiles, who behooved to have much instruction. “And when they were come,” etc. (v. 27.) They came, teaching them that with good reason had they been ordained by the Spirit. (n) They said not what they themselves, but “what God had done with them.” It seems to me, that they mean their trials. It was not for nothing that they, come here, nor to rest, but providentially guided by the Spirit, to the end that the preaching to the Gentiles might be firmly established. (p) And mark Paul’s ardor. He does not ask whether it be right to speak to Gentiles, but he straightway speaks: therefore it is that he says, “I did not refer myself to flesh and blood.” (Galatians 1:16.)

For it is indeed a great thing, a great, a generous soul (like this)! How many have since believed, and none of them all has shone like him! What we want is earnestness, exceeding ardor, a soul ready to encounter death. Else is it not possible to attain unto the Kingdom, not being crucified. Let us not deceive ourselves. For if in war it is impossible to come off safe while living daintily, and trafficking, and huckstering and idling, much more in this war. Or think ye not that it is a war worse than all others? (*Infra*, p. 204, note .) “For we wrestle not,” he says, “against flesh and blood.” (Ephesians 6:12.) Since even while taking our meals and walking, and bathing, the enemy is present with us, and knows no time of truce, except that of sleep only: nay, often even then he carries on the war, injecting into us unclean thoughts, and making us lewd by means of dreams. We watch not, we do not rouse ourselves up, do not look to the multitude of the forces opposed to us, do not reflect, that this very thing constitutes the greatest misfortune — that though surrounded by so great wars, we live daintily as in time of peace. Believe me, worse than Paul suffered may

have to be suffered now. Those enemies wounded him with stones: there is a wounding with words, even worse than stones. What then must we do? The same that he did: he did not hate those who cast stones at him, but after they had dragged him out, he entered again into their city, to be a benefactor to those who had done him such wrongs. If thou also endurest him who harshly insults thee, and has done thee wrongs, then hast thou too been stoned. Say not, "I have done him no injury." For what injury had Paul done, that he should be stoned? He was announcing a Kingdom, he was bringing men away from error, and bringing them to God: benefits these, worthy of crowns, worthy of proclamation by voice of herald, worthy of a thousand good things — not of stones. And yet (far from resenting) he did just the contrary. For this is the splendid victory. "And they dragged him," (v. 19) it says, These too they often drag: but be not thou angry; on the contrary, preach thou the word with gentleness. Hath one insulted thee? Hold thy peace, and bless if thou canst, and thou also hast preached the word, hast given a lesson of gentleness, a lesson of meekness. I know that many do not so smart under wounds, as they do under the blow which is inflicted by words: as indeed the one wound the body receives the other the soul. But let us not smart, or rather feeling the smart let us endure. Do you not see the pugilists, how, with their heads sorely battered, they bite their teeth into their lips, and so bear their smarts kindly? No need to grind the teeth, no need to bite (the lips). Remember thy Master, and by the remembrance thou hast at once applied the remedy. Remember Paul: reflect that thou, the beaten hast conquered, and he the beater, is defeated; and by this hast thou cured the whole. his the turning of the scale a moment and thou hast achieved the whole: be not hurried away, do not even move, thou hast extinguished the whole (fire). Great eloquence of persuasion there is in suffering aught for Christ: thou preachest not the word of faith, but thou preachest the word of patience (*φιλοσοφίας*). But, you will say, the more he sees my gentleness, the more he sets upon me. Is it for this then that thou art pained, that he increases thy rewards the more? "But this is the way," you say, "to make him unbearable." This is mere pretext of thine own littleness of mind: on the contrary, the other is the way to make him unbearable, namely, that thou avenge thyself. If God had known, that through forbearance of revenge, the unjust became unbearable, He would not have done this Himself: on the contrary, He would have said, Avenge thyself: but He

knew, that other than this is the more likely way to do good. Make not thou a law contrary to God: do as He bids thee. Thou art not kinder than He that made us. He hath said, “Bear to be wronged:” thou sayest, “I requite wrong for wrong, that he may not become unbearable.” Hast thou then more care for him than God has? Such talk is mere passion and ill temper, arrogance and setting up laws against God’s laws. For even if the man were hurt (by our forbearance), would it not be our duty to obey? When God orders anything, let us not make a contrary law. “A submissive answer,” we read, turneth away wrath” (Proverbs 16:1): not an answer of opposition. If it profits thee, it profits him also: but if it hurts thee who art to set him right, how much more will it hurt him? “Physician, heal thyself.” Hath one spoken ill of thee? Commend him thou. Hath he reviled thee? Praise him thou. Hath he plotted against thee? Do him a kindness. Requite him with the contrary things, if at least thou at all carest for his salvation and wish not thou to revenge thine own suffering. And yet, you will say, though he has often met with long-suffering from me he has become worse. This is not thine affair, but his. Wilt thou learn what wrongs God suffered? They threw down His altars, and slew His prophets (1 Kings 19:10), yet He endured it all. Could He not have launched a thunderbolt from above? Nay, when He had sent His prophets, and they killed them, then He sent His Son (Matthew 21:37), when they wrought greater impieties, then He sent them greater benefits. And thou too, if thou seest one exasperated, then yield the more: since this madness has greater need of soothing (*παραμθίας*). The more grievous his abuse of thee, the more meekness does he need from thee: and even as a gale when it blows strong, then it requires yielding to, so also he who is in a passion. When the wild beast is most savage, then we all flee: so also should we flee from him that is angry. Think not that this is an honor to him: for is it an honor we show to the wild beast, and to madmen, when we turn aside out of their way? By no means it is a dishonor and a scorn: or rather not dishonor and scorn, but compassion and humanity. Seest thou not how the sailors, when the wind blows violently, take down their sails, that the vessel may not sink? how, when the horses have run away with the driver, he only leads them into the (open) plain, and does not pull against them that he may not voluntarily exhaust his strength? This do thou also. Wrath is a fire, it is a quick flame needing fuel: do not supply food to the fire, and thou hast soon extinguished the evil. Anger has no power of itself; there

must be another to feed it. For thee there is no excuse. He is possessed with madness, and knows not what he does; but when thou, seeing what he is, fallest into the same evils, and art not brought to thy right senses by the sight, what excuse can there be for thee? If coming to a feast thou see at the very outset of the feast some one drunken and acting unseemly, would not he, who after seeing him makes himself drunk, be much more inexcusable? Just so it is here. Do we think it any excuse to say, I was not the first to begin? This is against us, that even the sight of the other in that condition did not bring us to our fight senses. It is just as if one should say, "I did not murder him first." For this very thing makes thee deserving of punishment, that even upon the warning of such a spectacle thou didst not restrain thyself. If thou shouldst see the drunken man in the act of vomiting, retching, bursting, his eyes strained, filling the table with his filthiness, everybody hurrying out of his way, and then shouldst fall into the same state thyself, wouldest thou not be more hateful? Like him is he that is in a passion: more than he who vomits, he has his veins distended, his eyes inflamed, his bowels racked; he vomits forth words far more filthy than that food; all crude what he utters, nothing duly digested, for his passion will not let it be. But as in that case excess of fumes (*χρῆμων*), making an uproar in the stomach, often rejects all its contents; so here, excess of heat, making a tumult in the soul suffers him not to conceal what it were right to leave unsaid, but things fit and unfit to be spoken, he says all alike, not putting the hearers but himself to shame. As then we get out of the way of those that vomit, so let us from those who are angry. Let us cast dust upon their vomit: By doing what? By holding our peace: let us call the dogs to eat up the vomit. I know that ye are disgusted at hearing this: but I wish you to feel this same disgust when ye see these things take place, and not to be pleased at the thing. The abusive man is filthier than the dog that returneth to its own vomit. For if indeed having vomited once he were done with it, he would not be like that dog: but if he vomits the same things again, it is plain that he does so from having eaten the same again. What then is more abominable than such an one? What filthier than that mouth which chews such food? And yet this is a work of nature, but the other not or rather both the one and the other are contrary to nature. How? Since it is not according to nature to be causelessly abusive, but against nature: he speaks nothing then like a man, but part as beast, part as madman. As then the disease of the body is contrary to nature, so also is

this. And to show that it is contrary to nature, if he shall continue in it, he will perish by little and little: but if he continue in that which is natural, he will not perish. I had rather sit at table with a man who eats dirt, than with one who speaks such words. See ye not the swine devouring dung? So also do these. For what is more stinking than the words which abusive men utter? It is their study to speak nothing wholesome, nothing pure, but whatever is base, whatever is unseemly, that they study both to do and say: and what is worse, they think to disgrace others, while they in fact are disgracing themselves. For that it is themselves they disgrace is plain. For, leaving out of the question those who speak lies (in their railings), say it be some notorious harlot, or even from the stage some other (abandoned creature), and let that person be having a fight with some other person: then let the latter cast this up to the former (what she or he is), and the former retort upon the latter the same reproach: which of them is most damaged by the words? For the former is but called what in fact he or she is, which is not the case with the other: so that the first gets nothing more in the way of shame (than there was before), while to the other there accrues a great accession of disgrace. But again, let there be some hidden actions (mod. text *εἰργασμένα* “which have been done”), and let only the person abusing know of them: then, holding his peace until now, let him openly parade (*ἐκπομπεύετω*) the reproach: even so, he himself is more disgraced than the other. How? by making himself the herald of the wickedness, so getting for himself either the imputation of not being privy to any such thing, or the character of one not fit to be trusted. And you shall see all men forthwith accuse him: “If indeed he had been privy to a murder being done, he ought to have revealed it all:” and so they regard him with aversion as not human even, they hate him, they say he is a wild beast, fierce and cruel: while the other they pardon much rather than him. For we do not so much hate those that have wounds, as those that compel one to uncover and show them. Thus that man has not only disgraced the other, but himself as well and his hearers, and the common nature of men: he has wounded the hearer, done no good. For this reason Paul says: “If there be any word that is good for edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” (Ephesians 4:29.) Let us get a tongue speaking only good things, that we may be lovely and amiable. But indeed, everything is come to that pitch of wickedness, that many boast of the very things, for which they should hide their faces. For the threats of the many are of this kind:

“thou canst not bear my tongue,” say they. Words, these, worthy only of a woman, of an abandoned drunken old hag, one of those that are dragged (to punishment) in the forum, a procuress. Nothing more shameful than these words, nothing more unmanly, more womanlike, than to have your strength in the tongue, and to think great things of yourself because you can rail, just like the fellows in processions, like the buffoons, parasites, and flatterers. Swine they are rather than men, who pride themselves upon this. Whereas you should (sooner) have buried yourself, and if another gave you this character, should recoil from the charge as odious and unmanly, instead of that you have made yourself the herald of (your own) disgrace (ὑβρεων). But you will not be able to hurt him you speak ill of. Wherefore I beseech you, considering how the wickedness is come to such a height, that many boast of it, let us return to our senses, let us recover those who are thus mad, let us take away these councils out of the city, let us make our tongue gracious, let us rid it of all evil speaking, that being clean from sins, we may be able to draw down upon us the goodwill from above, and to have mercy vouchsafed unto us from God, through the grace and compassion of His only-begotten Son, with Whom to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory, might, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 32

ACTS 15:1

“And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.”

MARK how at every step of the right progress in respect of the Gentiles, the beginning is brought in as matter of necessity. Before this (Peter) being found fault with, justified himself, and said all that he said in the’ tone of apology, which was what made his words acceptable: then, the Jews having turned away, upon this (Paul) came to the Gentiles. Here again, seeing another extravagance coming in, upon this (the apostle) enacts the law. For as it is likely that they, as being taught of God, discoursed to all indifferently, this moved to jealousy them of the Jews (who had believed). And they did not merely speak of circumcision, but they said, Ye cannot even be saved. Whereas the very opposite to this was the case, that receiving circumcision they could not be saved. Do you mark how closely the trials succeed each other, from within, from without? It is well ordered too, that this happens when Paul is present, that he may answer them. “When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.” (v. 2.) And Paul does not say, What? Have I not a right to be believed after so many signs? but he complied for their sakes. “And being brought on their way by the Church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.” (v. 3.) And observe, the consequence is that all the Samaritans also, learn what has come to the Gentiles: and they rejoiced. “And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the Church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.” (v. 4.) See what a providence is here! “But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders came together to consider of this matter. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know

how that of old days God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe.” (v. 5-7.) Observe Peter from the first standing aloof (*κεχωρισμένον*) from the affair, and even to this time judaizing. And yet (says he)” ye know.” (ch. 10:45; 11:2.) Perhaps those were present who of old found fault with him in the matter of Cornelius, and went in with him (on that occasion): for this reason he brings them forward as witnesses. “From old days,” he says, “did choose among you.” What means, “Among you?” Either, in Palestine, or, you being present. “By my mouth.” Observe how he shows that it was God speaking by him, and no human utterance. “And God, that knoweth the hearts, gave testimony unto them:” he refers them to the spiritual testimony: “by giving them the Holy Ghost even as unto us.” (v. 8.) Everywhere he puts the Gentiles upon a thorough equality. “And put no difference between us and them, having purified their hearts by faith.” (v. 9.) From faith alone, he says, they obtained the same gifts. This is also meant as a lesson to those (objectors); this is able to teach even them that faith only is needed, not works nor circumcision. For indeed they do not say all this only by way of apology for the Gentiles, but to teach (the Jewish believers) also to abandon the Law. However, at present this is not said. “Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples?” (v. 10.) What means, “Tempt ye God?” As if He had not power to save by faith. Consequently, it proceeds from a want of faith, this bringing in the Law. Then he shows that they themselves were nothing benefited by it, and he turns the whole (stress of his speech) against the Law, not against them, and (so) cuts short the accusation of them: “which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear. But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus we shall be saved, even as they.” (v. 11.) How full of power these words! The same that Paul says at large in the Epistle to the Romans, the same says Peter here. “For if Abraham,” says (Paul), “was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God.” (Romans 4:2.) Do you perceive that all this is more a lesson for them than apology for the Gentiles? However, if he had spoken this without a plea for speaking, he would have been suspected: an occasion having offered, he lays hold of it, and speaks out fearlessly. See on all occasions how the designs of their foes are made to work with them. If those had not stirred the question, these things would not have been spoken, nor what follows. (Recapitulation.) (b) But let us look more

closely at what has been said. "And certain men," etc. In Jerusalem, then, there were not any believers from among the Gentiles: but in Antioch of course there were. Therefore there came down certain yet laboring under this disease of the love of rule, and wishing to have those of the Gentiles attached to them. And yet Paul, though he too was learned in the Law, was not thus affected. "When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small disputation with them," etc. (v. 2.) But when he returned from thence, the doctrine also became more exact. For if they at Jerusalem enjoin no such thing, much more these (have no right to do so). "And being brought on their way," etc., "they caused no small joy to the brethren." (v. 3.) Do you mark, as many as are not enamored of rule, rejoiced in their believing? It was no ambitious feeling that prompted their recitals, neither was it for display, but in justification of the preaching to the Gentiles. (v. 4.) Thus they say nothing of what had happened in the matter of the Jews. "But there arose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed," etc. (v. 5.) (a) But even if they would needs bring over the Gentiles to their side, they learn that neither must the Apostles overlook it. "And the Apostles and elders," etc. (v. 6.) "Among us," he says, "God chose:" and "from old days:" long ago, he says, not now. And this too is no small point — at a time when Jews believed, not turned away (from the Gospel). "Among us;" an argument from the place: "of old days," from the time. And that expression, "Chose:" just as in their own case he says not, (so) willed it, but, "Chose that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel and believe." Whence is this proved? From the Spirit. Then he shows that the testimony given them is not of grace merely, but of their virtue. "And God which knoweth the hearts bare them witness" (v. 8); having afforded to them nothing less (than to us), for, he says, "Put no difference between us and them." (v. 9.) Why then, hearts are what one must everywhere look to. And it is very appositely said, "God that knoweth the hearts bare them witness:" as in the former instance, "Thou, Lord, that knowest the hearts of all men." (ch. 1:24.) For to show that this is the meaning, observe what he adds, "Put no difference between us and them." When he has mentioned the testimony born to them, then he utters that great word, the same which Paul speaks, "Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision." (1 Corinthians vii, 19.) "That he may make the twain one in Himself." (Ephesians 2:5.) Of all these the seeds lie in Peter's discourse. And he does not say (between) them of the

circumcision, but “Between us,” that is the Apostles, “and them.” Then, that the expression, “no difference” may not seem an outrage, After faith, he says — “Having purified their hearts by faith” (v. 10)-He thoroughly cleansed them first. Then he shows, not that the Law was evil, but themselves weak. — “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus we shall be saved even as they.” (v. 11.) Mark how he ends with a fearful consideration. He does not discourse to them from the Prophets, but from things present, of which themselves were witnesses. Of course (the Prophets) also themselves anon add their testimony (*infra* 5:15), and make the reason stronger by what has now come to pass. And observe, he first permits the question to be moved in the Church, and then speaks. “And put no difference between” — he said not, them of the circumcision, but “us and them,” i.e. the Gentiles: for this (gradual advance) little by little is stronger. “Why therefore tempt ye God?” who is become (the) God of the Gentiles: far this was tempting: whether He is able to save even after the Law. See what he does. He shows that they are in danger. For if, what the Law could not do, faith had power to do, “we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus we shall be saved even as they” (comp. Galatians 2:16): but faith falling off, behold, themselves (are) in destruction. And he did not say, Why do ye disbelieve? which was more harsh, but, “Tempt God,” and that when the fact is demonstrated.

(c) Great effrontery this, of the Pharisees, that even after faith they set up the Law, and will not obey the Apostles. But see these, how mildly they speak, and not in the tone of authority: such words are amiable, and more apt to fix themselves in the mind. Observe, it is nowhere a display of words, but demonstration by facts, by the Spirit. And yet, though they have such proofs, they still speak gently. And observe they do not come accusing those at Antioch, but “declaring all things that God had done with them:” (v. 4) but thence again these men lay hold upon the occasion (to compass their own objects), “but there rose up,” etc. (v. 1.) Such were the pains they took in their love of power: and it was not with the knowledge of the Apostles that they Paul and Barnabas were blamed. But still they brought forward none of these charges: but when they have proved the matter, then (the Apostles) write in stronger terms. For gentleness is everywhere a great good: gentleness, I say, not stupid indifference; gentleness, not adulation: for between these there is a vast difference.

Nothing ruffled Paul, nothing discomposed Peter. When thou hast convincing proofs, why lose thy temper, to render these of none effect? It is impossible for one who is out of temper ever to persuade. Yesterday also we discoursed about anger; but there is no reason why we should not today also; perchance a second exhortation coming directly after the first will effect somewhat. For indeed a medicine though of virtue to heal a wound, unless it be constantly renewed, mars all. And think not that our continual discoursing about the same things is a condemning of you: for if we condemned you, we should not discourse; but now, hoping that you will gain much, we speak these things. Would indeed that we did speak constantly of the same things: would that there were no other subject of our discourses, than how we might overcome our passions. For is it not contrary to all reason, that while emperors, living in luxury and so great honor, have no subject of discourse either while sitting at table, or at any other time, save only how to overcome their enemies — and therefore it is that they hold their assemblies each day, and appoint generals and soldiers, and demand taxes and tributes; and that of all state affairs, the moving causes are these two, the overcoming of those who make war upon them, and the establishing of their subjects in peace — we have no mind for such themes as this, nor ever even dream of conversing upon them: but how we may buy land, or purchase slaves, and make our property greater, these are subjects we can talk about every day, and never be tired of them: while concerning things in ourselves and really our own, we neither wish to speak ourselves, nor so much as dream of tolerating advice, nor of enduring to hear others speaking about them? But answer me, what do you talk about? About dinner? Why that is a subject for cooks. Of money? Nay, that is a theme for hucksters and merchants. Of buildings? That belongs to carpenters and builders. Of land? That talk is for husbandmen. But for us, there is no other proper business, save this, how we may make wealth for the soul. Then let not the discourse be wearisome to you. Why is it that none finds fault with the physician for always discoursing of the healing art, nor with people of other crafts for talking about their peculiar arts? If indeed the mastery over our passions were really achieved, so that there were no need of putting us in mind, we might reasonably be taxed with ambition and display: or rather, not then either. For even if it were gained, for all that, there would be need of discoursing, that one might not relapse and remain uncorrected: as in fact physicians discourse not only to

the sick, but also to the whole, and they have books on this subject, on the one part how to free from disease, on the other how to preserve health. So that even if we are well, still we must not give over, but must do all in order to the preserving of our health. And when we are sick there is a twofold necessity for advice: first, that we may be freed from the disease; secondly, that having been freed, we may not fall into it again. Well then, we are discoursing now by the method of treating the sick, not by the rules for the treatment of the healthy.

How then may one root out this evil passion? how subdue (*ὑποσκελίσειε*) this violent fever? Let us see whence it had its birth, and let us remove the cause. Whence is it wont to arise? From arrogance and much haughtiness. This cause then let us remove, and the disease is removed together with it. But what is arrogance? whence does it arise? for perhaps we are likely to have to go back to a still higher origin. But whatever course the reason of the thing may point out, that let us take, that we may go to the bottom of the mischief, and pluck it up by the roots. Whence then comes arrogance? From our not looking into our own concerns, but instead of that, busying ourselves about the nature of land, though we are not husbandmen, and the nature of gold, though we are not merchants, and concerning clothing, and everything else: while to ourselves and our own nature we never look at all. And who, you will say, is ignorant of his own nature? Many: perhaps all, save a few: and if ye will, I will show the proof of it. For, tell me, what is man? If one were asked, will he be able to answer outright to the questions, In what he differs from the brutes, in what he is akin to the heavenly inhabitants, what can be made of man? For as in the case of any other material, so also in this case: man is the subject-matter, but of this can be made either an angel or a beast. Does not this seem a strange saying? And yet ye have often heard it in the Scriptures. For of certain human beings it was said, “he is the angel of the Lord” (Malachi 2:7): and “from his lips,” saith it, “they shall seek judgment” (Malachi 3:1): and again, “I send My angel before Thy face:” but of some, “Serpents, generation of vipers.” (Matthew 12:34.) So then, it all depends upon the use. Why do I say, an angel? the man can become God, and a child of God. For we read, “I have said, Ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High.” (Psalm 82:6.) And what is greater, the power to become both God and angel and child of God is put into his own

hands. Yea, so it is, man can be the maker of an angel. Perchance this saying has startled you? Hear however Christ saying: "In the Resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like unto the angels." (Matthew 22:30.) And again, "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." (Matthew 19:12.) In a word, it is virtue which makes angels: but this is in our power: therefore we are able to make angels, though not in nature, certainly in will. For indeed if virtue be absent, it is no advantage to be an angel by nature; and the Devil is a proof of this, who was an angel once: but if virtue be present, it is no loss to be a man by nature; and John is a proof of this, who was a man, and Elias who went up into heaven, and all those who are about to depart thither. For these indeed, though with bodies, were not prevented from dwelling in heaven: while those others, though without bodies, could not remain in heaven. Let no one then grieve or be vexed with his nature as if it were a hindrance to him, but with his will. He (the Devil) from being incorporeal became a lion: for lo! it saith, "Our adversary, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8): we from being corporeal, become angels. For just as if a person, having found some precious material, should despise it, as not being an artificer, it will be a great loss to him, whether it be pearls, or a pearl shell, or any other such thing that he has seen; so we likewise, if we are ignorant of our own nature, shall despise it much: but if we know what it is, we shall exhibit much zeal, and reap the greatest profits. For from this nature is wrought a king's robe, from this a king's house, from this nature are fashioned a king's members: all are kingly. Let us not then misuse our own nature to our hurt. He has made us "a little lower than the angels," (Psalm 8:5), I mean, by reason of death: but even that little we have now recovered. There is nothing therefore to hinder us from becoming nigh to the angels, if we will. Let us then will it, let us will it, and having exercised ourselves thoroughly, let us return honor to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, world without end, Amen.

HOMILY 33

ACTS 15:13, 15

“And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Symeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets.”

This (James) was bishop, as they say, and therefore he speaks last, and herein is fulfilled that saying, “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.” (Deuteronomy 17:6; Matthew 18:16.) But observe the discretion shown by him also, in making his argument good from the prophets, both new and old. For he had no acts of his own to declare, as Peter had and Paul. And indeed it is wisely ordered that this (the active) part is assigned to those, as not intended. to be locally fixed in Jerusalem, whereas (James) here, who performs the part of teacher, is no way responsible for what has been done, while however he is not divided from them in opinion. (b) “Men and brethren,” he says, “hearken unto me.” Great is the moderation of the man. His also is a more complete oration, as indeed it puts the completion to the matter under discussion. (a) “Symeon,” he says, “declared:” (namely,) in Luke, in that he prophesied, “Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all nations, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.” (c) “How God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His Name.” (Luke 2:25.) Then, since that (witness), though from the time indeed he was manifest, yet had not authority by reason of his not being ancient, therefore he produces ancient prophecy also, saying, “And to this agree the words of the Prophets, as it is written: After this I wilt return, and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up.” (v. 16.) What? was Jerusalem raised up? Was it not rather thrown down? What sort of raising up does he call that which took place after the return from Babylon? “That the residue of men,” he says, “may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles upon whom My Name is called.” (v. 17.) Then, what makes his word authoritative — “Saith the Lord, which doeth all these things:” and, for that this is no new thing, but all was planned from the beginning,

“Known unto God are all His works from everlasting.” (v. 18.) And then again his authority (καὶ τὸ ἀξίωμα πάλιν) (as Bishop): “Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollution of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.” (v. 19-21.) Since then they had heard of the Law, with good reason he enjoins these things from the Law, that he may not seem to make it of no authority. And (yet) observe how he does not let them be told these things from the Law, but from himself, saying, It is not that I heard these things from the Law, but how? “We have judged.” Then the decree is made in common. “Then pleased it the Apostles and elders, together with the whole Church, to choose men of their own company” — do you observe they do not merely enact these matters, and nothing more? — “and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas: namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: and they wrote letters by them after this manner.” (v. 22.) And observe, the more to authenticate the decree, they send men of their own, that there may be no room for regarding Paul and his company with suspicion. “The Apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia.” (v. 23.) And mark with what forbearance of all harsh vituperation of those (brethren) they indite their epistle. “Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the Law: to whom we gave no such commandment.” (v. 24.) Sufficient was this charge against the temerity of those men, and worthy of the Apostles’ moderation, that they said nothing beyond this. Then to show that they do not act despotically, that all are agreed in this, that with deliberation they write this — “It seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send men of ours whom we have chosen” (v. 25) — then, that it may not look like disparagement of Paul and Barnabas, that those men are sent, observe the encomium passed upon them — “together with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas; who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us” — it is not man’s doing, it says — “to lay upon you no greater

burden” — again it calls the law a burden: then apologizing even for these injunctions — “save these necessary things” (v. 26-28): “That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. (v. 29.) For these things the New Testament did not enjoin: we nowhere find that Christ discoursed about these matters; but these things they take from the Law. “From things strangled,” it says, “and from blood.” here it prohibits murder. (Comp. Genesis 9:5.) “So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.” (v. 30-31.) Then those (brethren) also exhorted them: and having established them, for towards Paul they were contentiously disposed, so departed from them in peace. “And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the Apostles.” (v. 32-33.) No more factions and fightings, but thenceforth Paul taught.

(Recapitulation.) “Then all the multitude kept silence,” etc. (v. 12.) There was no arrogance in the Church. After Peter Paul speaks, and none silences him: James waits patiently, not starts up (for the next word). Great the orderliness (of the proceedings). No word speaks John here, no word the other Apostles, but held their peace, for James was invested with the chief rule, and think it no hardship. So clean was their soul from love of glory. “And after that they had held their peace, James answered,” etc. (v. 13.) (b) Peter indeed spoke more strongly, but James here more mildly: for thus it behooves one in high authority, to leave what is unpleasant for others to say, while he himself appears in the milder part. (a) But what means it, “How God first ($\pi\rho\acute{\omega}\tau\omicron\nu$) did visit?” (v. 14.) (It means) from the beginning ($\epsilon\xi \acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\eta\varsigma$). (c) Moreover he well says, “Symeon expounded” ($\epsilon\xi\eta\gamma\acute{\eta}\sigma\alpha\tau\omicron$) (or, interpreted), implying that he too spake the mind of others. “And to this agree,” etc. Observe how he shows that this is a doctrine of old time. “To take out of the Gentiles,” he says, “a people for His Name.” (v. 15.) Not simply, Chose, but, “for His Name,” that is for His glory. His Name is not shamed by the taking ($\pi\rho\lambda\acute{\eta}\psi\epsilon\iota$) the Gentiles first, but it is even a greater glory. — Here some even great thing is hinted at: that these are chosen before all. “After this I will return, and rebuild the

tabernacle of David which is fallen down.” (v. 16.) But if one would look into the matter closely, the kingdom of David does in fact now stand, his Offspring reigning everywhere. For what is the good of the buildings and the city, with none obeying there? And what is the harm arising from the destruction of the city, when all are willing to give their very souls? There is that come which is more illustrious than David: in all parts of the world is he now sung. This has come to pass: if so, then must this also come to pass, “And I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:” to what end? “that the residue of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My Name is called.” (v. 17.) If then it was to this end that the city rose again (namely) because of Him (that was to come) of them, it shows that of the building of the city the cause is, the calling of the Gentiles. Who are “the residue?” those who are then left. “And all the Gentiles, upon whom My Name is called:” but observe, how he keeps the due order, and brings them in second. “Saith the Lord, which doeth these things.” Not “saith” (only), but “doeth.” Why then, it was God’s work. — “But the question is other than this (namely), what Peter spoke more plainly, whether they must be circumcised. Then why dost thou harangue about these matters?” For what the objectors asserted, was not that they must not be received upon believing, but that it must be with the Law. And upon this Peter well pleaded: but then, as this very thing above all others troubled the hearers, therefore he sets this to rights again (*θεραπεύει*). And observe, that which was needful to be enacted as a rule, that it is not necessary to keep the Law, this Peter introduced: but the milder part, the truth which was received of old, this James saith, and dwells upon that concerning which nothing is written, in order that having soothed their minds by that which is acknowledged, he may opportunely introduce this likewise. “Wherefore,” saith he, “my sentence is, not to trouble them which from among the Gentiles do turn unto God” (v. 19), that is, not to subvert: for, if God called them, and these observances subvert, we fight against God. And again, “them which from the Gentiles,” he saith, “do turn.” And he says well, with authority, the “my sentence is. But that we write unto them that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication” — (b) and yet they often insisted upon these points in discoursing to them — but, that he may seem also to honor the Law (he mentions), these also, speaking (however) not as from Moses but from the Apostles, and to make the commandments many, he has divided the one

into two (saying), “and from things strangled, and from blood.” (v. 20.) For these, although relating to the body, were necessary to be observed, because (these things) caused great evils, “For Moses hath of old times in every city,” etc. (v. 21.) This above all quieted them. (ἀνέπαυσεν) (a) For this cause I affirm that it is good (so “to write to them.”) Then why do we not write the same injunctions to Jews also? Moses discourses unto them. See what condescension (to their weakness)! Where it did no harm, he set him up as teacher, and indulged them with a gratification which hindered nothing, by permitting Jews to hear him in regard of these matters, even while leading away from him them of the Gentiles. See what wisdom! He seems to honor him, and to set him up as the authority for his own people, and by this very thing he leads away the Gentiles from him! “Being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.” Then why do they not learn (what is to be learnt) out of him, for instance? Through the perversity of these men. He shows that even these (the Jews) need observe no more (than these necessary thing’s). And if we do not write to them, it is not that they are bound to observe anything more, but only that they have one to tell them. And he does not say, Not to offend, nor to turn them back, which is what Paul said to the Galatians, but, “not to trouble them:” he shows that the point (κατόρθωμα) if carried is nothing but a mere troubling. Thus he made an end of the whole matter; and while he seems to preserve the Law by adopting these rules from it, he unbinds it by taking only these. (c) There was a design of Providence in the disputation also, that after the disputation the doctrine might be more firm. “Then pleased it the Apostles to send chosen men of their own company,” etc., no ordinary persons, but the “leading men; having written” (letters) “by them after this manner. To those in Antioch,” it says, “and Syria and Cilicia.” (v. 22, 23) where the disease had its birth. Observe how they say nothing harsher (φορτικώτερον) against those men, but look to one thing only, namely, to undo (the mischief) which has been done. For this would make even the movers of the faction there to confess (that they were wrong). They do not say, The seducers, the pestilent fellows, or suchlike: though where need is, Paul does this, as when he says, “e full of all guile” (ch. 13:10): but here, the point being carried, there was no need. And observe, they do not put it, That certain from us ordered you to keep the Law, but, “Troubled you with words, subverting your souls,” — nothing could be more proper (κυριώτερον)

than that word: none (of the other speakers) has so spoken of the things done by those men. “The souls,” he says, already strongly established, these persons are ἀνασχευάζοντες as in speaking of a building, “taking them down again:” displacing them (μετατιθέντες) from the foundation). “To whom,” he says, “we gave no such commandment. It seemed good therefore to us being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you together with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (v. 25, 26.) If “beloved,” they will not despise them, if they “have hazarded their lives,” they have themselves a right to be believed. “We have sent,” it saith, “Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by word of mouth.” (v. 27.) For it was necessary that there should be not merely the Epistle there by itself, lest they should say that Paul and Barnabas had suppressed a (the real purport), that they said one thing instead of another. The encomium passed upon Paul stopped their mouths. For this is the reason why neither Paul comes alone nor Barnabas (with him), but others also from the Church; that he may not be suspected, seeing it was he that advocated that doctrine: nor yet those from Jerusalem alone. It shows that they have a right to be believed. “For it seemed good,” say they, “to the Holy Ghost and to us” (v. 28): not making themselves equal (to Him) — they are not so mad. But why does it put this (so)? Why did they add, “And to us,” and yet it had sufficed to say, “To the Holy Ghost?” The one, “To the Holy Ghost,” that they may not deem it to be of man; the other, “To us,” that they may be taught that they also themselves admit (the Gentiles), although themselves being in circumcision. They have to speak to men who are still weak and afraid of them: this is the reason why this also is added. And it shows that it is not by way of condescension that they speak, neither because they spared them, nor as considering them weak, but the contrary; for great was the reverence of the teachers also? “To lay upon you no greater burden” — they are ever calling it a burden — and again, “save these necessary things:” for that was a superfluous burden. See here a brief Epistle, with nothing more in it (than was needed), neither arts of persuasion (κατασκευάζ) nor reasonings, but simply a command: for it was the Spirit’s legislating. “So when they were dismissed they came to Antioch, and having gathered the multitude together, they delivered to them the epistle.” (v. 30.) After the epistle, then (Judas and Silas) also themselves

exhort them by word (v. 31): for this also was needful, that (Paul and Barnabas) might be quit of all suspicion. “Being prophets also themselves,” it says, exhorted the brethren “with many words.” It shows here the right that Paul and Barnabas have to be believed. For Paul also might have done this, but it behooved to be done by these. “And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace. (v. 33.)

No more faction. On this occasion, I suppose, it was that they received the right hand, as he says himself, “They gave to me and Barnabas right hands of fellowship.” (Galatians 2:9.) There he says, “They added nothing to me.” (ib. 6.) For they confirmed his view: they praised and admired it. — It shows that even from human reasonings it is possible to see this, not to say from the Holy Ghost only, that they sinned a sin not easy to be corrected. For such things need not the Spirit. — It shows that the rest are not necessary, but superfluous. seeing these things are necessary. “From which if ye keep yourselves,” it saith, “ye shall do well.” It shows that nothing is lacking to them, but this is sufficient. For it might have been done also without letters, but that there may be a law in writing (they send this Epistle): again, that they may obey the law (the Apostles), also told those men (the same things), and they did this, “and confirmed them, and having tarried a space were let go in peace.”

Let us not then be offended on account of the heretics. For look, here at the very outset of the preaching, how many offenses there were: I speak not of those which arose from them that were without; for these were nothing: but of the offenses which were within. For instance, first Ananias, then the “murmuring,” then Simon the sorcerer; afterwards they that accused Peter on account of Cornelius, next the famine, lastly this very thing, the chief of the evils. For indeed it is impossible when any good thing has taken place, that some evil should not also subsist along with it. Let us not then be disturbed, if certain are offended, but let us thank God even for this, because it makes us more approved. For not tribulations only, but even temptations also render us more illustrious. A man is no such great lover of the truth, only for holding to it when there is none to lead him astray from it: to hold fast to the truth when many are drawing him away, this makes the proved man. What then? Is this why offenses come? I am not speaking as if God were the author of them: God forbid! but I mean, that even out of their wickedness He works good to us:

it was never His wish that they should arise: “Grant to them,” He saith, “that they may be one” (John 17:21): but since offenses do come, they are no hurt, to these, but even a benefit: just as the persecutors unwillingly benefit the Martyrs by dragging them to martyrdom, and yet they are not driven to this by God; just so is it here. Let us not look (only at this), that men are offended: this very thing is itself a proof of the excellence of the doctrine — that many stimulate and counterfeit it: for it would not be so, if it were not good. And this I will now show, and make on all hands plain to you. Of perfumes, the fragrant spices are they which people adulterate and counterfeit; as, for instance, the amomum leaf. For because these are rare and of necessary use, therefore there come to be spurious imitations likewise. Nobody would care to counterfeit any common article. The pure life gets many a false pretender to it: no man would care to counterfeit the man of vicious life; no, but the man of monastic life. — What then shall we say to the heathen? There comes a heathen and says, “I wish to become a Christian, but I know not whom to join: there is much fighting and faction among you, much confusion: which doctrine am I to choose?” How shall we answer him? “Each of you” (says he) “asserts, ‘I speak the truth.’” (b) No doubt: this is in our favor. For if we told you to be persuaded by arguments, you might well be perplexed: but if we bid you believe the Scriptures, and these are simple and true, the decision is easy for you. If any agree with the Scriptures, he is the Christian; if any fight against them, he is far from this rule. (a) “But which am I to believe, knowing as I do nothing at all of the Scriptures? The others also allege the same thing for themselves. What then (c) if the other come, and say that the Scripture has this, and you that it has something different, and ye interpret the Scriptures diversely, dragging their sense (each his own way)?” And you then, I ask, have you no understanding, no judgment? “And how should I be able (to decide),” says he, “I who do not even know how to judge of your doctrines? I wish to become a learner, and you are making me forthwith a teacher.” If he say this, what, say you, are we to answer him? How shall we persuade him? Let us ask whether all this be not mere pretense and subterfuge. Let us ask whether he has decided (**κατέγνωκε**) against the heathen (that they are wrong). The fact he will assuredly affirm, for of course, if he had not so decided, he would not have come to (enquire about) our matters let us ask the grounds on which he has decided, for to be sure he has not settled the matter out of hand. Clearly he

will say, “Because (their gods) are creatures, and are not the uncreated God.” Good. If then he find this in the other parties (αἱρέσεις), but among us the contrary, what argument need we? We all confess that Christ is God. But let us see who fight (against this truth), and who not. Now we, affirming Him to be God speak of Him things worthy of God, that He hath power, that He is not a slave, that He is free, that He doeth of Himself: whereas the other says the reverse. Again I ask: if you would learn (to be) a physician,? And yet among them are many (different) doctrines. For if you accept without more ado just what you are told, this is not acting like a man: but if you have judgment and sense, you shall assuredly know what is good. We affirm the Son to be God, we verify (ἐπαληθεύομεν) what we affirm: but they affirm indeed, but (in fact) confess not. — But to mention (something) even plainer: those have certain persons from whom they are called, openly showing the name of the heresiarch himself, and each heresy in like manner: with us, no man has given us a name, but the faith itself. However, this (talk of yours) is mere pretense and subterfuge. For answer me: how is it that if you would buy a cloak, though ignorant of the art of weaving, you do not speak such words as these — “I do not know how to buy; they cheat me” — but do all you can to learn, and so whatever else it be that you would buy: but here you speak these words? For at this rate, you will accept nothing at all. For let there be one that has no (religious) doctrine whatever: if he should say what you say about the Christians — “There is inch a multitude of men, and they have different doctrines; this a heathen, that a Jew, the other a Christian: no need to accept any doctrine whatever, for they are at variance one with another; but I am a learner, and do not wish to be a judge” — but if you have yielded (so far as) to pronounce against (καταγινώσκειν) one doctrine, this pretext no longer has place for you. For just as you were able to reject the spurious, so here also, having come, you shall be able to prove what is profitable. For he that has not pronounced against any doctrine at all, may easily say this: but he that has pronounced against any, though he have chosen none, by going on in the same way, will be able to see what he ought to do. Then let us not make pretexts and excuses, and all will be easy. For, to show you that all this is mere excuse, answer me this: Do you know what you ought to do, and what to leave undone? Then why do you not what you ought? Do that, and by right reason seek of God, and He will assuredly reveal it to thee.

“God,” it saith, “is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.” (ch. 10:34, 35.) It cannot be that he who hears without prejudice should not be persuaded. For just as, if there were a rule, by which everything behooved to be put straight, it would not need much consideration, but it would be easy to detect the person who measures falsely (*τὸν παραμετροῦντα λαβεῖν*), so is it here. “Then how is it they do not see it at a glance?” Many things are the cause of this: both preconceived opinion, and human causes: (*αἰτίαι*). The others, say you, say the same thing about us. How? For are we separated from the Church? have we our heresiarchs? Are we called after men — as one of them has Marcion, another Manichaeus, a third Arius, for the author and leader (of his sect)? Whereas if we likewise do receive an appellation from any man, we do not take them that have been the authors of some heresy, but men that presided over us, and governed the Church. We have no “masters upon the earth” — God forbid — we have “One Master that is in heaven.” (Matthew 23:9, 10.) “And those also,” says he, “say the same.” But there stands the name set over them, accusing them, and stopping their mouths. — How” is it, there have been many heathen, and none of them asked these questions: and among the philosophers there were these (differences), and yet none of those holding the right party (*ἄρεσιν*) was hindered (thereby)? — Why did not (those believers) say, when (the others) raised these questions, “Both these and those are Jews: which must we believe?” But they believed as they ought. Then let us also obey the laws of God, and do all things according to His good pleasure, that having virtuously passed this life present, we may be enabled to attain unto the good things promised to them that love Him, by the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost together, be glory, dominion, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 34

ACTS 15:35

*“Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch,
teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.”*

Observe again their humility, how they let others also take part in the preaching. “And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good (ἡξίου see note , p. 213) to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention (or exasperation) was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other.” (v. 36-39.) And already indeed Luke has described to us the character of the Apostles, that the one was more tender and indulgent, but this one more strict and austere. For the gifts are diverse — (the gifts, I say), for that this is a gift is manifest — but the one befitting one, the other another set of characters, and if they change places, harm results instead of good. (b) In the Prophets too we find this: diverse minds, diverse characters: for instance, Elias austere, Moses meek. So here Paul is more vehement. And observe for all this, how gentle he is. “Thought not good,” it says, “to take him with them that had departed from them from Pamphylia.” (a) And there seems indeed to be exasperation (παροξυσμός), but in fact the whole matter is a plan of the Divine Providence, that each should receive his proper place: and it behooved that they should not be upon a par, but the one should lead, and the other be led. “And so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; and Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the Churches.” (v. 39-41.) And this also is a work of Providence. For the Cyprians had exhibited nothing of the like sort as they at Antioch and the rest: and those needed the softer character, but these needed such a character as Paul’s. “Which then,” say you, “did well? he that took, or he that left?” (c) For just as a general would not choose to have a low person always to his baggage-bearer, so neither did the Apostle. This corrected the other’s, and

instructed (Mark) himself. “Then did Barnabas ill?” say you. “And how is it not amiss (ἄτοπον), that upon so small a matter there should arise so great an evil?” In the first place then, no evil did come of it, if, sufficing each for whole nations, they were divided the one from the other, but a great good. And besides, they would not readily have chosen to leave each other. But admire, I pray you, the writer, how he does not conceal this either. “But at any rate,” say you, “if they must needs part, let it be without exasperation.” Nay, but if nothing more, observe this, that in this too is shown what was of man (in the preaching of the Gospel). For if the like behooved to be shown (even) in what Christ did, much more here. And besides, the contention cannot be said to be evil, when each disputes for such objects (as here) and with just reason. I grant you, if the exasperation were in seeking his own, and contending for his own honor, this might well be (reproved): but if wishing, both the one and the other, to instruct and teach, the one took this way and the other that, what is there to find fault with? For in many things they acted upon their human judgment; for they were not stocks or stones. And observe how Paul impeaches (Mark), and gives the reason. For of his exceeding humility, he revered Barnabas, as having been partner with him in so great works, and being with him: but still he did not so reverence him, as to overlook (what was necessary). Now which of them advised best, it is not for us to pronounce: but thus far (we may affirm), that it was a great arrangement of Providence, if these were to be vouchsafed a second visitation, but those were not to be visited even once.

(a) “Teaching and preaching the word of the Lord.” (v. 35.) They did not simply tarry in Antioch, but taught. What did they “teach,” and what “preach” (evangelize)? They both (taught) those that were already believers, and (evangelized) those that were not yet such. “And some days after,” etc. (v. 36.) For because there were offenses without number, their presence was needed. (d) “How they do,” he says. And this he did not know: naturally. See him ever alert, solicitous, not bearing to sit idle, though he underwent dangers without end. Do you mark, it was not of cowardice that he came to Antioch? He acts just as a physician does in the case of the sick. And the need of visiting them he showed by saying, “In which we preached the word. And Barnabas determined,” etc. (v. 37-40.) (So) Barnabas “departed, and went not With (him).” (b) The point to be

considered, is not that they differed in their opinions, but that they accommodated themselves the one to the other (seeing), that thus it was a greater good their being parted: and the matter took a pretext from this. What then? did they withdraw in enmity? God forbid! In fact you see after this Barnabas receiving many encomiums from Paul in the Epistles. There was “sharp contention,” it says, not enmity nor quarrelling. The contention availed so far as to part them. “And Barnabas took Mark,” etc. And with reason: for what each supposed to be profitable, he did not forego thereafter, because of the fellowship with the other. Nay, it seems to me that the parting took place advisedly (*κατὰ σύνεσιν*), and that they said one to another “As I wish not, and thou wishest, therefore that we may not fight, let us distribute the places.” So that in fact they did this, altogether yielding each to the other: for Barnabas wished Paul’s plan to stand, therefore withdrew; on the other hand, Paul wished the other’s plan to stand, therefore he withdrew. Would to God we too made such separations, as to go forth for preaching. A wonderful man this is; and exceedingly great! To Mark this contest was exceedingly beneficial. For the awe inspired by Paul converted him, while the kindness of Barnabas caused that he was not left behind: so that they contend indeed, but the gain comes to one and the same end. For indeed, seeing Paul choosing to leave him, he would be exceedingly awed, and would condemn himself, and seeing Barnabas so taking his part, he would love him exceedingly: and so the disciple was corrected by the contention of the teachers: so far was he from being offended thereby. For if indeed they did this with a view to their own honor, he might well be offended: but if for his salvation, and they contend for one and the same object, to show that he who honored him had well determined, what is there amiss (*ἄτοπον*) in it?

(e) “But Paul,” it says, “departed, having chosen Silas, and being commended to the grace of God.” What is this? They prayed it says: they besought God. See on all occasions how the prayer of the brethren can do great things. And now he journeyed by land, wishing even by his journeying to benefit those who saw (*τοὺς ὀρώντας*) him. For when indeed they were in haste they sailed, but now not so. (c) “And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the Churches. Then came he to Derbe and Lystra.” (v. 41.) Mark the wisdom of Paul: he does not go to other cities before he has visited them which had received the Word. For it is

folly to run at random. This let us also do: let us teach the first in the first place, that these may not become an hindrance to them that are to come after.

“And, behold a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters; for they knew all that his father was a Greek.” (ch. 16:1-3.) It is indeed amazing, the wisdom of Paul! He that has had so many battles about circumcision, he that moved all things to this end, and did not give over until he had carried his point, now that the decree is made sure, circumcises the disciple. He not only does not forbid others, but himself does this thing. (b) “Him,” it says, “he would have to go forth with him.” And the wonder is this, that he even took him unto him. “Because of the Jews,” it says, “which were in those parts:” for they would not endure to hear the word from one uncircumcised. (a) Nothing could be wiser. So that in all things he looked to what was profitable: he did nothing upon his own preference (προλήψει). (c) And what (then)? Mark the success: he circumcised, that he might take away circumcision: for he preached the decrees of the Apostles. “And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the Apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the Churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.” (v. 4, 5.) Dost thou mark fighting, and by fighting, edification? Not warred upon by others, but themselves doing contrary things, so they edified the Church! They introduced a decree not to circumcise, and he circumcises! “And so were the Churches,” it says, “established in the faith,” and in multitude: “increased,” it says, “in number daily.” Then he does not continue to tarry with these, as having come to visit them: but how? he goes further. “Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy, Ghost to preach the word in Asia,” (v. 6.) having left Phrygia and Galatia, they hastened into the interior. For, it says, “After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.” (v. 7.) Wherefore they were forbidden, he does not say, but that they were “forbidden,” he does say, teaching us

to obey and not ask questions, and showing that they did many things as men. "And the Spirit," it says, "suffered them not: but having passed by Mysia they came down to Troas." (v. 8.) "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us." (v. 9.) Why a vision, and not the Holy Ghost? because He forbade the other) He would even in this way draw them over: since to the saints also He appeared in a dream, and in the beginning (Paul) himself saw a vision, "a man coming in and laying his hands upon him." (ch. 9:12.) In this manner also Christ appears to him, saying, "Thou must stand before Caesar." Then for this reason also He draws him thither, that the preaching may be extended. This is why he was forbidden to tarry long in the other cities, Christ urging him on. For these were to enjoy the benefit of John for a long time, and perhaps did not extremely need him (Paul), but thither he behooved to go. And now he crosses over and goes forth. "And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them." (v. 10.) Then the writer mentions also the places, as relating a history, and showing where he made a stay (namely), in the greater cities, but passed by the rest. Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; and from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony." (v. 11, 12.) It is a high distinction for a city, the being a colony. "And in this city we were tarrying certain days." But let us look over again what has been said. (Recapitulation.) "And after some days, Paul said," etc. (ch. 15:36.) He put to Barnabas a necessity for their going abroad, saying "Let us visit the cities in which we preached the word." "But Paul begged," etc. (v. 38.) And yet no need for him to beg, who had to make an accusation presently. This happens even in the case where God and men are the parties: the man requests, God is wroth. For instance, when He saith, "If her father had spit in her face" (Numbers 12:14): and again, "Let me alone, and in Mine anger I will blot out this people." (Exodus 32:32.) And Samuel when he mourns for Saul. (1 Samuel 15:35.) For by both, great good is done. Thus also here: the one is wroth, the other not so. The same happens also in matters where we are concerned. And the sharp contention with good reason, that Mark may receive a lesson, and the affair may not seem mere stage-playing. For it is not to be thought that he who bids, "Let not the

sun go down upon your wrath,” (Ephesians 4:26) would have been wroth because of such a matter as this: nor that he who on all occasions gave way would not have given way here, he who so greatly loved Paul that before this he sought him in Tarsus, and brought him to the Apostles, and undertook the alms in common with him, and in common the business relating to the decree. But they take themselves so as to instruct and make perfect by their separation them that need the teaching which was to come from them. And he rebukes others indeed, but bids do good to all men. As in fact he does elsewhere, saying, “But ye, be not weary in well-doing.” (2 Thessalonians 3:13.) This we also do in our common practice. Here it seems to me that others also were alike displeased with Paul. And thereupon taking them also apart, he does all, and exhorts and admonishes. Much can concord do, much can charity. Though it be for a great matter thou askest; though thou be unworthy, thou shall be heard for thy purpose of heart: fear not.

“He went,” it says, “through” the cities “And, behold, there was a disciple, by name Timothy, who had a good report of the brethren which were in Lystra and Iconium.” (v. 41; 16:1.) Great was the grace of Timothy. When Barnabas departed (ἀπέστη), he finds another, equivalent to him. Of him he saith, “Remembering thy tears and thy unfeigned faith, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and in thy mother Eunice.” (2 Timothy 1:5.) His father continued to be a Gentile, and therefore it was that (Timothy) was not circumcised. (a) Observe the Law already broken. Or if not so, I suppose he was born after the preaching of the Gospel but this is perhaps not so. (c) He was about to make him a bishop, and it was not meet that he should be uncircumcised. (e) And this was not a small matter, seeing it offended after so long a time: (b) “for from a child,” he says, “thou hast known the Holy Scriptures.” (ib. 3:15.) (d) “And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep.” (v. 4.) For until then, there was no need for the Gentiles to keep any such. The beginning of the abrogation was the Gentiles’ not keeping these things, and being none the worse for it: nor having any inferiority in respect of faith: anon, of their own will they abandoned the Law. (f) Since therefore he was about to preach, that he might not smite the Jews a double blow, he circumcised Timothy. And yet he was but half (a Jew by birth), his father being a Greek: but yet, because that was a great point

carried in the cause of the Gentiles, he did not care for this: for the Word must needs be disseminated: therefore also he with his own hands circumcised him. “And so were the churches established in the faith.” Do you mark here also how from going counter (to his own object) a great good results? “And increased in number daily.” (v. 5.) Do you observe, that the circumcising not only did no harm, but was even of the greatest service? “And a vision appeared unto Paul in the night.” (v. 9.) Not now by Angels, as to Philip, as to Cornelius, but how? By a vision it is now shown to him: in more human sort, not now as before (i.e., 5:6, 7) in more divine manner. For where the compliance is more easy, it is done in more human sort; but where great force was needed, there in more divine. For since he was but urged to preach, to this end it is shown him in a dream: but to forbear preaching, he could not readily endure: to this end the Holy Ghost reveals it to him. Thus also it was then with Peter, “Arise, go down.” (ch. 10:20.) For of course the Holy Spirit did not work what was otherwise easy: but (here) even a dream sufficed him. And to Joseph also, as being readily moved to compliance, the appearance is in a dream, but to the rest in waking vision. (Matthew 1:20; 2:13, 19.) Thus to Cornelius, and to Paul himself. “And lo, a man of Macedonia,” etc. and not simply enjoining, but “beseeching,” and from the very persons in need of (spiritual) cure. (ch. 10:3; 9:3.) “Assuredly gathering,” it says, “that the Lord had called us.” (v. 10), that is, inferring, both from the circumstance that Paul saw it and none other, and from the having been “forbidden by the Spirit,” and from their being on the borders; from all these they gathered. “Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course,” etc. (v. 11.) That is, even the voyage made this manifest: for there was no tardiness. It became the very root of Macedonia. It was not always in the way of “sharp contention” that the Holy Spirit wrought: but this so rapid progress (of the Word) was a token that the thing was more than human. And yet it is not said that Barnabas was exasperated, but, “Between them there arose a sharp contention.” (v. 39.) If the one was not exasperated neither was the other.

Knowing this, let us not merely pick out (ἐκλέγωμεν) these things, but let us learn and be taught by them: for they were not written without a purpose. It is a great evil to be ignorant of the Scriptures: from the things we ought to get good from, we get evil. Thus also medicines of healing

virtue, often, from the ignorance of those who use them, ruin and destroy: and arms which are meant to protect, are themselves the cause of death unless one know how to put them on. But the reason is, that we seek everything rather than what is good for ourselves. And in the case of a house, we seek what is good for it, and we would not endure to see it decaying with age, or tottering, or hurt by storms: but for our soul we make no account: nay, even should we see its foundations rotting, or the fabric and the roof, we make no account of it. Again, if we possess brute creatures, we seek what is good for them: we call in both horse-feeders and horse-doctors, and all besides: we attend to their housing, and charge those who are entrusted with them, that they may not drive them at random or carelessly, nor take them out by night at unseasonable hours nor sell away their provender; and there are many laws laid down by us for the good of the brute creatures: but for that of our soul there is no account taken. But why speak I of brute creatures which are useful to us? There are many who keep small birds (or “sparrows”) “which are useful for nothing except that they simply amuse, and there are many laws even about them, and nothing is neglected or without order, and we take care for everything rather than for our own selves. Thus we make our selves more worthless than all. And if indeed a person abusively call us “dog,” we are annoyed: but while we are opprobrious to ourselves, not in word, but in deed, and do not even bestow as much care on our soul as on dogs, we think it no great harm. Do you see how all is full of darkness? How many are careful about their dogs, that they may not be filled with more than the proper food, that so they may be keen and fit for hunting, being set on by famine and hunger: but for themselves they have no care to avoid luxury: and the brute creatures indeed they teach to exercise philosophy, while they let themselves sink down into the savageness of the brutes. The thing is a riddle. “And where are your philosophic brutes?” There are such; or, say, do you not take it to be philosophy, when a dog gnawed with hunger, after having hunted and caught his prey, abstains from the food; and though he sees his meal ready before him, and with hunger urging him on, yet waits for his master? Be ashamed of yourselves: teach your bellies to be as philosophic. You have no excuse. When you have been able to implant such philosophic self-command in an irrational nature, which neither speaks nor hears reason, shall you not much more be able to implant it in yourself? For that it is the effect of man’s care, not of nature is plain: since

otherwise all dogs ought to have this habit. Do you then become as dogs. For it is you that compel me to fetch my examples thence: for indeed they should be drawn from heavenly things; but since if I speak of those, you say, “Those are (too) great,” therefore I speak nothing of heavenly things: again, if I speak of Paul, you say, “He was an Apostle:” therefore neither do I mention Paul: if again I speak of a man, you say, “That person could do it:” therefore I do not mention a man even, but a brute creature; a creature too, that has not this habit by nature, lest you should say that it effected this by nature, and not (which is the fact) from choice: and what is wonderful, choice not self-acquired, but (the result of) your care. The creature does not give a thought to the fatigue, the wear and tear it has undergone in running down the prey, not a thought to this, that by its own proper toil it has made the capture: but casting away all these regards, it observes the command of its master, and shows itself superior to the cravings of appetite. “True; because it looks to be praised, it looks to get a greater meal.” Say then to yourself, that the dog through hope of future pleasure, despises that which is present: while you do not choose for hope of future good things to despise those which are present; but he indeed knows, that, if he tastes of that food at the wrong time and against his master’s will, he will both be deprived of that, and not get even that which was apportioned to him, but receive blows instead of food: whereas you cannot even perceive this, and that which he has learnt by dint of custom, you do not succeed in acquiring even from reason. Let us imitate the dogs. The same thing hawks also and eagles are said to do: what the dogs do with regard to hares and deer, the same do those with regard to birds; and these too act from a philosophy learnt from men. These facts are enough to condemn us, these enough to convict us. To mention another thing: — they that are skilled in breaking horses, shall take them, wild, fierce, kicking, biting, and in a short time so discipline them, that though the teacher be not there, it is a luxury to ride them, their paces are so thoroughly well-ordered: but the paces of the soul may be all disordered, and none cares for it: it bounds, and kicks, and its rider is dragged along the ground like a child, and makes a most disgraceful figure, and yet no one puts curbs on her, and leg-ties, and bits, nor mounts upon her the skillful rider — Christ, I mean. And therefore it is that all is turned upside down. For when you both teach dogs to master the craving of the belly, and tame the fury in a lion, and the unruliness of horses, and teach the birds to

speak plainly, how inconsistent must it not be — to implant achievements of reason in natures that are without reason, and to import the passions of creatures without reason into natures endowed with reason? There is no excuse for us, none. All who have succeeded (in mastering their passions) will accuse us, both believers and unbelievers: for even unbelievers have so succeeded; yea, and wild beasts, and dogs, not men only: and we shall accuse our own selves, since we succeed, when we will, but when we are slothful, we are dragged away. For indeed many even of those who live a very wicked life, have oftentimes changed themselves when they wished. But the cause is, as I said, that we go about seeking for what is good for other things, not what is good for ourselves. If you build a splendid house, you know what is good for the house, not what is good for yourself: if you take a beautiful garment, you know what is good for the body, not for yourself: and if you get a good horse, it is so likewise. None makes it his mark how his soul shall be beautiful; and yet, when that is beautiful, there is no need of any of those things: as, if that be not beautiful, there is no good of them. For like as in the case of a bride, though there be chambers hung with tapestry wrought with gold, though there be choirs of the fairest and most beautiful women, though there be roses and garlands, though there be a comely bridegroom, and the maidservants and female friends, and everybody about them be handsome, yet, if the bride herself be full of deformity, there is no good of all those; as on the other hand if she were beautiful, neither would there be any loss arising from (the want of) those, nay just the contrary; for in the case of an ugly bride, those would make her look all the uglier, while in the other case, the beautiful would look all the more beautiful: just so, the soul, when she is beautiful, not only needs none of those adjuncts, but they even cast a shade over her beauty. For we shall see the philosopher shine, not so much when in wealth, as in poverty. For in the former case many will impute it to his riches, that he is not superior to riches: but when he lives with poverty for his mate, and shines through all, and will not let himself be compelled to do anything base, then not reclaims shares with him in the crown of philosophy. Let us then make our soul beauteous, if at least we would fain be rich. What profit is it, when your mules indeed are white and plump and in good condition, but you who are drawn by them are lean and scurvy and ill-favored? What is the gain, when your carpets indeed are soft and beautiful, full of rich embroidery and art, and your soul goes clad in rags, or even

naked and foul? What the gain, when the horse indeed has his paces beautifully ordered, more like dancing than stepping, while the rider, together with his choral train and adorned with more than bridal ornaments, is more crooked than the lame, and has no more command over hands and feet than drunkards and madmen? Tell me now, if some one were to give you a beautiful horse, and to distort your body, what would be the profit? Now you have your soul distorted, and care you not for it? Let us at length, I beseech you, have a care for our own selves. Do not let us make our own selves more worthless than all beside. If anyone insult us with words, we are annoyed and vexed: but insulting ourselves as we do by our deeds, we do not give a thought to it. Let us, though late, come at last to our senses, that we may be enabled by having much care for our soul, and laying hold upon virtue, to obtain eternal good things, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory, might, honor, now and evermore, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 35

ACTS 16:13, 14

“And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont (Chrys. “was thought likely”) to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.”

SEE again Paul judaizing. “Where it was thought,” it says, both from the time and from the place, “that prayer would be. — Out of the city, by a river side:” for it is not to be supposed that they prayed only where there was a synagogue; they also prayed out of synagogue, but then for this purpose they set apart, as it were, a certain place, because as Jews they were more corporeal — and, “on the sabbath-day,” when it was likely that a multitude would come together. “And we sat down, and spake to the women which resorted thither.” Mark again the freedom from all pride. “And a certain woman:” a woman and she of low condition, from her trade too: but mark (in her) a woman of elevated mind (φιλόσοφον). In the first place, the fact of God’s calling her bears testimony to her: “And when she was baptized,” it says, “she and her household “ — mark how he persuaded all of them — “she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us ” (v. 15): then look at her wisdom, how she importunes (δυσωπεῖ), the Apostles how full of humility her words are, how full of wisdom. “If ye have judged me faithful,” she says. Nothing could be more persuasive. Who would not have been softened by these words? She did not request (or, “claim”) did not entreat simply: but she left them to decide, and (yet) exceedingly forced them: “And she constrained. us,” it says, by those words. And again in a different way: for see how she straightway bears fruit, and accounts it a great gain. “If ye have judged me,” that is, That ye did judge me is manifest, by your delivering to me such (holy) mysteries (i.e. sacraments, see p. 225, note): and she did not dare to invite them before this. But why was there any unwillingness on the part of Paul and those with them, that they should need to be constrained? It was either by way of calling her to greater earnestness of

desire, or because Christ had said, “Enquire who is worthy, and there abide.” (Luke 10:8.) (It was not that they were unwilling), but they did it for a purpose. And it came to pass,” it says, “as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: the same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation.” (v. 16, 17.) What may be the reason that both the demon spoke these words, and Paul forbade him? Both the one acted maliciously, and the other wisely: the demon wished in fact to make himself credible. For if Paul had admitted his testimony, he would have deceived many of the believers, as being received by him: therefore he endures to speak what made against himself, that he may establish what made for himself: and so the demon himself uses accommodation (συγκαταβάσει) in order to destruction. At first then, Paul would not admit it, but scorned it, not wishing to cast himself all at once upon miracles; but when it continued to do this, and pointed to their work (καὶ τὸ ἔργον ἐδείκνυ) “who preach unto us the way of salvation,” then he commanded it to come out. For it says, “Paul being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour. (a) And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas.” (v. 18, 19.) (d) So then Paul did all, both miracles and teaching, but of the dangers Silas also is partaker. And why says it, “But Paul being grieved?” It means, he saw through the malice of the demon, as he saith, “For we are not ignorant of his devices.” (2 Corinthians 2:11.) (b) “And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone.” Everywhere money the cause of evils. O that heathen cruelty! they wished the girl to be still a demoniac, that they might make money by her. “They caught Paul and Silas,” it says, “and dragged them into the marketplace unto the rulers, and brought them unto the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city!” (v. 20): by doing what? Then why did you not drag them (hither) before this? “Being Jews:” the name was in bad odor. “And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.” (v. 21.) They made a charge of treason of it (εἰς καθασίωσιν ἤγαγον). (e) Why did they not say, Because they cast out the demon, they were guilty of impiety against God? For this was a defeat to them: but instead of that, they have recourse to a charge of treason (ἐπὶ καθοσίωσιν): like

the Jews when they said, “We have no king but Caesar: whoso maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.” (John 19:14, 12.) (c) “And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.” (v. 22.) O the irrational conduct! They did not examine, did not allow them to speak. And yet, such a miracle having taken place, ye ought to have worshipped them, ought to have held them as saviors and benefactors. For if money was what ye wished, why, having found so great wealth, did ye not run to it? This makes you more famous, the having power to cast out demons than the obeying them. Lo, even miracles, and yet love of money was mightier. (f) “And when they had laid man) stripes upon them, they cast them into prison.” — great was their wrath — “charging the jailer to keep them safely” (v. 23): “who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.” (v. 24.) Observe, he also again thrust them into the “inner” prison: and this too was done providentially, because there was to be a great miracle.

(Recapitulation.) “Out of the city.” (v. 13.) The place was convenient for hearing the word, aloof from troubles and dangers. (b) “On the sabbath.” As there was no work going on, they were more attentive to what was spoken. (a) “And a certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of purple” (v. 14): observe how the writer of the history is not ashamed of the occupations (of the converts): (c) moreover neither was this city of the Philippians a great one. Having learnt these things, let us also be ashamed of no man. Peter abides with a tanner (ch. 9:43): (Paul) with a woman who was a seller of purple, and a foreigner. Where is pride? “Whose heart the Lord opened.” Therefore we need God, to open the heart: but God opens the hearts that are willing: for there are hardened hearts to be seen. “So that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul.” The opening, then, was God’s work, the attending was hers: so that it was both God’s doing and man’s. And she was baptized (v. 15), and receives the Apostles with such earnestness of entreaty; with more than that used by Abraham. And she speaks of no other token than that whereby she was saved (Genesis 18:3): she says not, “If ye have judged me” a great, a devout woman; but what? “faithful to the Lord:” if to the Lord, much more to you. “If ye have judged me:” if ye do not doubt it. And she says not, Abide with me, but, “Come into my house and abide:” with great

earnestness (she says it). Indeed a faithful woman! — “A certain damsel possessed with a spirit of Python.” (v. 16.) Say, what is this demon? The God, as they call him, Python: from the place he is so called. Do you mark that Apollo also is a demon? And (the demon) wished to bring them into temptation: (therefore) to provoke them, “the same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation.” (v. 17.) O thou accursed, thou execrable one! if then thou knowest that it is “His way of salvation” that “they show,” why dost thou not come out freely? But just what Simon wished, when he said, “Give me, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost” (ch. 8:19), the same did this demon: since he saw them becoming famous, here also he plays the hypocrite: by this means he thought to be allowed to remain in the body, if he should preach the same things. But if Christ “receive not testimony from man,” (John 5:34), meaning John, much less from a demon. “Praise is not comely in the mouth of a sinner” (Ecclus. 15:9), much less from a demon. For that they preach is not of men, but of the Holy Ghost. Because they did not act in a spirit of boasting. “And Paul being grieved,” etc. By their clamor and shouting they thought to alarm them (the magistrates): saying, “These men do exceedingly trouble our city.” (v. 18-20.) What sayest thou? Dost thou believe the demon? Why not here also? He saith, They are “servants of the most high God;” thou sayest, “They exceedingly trouble our city;” he saith, “They show us the way of salvation;” thou sayest, “They teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive.” (v. 21.) Observe, how they do not attend even to the demon, but look only to one thing, their covetousness. But observe them (Paul and Silas), how they do not answer, nor plead for themselves; (b) “For when,” saith he, “I am weak, then am I strong. My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9): so that by reason of their gentleness also they should be admired. (a) “And the magistrates,” etc., “charging the jailer to keep them safely” (v. 22): that they may be the means of a greater miracle. (c) The stricter the custody, the greater the miracle. It was probably from the wish to cut short the disturbance, that the magistrates did these things; because they saw the crowd urgent, and wished to stay their passion at the instant, therefore they inflicted the stripes: at the same time it was their wish to hear the matter, and that was why they cast them into prison and gave charge “to keep them safely.” And, it says, “he made

them fast in the stocks” (v. 24), (το ξύλον) as we should say, the *nervum* (νέρβον).

What tears do not these things call for! (Think) what they suffer, while we (live) in luxury, we in theatres, we perishing and drowning (in dissolute living), seeking always idle amusement, not enduring to suffer pain for Christ, not even as far as words, not even as far as talk. These things I beseech you let us ever call to mind, what things they suffered, what things they endured, how undismayed they were, how unoffended. They were doing God’s work, and suffered these things! They did not say, Why do we preach this, and God does not take our part? But even this was a benefit to them, even apart from the truth, in the thing itself; it made them more vigorous, stronger, intrepid. “Tribulation worketh endurance.” (Romans 5:4.) Then let us not seek loose and dissolute living. For as in the one case the good is twofold, that the sufferers are made strong, and that the rewards are great; so in the other the evil is twofold, that such are rendered more enervated, and that it is to no good, but only evil. For nothing can be more worthless than a man who passes all his time in idleness and luxury. For the man untried, as the saying is, is also unapproved; unapproved not only in the contests, but also in everything else. Idleness is a useless thing, and in luxury itself nothing is so unsuited to the end proposed as the leading a luxurious life: for it palls with satiety, so that neither the enjoyment of the viands is so great, nor the enjoyment of relaxation, but all becomes vapid, and runs to waste.

Then let us not seek after this. For if we will consider which has the pleasanter life, he that is toiled and hardworked, or he that lives in luxury, we shall find it to be the former. For in the first place, the bodily senses are neither clear nor sound, but dull (χαῦναι) and languid; and when those are not right, even of health there is plainly no enjoyment. Which is the useful horse, the pampered or the exercised? which the serviceable ship, that which sails, or that which lies idle? which the best water, the running or the stagnant? which the best iron, that which is much used, or that which does no work? does not the one shine bright as silver, while the other becomes all over rusty, useless, and even losing some of its own substance? The like happens also to the soul as the consequence of idleness: a kind of rust spreads over it, and corrodes both its brightness and everything else. How then shall one rub off this rust? With the

whetstone of tribulations: so shall one make the soul useful and fit for all things. Else, how, I ask, will she be able to cut off the passions, with her edge turned (*ἀνακλώσης*) and bending like lead? How shall she wound the devil? — And then to whom can such an one be other than a disgusting spectacle — a man cultivating obesity, dragging himself along like a seal? I speak not this of those who are naturally of this habit, but of those who by luxurious living have brought their bodies into such a condition, of those who are naturally of a spare habit. The sun has risen, has shot forth his bright beams on all sides, and roused up each person to his work: the husbandman goes forth with his spade, the smith with his hammer, and each artisan with his several instruments, and you will find each handling his proper tools; the woman also takes either her distaff or her webs: while he, like the swine, immediately at the first dawn goes forth to feed his belly, seeking how he may provide sumptuous fare. And yet it is only for brute beasts to be feeding from morning to night; and for them, because their only use is to be slaughtered. Nay, even of the beasts, those which carry burdens and admit of being worked, go forth to their work while it is yet night. But this man, rising from his bed, when the (noon-tide) sun has filled the market-place, and people are tired of their several works, then this man gets up, stretching himself out just as if he were indeed a hog in fattening, having wasted the fairest part of the day in darkness. Then he sits there for a long time on his bed, often unable even to lift himself up from the last evening's debauch, and having wasted (still) more time in this (listlessness), proceeds to adorn himself, and issues forth, a spectacle of unseemliness, with nothing human about him, but with all the appearance of a beast with a human shape: his eyes rheumy from the effect of wine, while the miserable soul, just like the lame, is unable to rise, bearing about its bulk of flesh, like an elephant. Then he comes and sits in (various) places, and says and does such things, that it were better for him to be still sleeping than to be awake. If it chance that evil tidings be announced, he shows himself weaker than any girl; if good, more silly than any child; on his face there is a perpetual yawn. He is a mark for all that would do harm, if not for all men, at least for all evil passions; and wrath easily excites such a man, and lust, and envy, and all other passions. All flatter him, all pay court to him, rendering his soul weaker than it is already: and each day he goes on and on, adding to his disease. If he chance to fall into any difficulty of business, he becomes dust and ashes, and his silken garments

are of no help to him. We have not said all this without a purpose, but to teach you, that none of you should live idly and at random. For idleness and luxury are not conducive to work, to good reputation, to enjoyment. For who will not condemn such a man? Family, friends, kinsfolk (will say), He is indeed a very encumbrance of the ground. Such a man as this has come into the world to no purpose: or rather, not to no purpose, but to ill purpose against his own person, to his own ruin, and to the hurt of others. But that this is more pleasant — let us look to this; for this is the question. Well then, what can be less pleasant than (the condition of) a man who has nothing to do; what more wretched and miserable? Is it not worse than all the fetters in the world, to be always gaping and yawning, as one sits in the market-place, looking at the passers by? For the soul, as its nature is to be always on the move, cannot endure to be at rest. God has made it a creature of action: to work is of its very nature; to be idle is against its nature. For let us not judge of these things from those who are diseased, but let us put the thing itself to the proof of fact. Nothing is more hurtful than leisure, and having nothing to do: indeed therefore hath God laid on us a necessity of working: for idleness hurts everything. Even to the members of the body, inaction is a mischief. Both eye, if it perform not its work, and mouth, and belly, and every member that one could mention, falls into the worst state of disease: but none so much as the soul. But as inaction is an evil, so is activity in things that ought to be let alone. For just as it is with the teeth, if one eats not, one receives hurt to them, and if one eats things unfitting, it jars them, and sets them on edge: so it is here; both if the soul be inactive, and if inactive in wrong things, it loses its proper force. Then let us eschew both alike; both inaction, and the activity which is worse than inaction. And what may that be? Covetousness, anger, envyings, and the other passions. As regards these, let us make it our object to be inactive, in order that we may obtain the good things promised to us, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ', with Whom to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory, might, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 36

ACTS 16:25, 26

“And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed.”

What could equal these souls? These men had been scourged, had received many stripes, they had been misused, were in peril of their lives, were thrust into the inner prison, and set fast in the stocks: and for all this they did not suffer themselves to sleep, but kept vigil all the night. Do you mark what a blessing tribulation is? But we, in our soft beds, with none to be afraid of, pass the whole night in sleep. But belike this is why they kept vigil, because they were in this condition. Not the tyranny of sleep could overpower them, not the smart of pain could bow them, not the fear of evil east them into helpless dejection: no, these were the very things that made them wakeful: and they were even filled with exceeding delight. “At midnight,” it says, “and the prisoners listened to them:” it was so strange and surprising! “And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately, all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.” (v. 27.) There was an earthquake, that the keeper should be roused from sleep, and the doors flew open, that he should wonder at what had happened: but these things the prisoners saw not: otherwise they would all have fled: but the keeper of the prison was about to slay himself, thinking the prisoners were escaped. “But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here” (v. 28.) (b) “Then he called for lights, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas; and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (v. 29-30.) Do you mark how the wonder overpowered him? (a) He wondered more at Paul’s kindness; he was amazed at his manly boldness, that he had not escaped when he had it in his power, that he hindered him from killing himself. (c) “And they said,

believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.” (v. 31, 35) and (so) immediately gave proof of their kindness towards him. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.” (v. 33.) He washed them, and was himself baptized, he and his house. “And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house. And when it was day, the magistrates sent the sergeants, saying, Let those men go.” (v. 34, 35.) It is likely the magistrates had learnt what had happened, and did not dare of themselves to dismiss them. “And the keeper of the prison told these words to Paul, saying, the magistrates have sent to let you go now therefore depart, and go in peace. But Paul said unto them, they have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out. And the sergeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans. And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city. And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.” (v. 36-40.) Even upon the declaration of the magistrates Paul does not go out, but for the sake both of Lydia and the rest he puts them in fear: that they may not be supposed to have come out upon their own request, that they may set the rest in a posture of boldness. The impeachment was twofold: that “being Romans,” and “uncondemned,” they had openly cast them into prison. You see that in many things they took their measures as men.

(Recapitulation) “And at midnight,” etc. (v. 25.) Let us compare, beloved, with that night these nights of ours, with their revelings, their drunkenness, and wanton excesses, with their sleep which might as well be death, their watchings which are worse than sleep. For while some sleep without sense or feeling, others lie awake to pitiable and wretched purpose, plotting deceits, anxiously thinking about money, studying how they may be revenged upon those who do them wrong, meditating enmity, reckoning up the abusive words spoken during the day, thus do they rake up the smoldering embers of wrath, doing things intolerable. Mark how

Peter slept. (ch. 12:6.) Both there, it was wisely ordered (that he should be asleep); for the Angel came to him, and it behooved that none should see what happened; and on the other hand it was well ordered here (that Paul should be awake), in order that the keeper of the prison might be prevented from killing himself. “And suddenly there was a great earthquake.” (v. 26.) And why did no other miracle take place? Because this was, of all others, the thing sufficient for his conversion, seeing he was personally in danger: for it is not so much miracles that overpower us, as the things which issue in our own deliverance. That the earthquake should not seem to have come of itself, there was this concurrent circumstance, bearing witness to it: “the doors were opened, and all their bonds were loosed.” And it appears in the night-time; for the Apostles did not work for display, but for men’s salvation “And the keeper of the prison,” etc. (v. 27.) The keeper was not an evil-disposed man that he “thrust them into the inner prison,” (v. 24) was because of his “having received such a command,” not of himself. The man was all in a tumult of perturbation. “What shall I do to be saved?” he asks. Why not before this? Paul shouted, until he saw, and is beforehand with him saying, “We are all here. And having called for lights,” it says, “he sprang in, and fell down at the feet” of the prisoner; he, the prison keeper, saying, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (v. 28-30.) Why, what had they said? Observe, he does not, on finding himself safe, think all is well; he is overcome with awe at the miraculous power.

Do you mark what happened in the former case, and what here? There a girl was released from a spirit, and they cast them into prison, because they had liberated her from the spirit. Here, they did but show the doors standing open, and it opened the doors of his heart, it loosed two sorts of chains; that (prisoner) kindled the (true) light; for the light in his heart was shining. “And he sprang in, and fell before them;” and he does not ask, How is this? What is this? but straightway he says, “What must I do to be saved?” What then answers Paul? “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thine house.” (v. 31.) For this above all, wins men: that one’s house also should be saved. “And they spake the word to him, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes,” etc. (v. 32, 33), washed them and was washed: those he washed from their stripes, himself was washed from his

sins: he fed and was fed. “And rejoiced,” it says: although there was nothing but words only and good hopes: “having believed in God with all his house (v. 34): this was the token of his having believed — that he was released of all. What worse than a jailer, what more ruthless, more savage? He entertained them with great honor. Not, because he was safe, he made merry, but, having believed God. (a) “Believe on the Lord,” said the Apostle: therefore it is that the writer here says, “Having believed, — (d) Now therefore,” it says, “depart, and go in peace” (v. 36): that is, in safety, fearing no man. (b) “But Paul said unto them” (v. 37): that he may not seem to be receiving his liberty as one condemned, and as one that has done wrong: therefore it is that he says, “Having openly beaten us uncondemned,” etc. — that it may not be matter of grace on their part. (e) And besides, they wish the jailer himself to be out of danger, that he may not be called to account for this afterwards. And they do not say, “Having beaten us,” who have wrought miracles: for they (the magistrates) did not even heed these: but, that which was most effectual to shake their minds, “uncondemned, and being Romans.” (c) Observe how diversely grace manages things: how Peter went out, how Paul, though both were Apostles. “They feared,” (v. 38) it says: because the men were Romans, not because they had unjustly cast them into prison, “And besought them to depart out of the city” (v. 39): begged them as a favor. And they went to the house of Lydia, and having confirmed her, so departed. For it was not right to leave their hostess in distress and anxiety. But they went out, not in compliance with the request of those rulers, but hasting to the preaching: the city having been sufficiently benefited by the miracle: for it was fit they should not be there any longer. For in the absence of them that wrought it, the miracle appeared greater, itself crying out more loudly: the faith of the jailer was a voice in itself. What equal to this? He is put in bonds, and looses, being bound: looses a twofold bond: him that bound him, he looses by being bound. These are indeed works of (supernatural) grace. (f) Let us constantly bear in mind this jailer, not the miracle: how, prisoner as he was (the Apostle), persuaded his jailer. What say the heathen? “And of what things,” say they, “was such a man as this to be persuaded — a vile, wretched creature, of no understanding, full of all that is bad and nothing else, and easily brought over to anything? For these, say they, are the things, a tanner, a purple-seller, an eunuch, slaves, and women believed.” This is what they say. What then will they be able to

say, when we produce the men of rank and station, the centurion, the proconsul, those from that time to the present, the rulers themselves, the emperors? But for my part, I speak of something else, greater than this: let us look to these very persons of no consideration. “And where is the wonder?” say you. Why, this, I say, is a wonder. For, if a person be persuaded about any common things, it is no wonder: but if resurrection, a kingdom of heaven, a life of philosophic self-command, be the subjects, and, discoursing of these to persons of mean consideration, one persuades them, it will be more wonderful than if one persuaded wise men. For when there is no danger attending the things of which one persuades people, then (the objector) might with some plausibility allege want of sense on their part: but when (the preacher) says — to the slave, as you will have it — “If thou be persuaded by me, it is at thy peril, thou wilt have all men for thine enemies, thou must die, thou must suffer evils without number,” and yet for all this, convinces that man’s soul, there can be no more talk here of want of sense. Since, if indeed the doctrines contained what was pleasant, one might fairly enough say this: but if, what the philosophers would never have chosen to learn, this the slave does learn, then is the wonder greater. And, if you will, let us bring before us the tanner himself, and see what were the subjects on which Peter conversed with him: or if you will, this same jailer. What then said Paul to him? “That Christ rose again,” say you; “that there is a resurrection of the dead, and a kingdom: and he had no difficulty in persuading him, a man easily led to anything.” How? Said he nothing about the mode of life; that he must be temperate, that he must be superior to money, that he must not be unmerciful, that he must impart of his good things to others? For it cannot be said, that the being persuaded to these things also was from the want of power of mind; no, to be brought to all this required a great soul. For be it so, that as far as the doctrines went, they were rendered more apt to receive these by their want of intelligence: but to accept such a virtuous, self-denying rule of life, how could that be owing to any defect of understanding? So that the less understanding the person may have, if nevertheless he is persuaded to things, to which even philosophers were unable to persuade their fellow-philosophers, the greater the wonder — when women and slaves are persuaded of these truths, and prove it by their actions, of which same truths the Platos and all the rest of them were never able to persuade any man. And why say I, “any man?” Say rather, not themselves even: on the

contrary, that money is not to be despised, Plato persuaded (his disciples) by getting, as he did, such an abundance of property, and golden rings, and goblets; and that the honor to be had from the many is not to be despised, this Socrates himself shows, for all that he may philosophize without end on this point: for in everything he did, he had an eye to fame. And if you were conversant with his discourses, I might go at great length into this subject, and show what a deal of insincerity (εἰρωνείαν) there was in them, — if at least we may believe what his disciple says of him, — and how that all his writings have their ground-work in vainglory. But, leaving them, let us direct the discourse to our own selves. For besides the things that have been said, there is this also to be added, that men were persuaded of these things to their own peril. Be not thou therefore shameless, but let us think over that night, the stocks, and the hymns of praise. This let us also do, and we shall open for ourselves — not a prison, but — heaven. If we pray, we shall be able even to open heaven. Elias both shut and opened heaven by prayer. (James 5:17.) There is a prison in heaven also. “Whatsoever,” He saith, “ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven.” (Matthew 16:19.) Let us pray by night, and we shall loose these bonds. For that prayers loose sins, let that widow convince us, let that friend convince us, who at that untimely hour of the night persists and knocks (Luke 11:5): let Cornelius convince us, for, “thy prayers,” it says, “and thine alms are come up before God.” (ch. 10:4.) Let Paul convince us, who says, “Now she that is a widow indeed and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications night and day.” (1 Timothy 5:5.) If he speaks thus of a widow, a weak woman, much more would he of men. I have both before discoursed to you on this, and now repeat it: let us arouse ourselves during the night: though thou make not many prayers, make one with watchfulness, and it is enough, I ask no more: and if not at midnight, at any rate at the first dawn. Show that the night is not only for the body, but also for the soul: do not suffer it to pass idly, but make this return to thy Master: nay rather (the benefit) itself returns to thee. Say, if we fall into any difficult strait, to whom do we not make request? and if we soon obtain our request, we breathe freely again. What a boon were it for thee, to have a friend to go to with thy request, who shall be ready to take it as a kindness, and to be obliged to thee for thy asking? What a boon, not to have to go about and seek one to ask of, but to find one ready? to have no need of others through whom thou mayest solicit? What

could be greater than this? Since here is One who then does most, when we make not our requests of others than Himself: just as a sincere friend then most complains of us for not trusting in his friendship, when we ask of others to make request to him. Thus also let us act. "But what," you will ask, "if I should have offended Him?" Cease to give offense, and weep, and so draw near to Him, and thou wilt quickly render Him propitious as to thy former sins. Say only, I have offended: say it from thy soul and with a sincere mind, and all things are remitted to thee. Thou dost not so much desire thy sins to be forgiven, as He desires to forgive thee thy sins. In proof that thou dost not so desire it, consider that thou hast no mind either to practice vigils, or to give thy money freely: but He, that He might forgive our sins, spared not His Only-begotten and True Son, the partner of His throne. Seest thou how He more desires to forgive thee thy sins (than thou to be forgiven)? Then let us not be slothful, nor put off this any longer. He is merciful and good: only let us give Him an opportunity. And (even) this (He seeks), only that we may not become unprofitable, since even without this He could have freed us from them: but like as we (with the same view) devise and arrange many things for our servants to do, so does He in the matter of our salvation. "Let us anticipate His face with thanksgiving." (Psalm 95:2. "Let us come before His presence." E.V.), since He is good and kind. But if thou call not upon Him, what will He do? Thou dost not choose to say, Forgive; thou wilt not say it from thy heart, but with thy mouth only. What is it, to call in truth? (To call) with purpose of heart, with earnestness, with a sincere mind; just as men say of perfumes, "This is genuine, and has nothing spurious," so here. He who truly calls on Him, he who truly prays to Him, continually attends to it, and desists not, until he obtain (his request): but he who does it in a merely formal manner (*ἄφοσιούμενος*), and even this only by way of fulfilling a law, does not call in truth. Whosoever thou art, say not only, "I am a sinner," but be earnest also to rid thyself of this character; say not this only, but also grieve. If thou grievest, thou art in earnest: if thou art not in earnest, thou grievest not: if thou grievest not, thou triflest. What sort of man is he who shall say, "I am sick," and not to do all to be freed from his sickness? A mighty weapon is Prayer. "If ye," saith the Lord, "know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more your Father?" (Luke 11:13.) Then wherefore art thou unwilling to approach Him? He loves thee, He is of more power than all besides. Both willing is

He and able, what is there to hinder? Nothing. But then, on our part, let us draw near with faith, draw near, offering the gifts that He desires, forgetfulness of wrongs, kindness, meekness. Though thou be a sinner, with boldness shalt thou ask of Him forgiveness of thy sins, if thou canst show that this has been done by thyself: but though thou be righteous, and possess not this virtue of forgetfulness of injuries, thou art none the better for it. It cannot be that a man who has forgiven his neighbor should not obtain perfect forgiveness: for God is beyond comparison more merciful than we. What sayest thou? If thou sayest, "I have been wronged, I have subdued my anger, I have endured the onset of wrath because of Thy command, and dost Thou not forgive? Full surely He will forgive: and this is plain to all. Therefore let us purge our soul from all resentment. This is sufficient for us, in order that we may be heard; and let us pray with watching and much perseverance, that having enjoyed His bountiful mercy, we may be found worthy of the good things promised, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory, might, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 37

ACTS 17:1, 2, 3

“Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.”

Again they haste past the small cities, and press on to the greater ones, since from those the word was to flow as from a fountain into the neighboring cities. “And Paul, as his manner was, went into the synagogue of the Jews.” Although he had said, “We turn to the Gentiles” (ch. 13:46), he did not leave these alone: such was the longing affection he had towards them. For hear him saying, “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved” (Romans 10:1): and, “I wished myself accursed from Christ for my brethren.” (ib. 9:3.) But he did this because of God’s promise and the glory: and this, that it might not be a cause of offense to the Gentiles. “Opening,” it says, “from the Scriptures, he reasoned with them for three sabbaths, putting before them that the Christ must suffer.” Do thou mark how before all other things he preaches the Passion: so little were they ashamed of it, knowing it to be the cause of salvation. “And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.” (v. 4.) The writer mentions only the sum and substance of the discoursing: he is not given to redundancy, and does not on every occasion report the sermons. “But the Jews which believed not (the best texts omit “which believed not”), moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.” (v. 5-7.) Oh! what an accusation! again they get up a charge of treason against them, “saying, there is another king (one)

Jesus. And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.” (v. 8, 9.) A man worthy to be admired, that he put himself into danger, and sent them away from it. “And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble,” it says, “than they of Thessalonica: more noble,” i.e. more gentle (ἐπιεικέστεροι) (in their behavior): “in that they received the word with all readiness,” and this not inconsiderately, but with a strictness wherein was no passion, “searching the Scriptures whether these things were so.” (v. 10, 11.) “Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few. But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people. And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.” (v. 12-14.) See how he at one time gives way, at another presses on, and in many things takes his measures upon human considerations. “And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with speed, they departed.” (v. 15.) But let us look again at what has been said.

(Recapitulation.) “Three sabbath-days,” it says, being the time when they had leisure from work, “he reasoned with them, opening out of the Scriptures” (v. 2): for so used Christ also to do: as on many occasions we find Him reasoning from the Scriptures, and not on all occasions (urging men) by miracles. Because to this indeed they stood in a posture of hostility, calling them deceivers and jugglers; but he that persuades men by reasons from the Scriptures, is not liable to this imputation. And on many occasions we find (Paul) to have convinced men simply by force of teaching: and in Antioch “the whole city was gathered together” (ch. 13:44): so great a thing is this also, for indeed this itself is no small miracle, nay, it is even a very great one. And that they might not think that they did it all by their own strength, but rather that God permitted it, two things resulted, namely, “Some of them were persuaded,” etc. (c) “And of devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few:” but those others did the contrary: “the Jews moved with envy,” etc. (v. 4, 5)

(b) and, from the fact that the being called was itself a matter of God's fore-ordering, (a) they neither thought great things of themselves as if the triumph were their own, nor were terrified as being responsible (for all). But how comes it that he said, "That we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision" (Galatians 2:9), and yet discoursed to the Jews? (a) He did this as a thing over and above. (β) For he did other things also more than he was obliged. For instance, Christ ordained that they should "live by the Gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:14; 1:17), but our Apostle did it not: Christ sent him not to baptize, yet he did baptize. Mark how he was equal to all. Peter to the circumcision, he to the Gentiles, to the greater part. (a) Since if it was necessary for him to discourse to Jews, how said he again: "For He that wrought effectually in him toward the circumcision, the same was mighty also in me toward the Gentiles" (Galatians 2:8)? In the same way as those Apostles also had intercourse with the Gentiles, though they had been set apart for the circumcision, so likewise did our Apostle. The more part of his work indeed was with the Gentiles: still he did not neglect the Jews either, that they might not seem to be severed from them. And how was it, you will ask, that he entered in the first place into the synagogues, as if this were his leading object? True but he persuaded the Gentiles through the Jews, and from the things which he discoursed of to the Jews. And he knew, that this was most suitable for the Gentiles, and most conducive to belief. Therefore he says: "Inasmuch as I am the "Apostle of the Gentiles." (Romans 11:13.) And his Epistles too all fight against the Jews. That the Christ," he says, "must needs have suffered." (v. 3.) If there was a necessity for His suffering, there was assuredly. a necessity for His rising again: for the former was far more wonderful than the latter. For if He gave Him up to death Who had done no wrong, much rather did He raise Him up again. "But the Jews which believed not took unto them certain of the baser sort, and set all the city on an uproar (v. 5): so that the Gentiles were more in number. The Jews thought not themselves enough to raise the disturbance for because they had no reasonable pretext, they ever effect such purposes by means of uproar, and by taking to themselves base men. "And when they found them not," it says, "they haled Jason and certain brethren." (v. 6.) O the tyranny! dragged them without any cause out of their houses. "These all," say they, "do contrary to the decrees of Caesar" (v. 7): for since they spoke nothing contrary to what had been decreed, nor made any

commotion in the city, they bring them under a different charge: “saying that there is another king, one Jesus. And they troubled the people,” etc. (v. 8.) And what are ye afraid of, seeing He is dead? (β) “And when they had taken security,” etc. (v. 9.) See how by giving security Jason sent Paul away: so that he gave his life (to the hazard) for him.(a) “And brethren,” etc. (v. 10.) See how the persecutions in every case extend the preaching. “Now these,” it says, “were more noble than those in Thessalonica” (v. II): i.e. they were not (men) practicing base things, but some were convinced, and the others (who were not), did nothing (of that sort). (β) “Daily,” it says, “searching the Scriptures whether these things were so:” not merely upon a sudden impetus or (burst of) zeal. “More noble,” it says: i.e. in point of virtue (a) “Therefore many of them,” etc. (v. 12.) And here again are Greeks. (β) “But when the Jews of Thessalonica,” etc. (v. 13), because there were lewd persons there. And yet that city was greater. But it is no wonder in the greater city the people were worse nay, of course to the greater city there go the worse men, where the occasions of disturbances are many. And as in the body, where the disease is more violent for having more matter and fuel, just so is it here. (a) But look, I beg you, how their fleeing was providentially ordered, not from cowardice: otherwise they would have ceased to preach, and would not have exasperated them still more. But from this (flight) two things resulted: both the rage of those (Jews) was quenched, and the preaching spread. But in terms befitting their disorderly conduct, he says, “Agitating the multitude.” (β) Just what was done at Iconium — that they may have the additional condemnation of destroying others besides themselves. (ch. 14:2, 19.) This is what Paul says of them: “Forbidding to preach to the Gentiles, to fill up their sins alway, for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.” (1 Thessalonians 2:16.) Why did he not stay? for if (at Lystra, ch. 14:19, 21) there, where he was stoned, he nevertheless stayed a long time, much more here. Why? (The Lord) did not wish them to be always doing signs; for this is itself a sign, not less than the working of signs — that being persecuted, they overcame without signs. So that just as now He prevails without signs, so was it on many occasions His will to prevail then. Consequently neither did the Apostles run after signs: as in fact he says himself, “We preach Christ crucified” (1 Corinthians 1:23) — to them that crave signs, to them that crave wisdom, we give that which cannot even after signs persuade, and yet we do persuade! So that this was

a mighty sign. See then, how when the preaching is extended, they are not in a hurry to run after signs. For it was right that thenceforth the believers should be mighty signs to the rest. Howbeit, by retreating and advancing they did these things. (a) “And immediately,” it says, “the brethren sent away Paul.” (v. 14.) Here now they send Paul alone: for it was for him they feared, lest he should suffer some harm, the head and front of all being in fact none other than he. (β) “They sent him away,” it says, “as it were to the sea:” that it might not be easy for them to seize him. For at present they could not have done much by themselves; and with him they accomplished and achieved many things. For the present, it says, they wished to rescue him. (a) So far is it from being the case, that (supernatural) Grace worked all alike on all occasions: on the contrary, it left them to take their measures upon human judgment, (only) stirring them up and rousing them out of sleep, and making them to take pains. Thus, observe, it brought them safe only as far as Philippi, but no more after that. “And receiving,” it says, “a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.” (v. 15.) For though he was a Paul, nevertheless he needed them. And with good reason are they urged by God to go into Macedonia, for there lay Greece moreover bright (before them). (ch. 16:9.)

See what zeal the rest of the disciples showed with respect to their leaders: not as it is now with us, who are separated and divided into great and small: some of us exalted, while others are envious: for this is the reason why those are envious, because we are puffed up, because we will not endure to be put upon a par with them. The reason why there is harmony in the body, is because there is no puffing up: and there is no puffing up, because the members are of necessity made to stand in need of each other, and the head has need of the feet. And God has made this to be the case with us, and, for all that, we will not endure it: although even without this, there ought to be love among us. Hear ye not how they that are without accuse us when they say, “Needs make friendships?” The laity have need of us; and we again exist for them. Since teacher or ruler would not exist, if there were not persons to be taught, nor would he perform his part, for it would not be possible. As the land has need of the husbandman, and the husbandman of the land, so is it here. What reward is there for the teacher to receive, when he has none to produce that he has

taught? and what for the taught, who have not had the benefit of the best teaching? So that we need each other alike in turn, both the governed, them that govern, and leaders, them that obey: for rulers are for the sake of many. Since no one is sufficient to do anything by himself alone, whether need be to ordain (*χειροτονῆσαι*), or to examine men's counsels and opinions. but they become more honorable by assembly and numbers. For instance, the poor need givers, the givers again need receivers.

“Considering one another” he says, “to provoke unto love and to good works.” (Hebrews 10:24.) On this account the assembly of the whole Church has more power: and what each cannot do by himself singly, he is able to do when joined with the rest. Therefore most necessary are the prayers offered up, here, for the world, for the Church, from the one end of the earth to the other, for peace, for those who are in adversities. And Paul shows this when he says, “That for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf” (2 Corinthians 1:11); that is, that He might confer the favor on many. And often he asks for their prayers. See also what God says with regard to the Ninevites: “And shall not I spare that city, wherein dwell more than six score thousand persons?” (Jonah 4:11.) For if, “where two or three,” He says, “are gathered together in My Name” (Matthew 18:20), they prevail much, how much more, being many? And yet thou mayest prevail, though thou be but one; yet not equally so. For why art thou but one? Why dost thou not make many? Why dost thou not become the maker of love? Why dost thou not create (*κατασκευάζεις*) friendship? Thou lackest the chief excellence of virtue. For as men's being bad by agreement together more provokes God; so for men to be good by unanimity delights Him more. “Thou shall not follow a multitude,” He says, “to do evil.” (Exodus 23:2.) “They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable” (Romans 3:12), and have become as it were men singing in concert in their wickedness. Make for thyself friends in preference to domestics, and all besides. If the peacemaker is a son of God, how much more he who makes friends also? (Matthew 5:9.) If he who reconciles only is called a son of God, of what shall not he be worthy, who makes friends of those who are reconciled? Let us engage ourselves in this trade, let us make those who are enemies to each other friends, and those who are not indeed enemies, but are not friends, them let us bring together, and before all, our own selves. For as he who is at enmity in his house, and has differences with his wife,

carries no authority when reconciling others, but will be told, “Physician, heal thyself” (Luke 4:23), so will a man be told in this case. What then is the enmity that is in us? That of the soul against the body, that of vice against virtue. This enmity let us put an end to, this war let us take away, and then being in peace we shall also address others with much boldness of speech, our conscience not accusing us. Anger fights against gentleness, love of money against contempt of it, envy against goodness of heart. Let us make an end of this war, let us overthrow these enemies, let us set up these trophies, let us establish peace in our own city. We have within us a city and a civil polity, and citizens and aliens many: but let us banish the aliens, that our own people may not be ruined. Let no foreign nor spurious doctrine enter in, no carnal desire. See we not that, if any enemy has been caught in a city, he is judged as a spy? Then let us not only banish aliens, but let us drive out enemies also. If we see one, let us deliver up to the ruler, (that is), to conscience (τῷ νόῳ), that imagination which is indeed an alien, a barbarian, albeit tricked out with the garb of a citizen. For there are within us many imaginations of this kind, which are by nature indeed enemies, but are clad in sheep’s skins. Just as the Persians, when they have put off the tiara, and the drawers, and the barbarian shoes, and put on the other dress which is usual with us, and have shorn themselves close, and converse in our own tongue, conceal war under their outward garb: but once apply the tortures (βασάνους or “tests”), and thou bringest to light what is hidden: so here, examine (or “put to the test,”) by torture again and again such an imagination as this, and thou wilt quickly see that its spirit is that of a stranger. But to show you also by way of example the sort of spies which the devil sends into us to spy out what is in us, come let us strip one of them, and examine it strictly at the tribunal: and if you please, let us bring forward some of those which were detected by Paul. “Which things,” he says, “have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting off the body: not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh.” (Colossians 2:23.) The devil wished to bring in Judaism: now if he had introduced it in its own form, he would not have carried his point. Accordingly, mark how he brought it about. “You must neglect the body,” he says: “this is (the true) philosophy, not to admit of meats, but to guard against them: this is humility.” And now again in our own times, in the case of the heretics, he wished to bring us down to the creature. See then how he dressed up his deceit. Had he said, “Worship a

creature,” he would have been detected: but what says he? “God” (viz. the Son and the Holy Ghost), he says, “is a created being.” But let us lay bare for the decision of the judges the meaning of the Apostolic writings: there let us bring him: themselves will acknowledge both the preaching and the language. Many make gains “that they may have wherewith to give to the poor,” unjust gains: this too is a wicked imagination. But let us undress it, let us convict it, that we may not be taken by it, but that having escaped all the devices of the devil, and holding to the sound doctrines with strictness, we may be able both to pass in safety through this life present, and to obtain the good things promised, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father, together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, might, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 38

ACTS 17:16, 17

“Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.”

OBSERVE how he meets with greater trials among the Jews than among the Gentiles. Thus in Athens he undergoes nothing of this kind; the thing goes as far as ridicule, and there an end: and yet he did make some converts: whereas among the Jews he underwent many perils; so much greater was their hostility against him. — “His spirit,” it says, “was roused within him when he saw the city all full of idols.” Nowhere else were so many objects of worship to be seen. But again “he disputed with the Jews in the synagogue, and in the market daily with them that met with him. Then certain of the philosophers of the Stoics and Epicureans encountered him.” (v. 18.) It is a wonder the philosophers did not laugh him to scorn, speaking in the way he did. “And some said, What does this babblers mean to say?” insolently, on the instant: — this is far from philosophy. “Other some said, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods,” from the preaching, because he had no arrogance. They did not understand, nor comprehend the subjects he was speaking of — how should they? affirming as they did, some of them, that God is a body; others, that pleasure is the (true) happiness. “Of strange gods, because he preached unto them Jesus and the Resurrection:” for in fact they supposed “Anastasis” (the Resurrection) to be some deity, being accustomed to worship female divinities also. “And having taken him, they brought him to the Areopagus” (v. 19) — not to punish, but in order to learn — “to the Areopagus” where the trials for murder were held. Thus observe, in hope of learning (they ask him), saying, “May we know what is this new doctrine spoken of by thee? For thou bringest certain strange matters to our ears” (v. 20): everywhere novelty is the charge: “we would fain know therefore, what these things may mean.” It was a city of talkers, that city of theirs. “For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing. Then

Paul stood in the midst of Mars hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I look upon you as being in all things” (v. 21, 22) — he puts it by way of encomium: (the word) does not seem to mean anything offensive — **δεισιδαιμονεστέρους**, that is, **εὐλαβεστέρους**, “more religiously disposed. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with his inscription, Te AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye ignorantly worship, this declare I unto you.” (v. 23.) — “ On which was inscribed, To an Unknown God.” The Athenians, namely, as on many occasions they had received gods from foreign parts also — for instance, the temple of Minerva, Pan, and others from different countries, being afraid that there might be some other God not yet known to them, but worshipped elsewhere, for more assurance, forsooth, erected an altar to that God also: and as the God was not known, it was inscribed, “To an Unknown God.” This God then, he tells them, is Christ; or rather, the God of all. “Him declare I unto you,” Observe how he shows that they had already received Him, and “it is nothing strange,” says he, “nothing new that I introduce to you.” All along, this was what they had been saying: “What is this new doctrine spoken of by thee? For thou bringest certain strange matters to our ears.” Immediately therefore he removes this surmise of theirs: and then says, “God that made the world and all things therein, He being Lord of heaven and earth” — for, that they may not imagine Him to be one of many, he presently sets them right on this point; adding, “dwelleth not in temples made with hands” (v. 24), “neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed anything “ — do you observe how, little by little, he brings in the philosophy? how he ridicules the heathen error? “seeing it is He that giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.” This is peculiar to God. Look, then, whether these things may not be predicated of the Son also. “Being Lord,” he saith, “of heaven and earth “ — which they accounted to be God’s. Both the creation he declares to be His work, and mankind also. “Having determined,” he says, “the times assigned to them, and the bounds of their habitation,” (v. 25, 26), “that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one, of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being: as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring.” (v. 27, 28.) This is said by Aratus the poet. Observe how he draws his arguments from

things done by themselves, and from sayings of their own. “Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art.” (v. 29.) And yet for this reason we ought. By no means: for surely we are not like (to such), nor are these souls of ours. “And imagination of man.” How so? But some person might say, “We do not think this.” But it was to the many that he was addressing himself, not now to Philosophy. How then did they think so unworthily of Him? Again, putting it upon their ignorance, he says, “Now the times of ignorance God overlooked.” Having agitated their minds by the fear, he then adds this: and yet he says, “but now he commandeth all men everywhere to repent.” (v. 30.) “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.” (v. 31.) But let us look over again what has been said.

(Recapitulation.) (b) “And while Paul waited,” etc. (v. 16.) It is providentially ordered that against his will he stays there, while waiting for those others. (a) “His spirit,” it says, “within him” **παρωξύνετο**. It does not mean there, anger or exasperation: just as elsewhere it says, “There was **παροξυσμὸς** between them.” (ch. 15:30.) (c) Then what is **παρωξύνετο**? Was roused: for the gift is far removed from anger and exasperation. He could not bear it, but pined away. “He reasoned therefore in the synagogue,” etc. (v. 17.) Observe him again reasoning with Jews. By “devout persons” he means the proselytes. For the Jews were dispersed everywhere before (mod. text “since”) Christ’s coming, the Law indeed being henceforth, so to say, in process of dissolution, but at the same time (the dispersed Jews) teaching men religion. But those prevailed nothing, save only that they got witnesses of their own calamities. (e) “And certain philosophers,” etc. (v. 18.) How came they to be willing to confer with him? (They did it) when they saw others reasoning, and the man having repute (in the encounter). And observe straightway with overbearing insolence, “some said, What would this babbler say? For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 2:14.) Other some, He seemeth to be a setter-forth of strange deities: **δαίμονίων**, for so they called their gods. “And having taken him, they brought him,” etc. (v. 19.) (a) The Athenians no longer enjoyed their own laws, but were become

subject to the Romans. (g) (Then) why did they hale him to the Areopagus? Meaning to overawe him — (the place) where they held the trials for bloodshed. “May we know, what is this new doctrine spoken of by thee? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears; we would fain know therefore what these things mean. For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.” (v. 20, 21.) Here the thing noted is, that though ever occupied only in this telling and hearing, yet they thought those things strange — things which they had never heard. “Then Paul standing in the midst of the Areopagus said, Ye men of Athens, I look upon you as being in all things more religiously disposed” (v. 22): (f) for the cities were full of gods (δαιμόνων, al. εἰδώλων): (h) this is why he says δεισιδαιμονεστέρους. “For as I passed by and viewed the objects of your worship — he does not say simply τοὺς δαίμονας as (the demons, or deities), but paves the way for his discourse: “I beheld an altar,” etc. (v. 23.) This is why he says, “I look upon you as being more religiously disposed, viz. because of the altar. “God,” he says, “that made the world.” (v. 24.) He uttered one word, by which he has subverted all the (doctrines) of the philosophers. For the Epicureans affirm all to be fortuitously formed and (by concourse) of atoms, the Stoics held it to be body and fire (ἐκπύρωσιν). “The world and all that is therein.” Do you mark the conciseness, and in conciseness, clearness? Mark what were the things that were strange to them: that God made the world! Things which now any of the most ordinary persons know, these the Athenians and the wise men of the Athenians knew not. “Seeing He is Lord of heaven and earth:” for if He made them, it is clear that He is Lord. Observe what he affirms to be the note of Deity — creation. Which attribute the Son also hath. For the Prophets everywhere affirm this, that to create is God’s prerogative. Not as those affirm that another is Maker but not Lord, assuming that matter is uncreated. Here now he covertly affirms and establishes his own, while he overthrows their doctrine. “Dwelleth not in temples made with hands.” For He does indeed dwell in temples, yet not in such, but in man’s soul. He overthrows the corporeal worship. What then? Did He not dwell in the temple at Jerusalem? No indeed: but He wrought therein. “Neither is worshipped by men’s hands.” (v. 25.) How then was He worshipped by men’s hands among the Jews? Not by hands, but by the understanding. “As though He needed anything:” since even

those (acts of worship) He did not in this sort seek, “as having need. Shall I eat,” saith He, “the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?” (Psalm 1:13.) Neither is this enough — the having need of naught — which he has affirmed: for though this is Divine, yet a further attribute must be added. “Seeing it is He that giveth unto all, life and breath and all things.” Two proofs of Godhead: Himself to have need of naught, and to supply all things to all men. Produce here Plato (and) all that he has philosophized about God, all that Epicurus has: and all is but trifling to this! “Giveth,” he says, “life and breath.” Lo, he makes Him the Creator of the soul also, not its begetter. See again how he overthrows the doctrine about matter. “And made,” he says, “off one blood every nation of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth.” (v. 26.) These things are better than the former: and what an impeachment both of the atoms and of matter, that (creation) is not partial (work), nor the soul of man either? But this, which those say, is not to be Creator. — But by the mind and understanding He is worshipped. — “It is He that giveth,” etc. He not the partial (μερικὸν δαίμονες) deities. “And all things.” it is “He,” he saith. — How man also came into being. — First he showed that “He dwelleth not,” etc., and then declared that He “is not worshipped as though He had need of aught.” If God, He made all: but if He made not, He is not God. Gods that made not heaven and earth, let them perish. He introduces much greater doctrines, though as yet he does not mention the great doctrines; but he discoursed to them as unto children. And these were much greater than those. Creation, Lordship, the having need of naught, authorship of all good — these he has declared. But how is He worshipped? say. It is not yet the proper time. What equal to this sublimity? Marvelous is this also — of one, to have made so many: but also, having made, Himself sustains them (συγκρατεῖ) in being, “giving life and breath and all things. (b) And hath determined the times appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him.” (v. 27.) (a) It means either this, that He did not compel them to, go about and seek God, but according to the bounds of their habitation: (c) or this, that He determined their seeking God, yet not determined this (to be done) continually, but (determined) certain appointed times (when they should do so): showing now, that not having sought they had found: for since, having sought, they had not found, he shows that God was now as manifest as though He were in the midst of them palpably

(ψηλαφώμενος). (e) “Though He be not far,” he saith, “from every one of us,” but is near to all. See again the power (or, “what it is to be God,”) of God. What saith he? Not only He gave “life and breath and all things,” but, as the sum and substance of all, He brought us to the knowledge of Himself, by giving us these things by which we are able to find and to apprehend Him. But we did not wish to find Him, albeit close at hand. “Though He be not far from every one of us.” Why look now, He is near to all, to every one all the world over! What can be greater than this? See how he makes clear riddance of the parcel deities (τούς μερικούς)! What say I, “afar off?” He is so near, that without Him we live not: “for in Him we live and move and have our being.” (v. 28.) “In him;” to put it by way of corporeal similitude, even as it is impossible to be ignorant of the air which is diffused on every side around us, and is “not far from every one of us,” nay rather, which is in us. (d) For it was not so that there was a heaven in one place, in another none, nor yet (a heaven) at one time, at another none. So that both at every “time” and at every “bound” it was possible to find Him. He so ordered things, that neither by place nor bytime were men hindered. For of course even this, if nothing else, of itself was a help to them — that the heaven is in every place, that it stands in all time. (f) See how (he declares) His Providence, and His upholding power (συγκράτησιν); the existence of all things from Him, (from Him) their working (τὸ ἐνεργεῖν), (from Him their preservation) that they perish not. And he does not say, “Through Him,” but, what was nearer than this, “In him.” — That poet said nothing equal to this, “For we are His offspring.” He, however, spake it of Jupiter, but Paul takes it of the Creator, not meaning the same being as he, God forbid! but meaning what is properly predicated of God: just as he spake of the altar with reference to Him, not to the being whom they worshipped. As much as to say, “For certain things are said and done with reference to this (true God), but ye know not that they are with reference to Him.” For say, of whom would it be properly said, “To an Unknown God?” Of the Creator, or of the demon? Manifestly of the Creator: because Him they knew not, but the other they knew. Again, that all things are filled (with the presence) — of God? or of Jupiter — a wretch of a man, a detestable impostor! But Paul said it not in the same sense as he, God forbid! but with quite a different meaning. For he says we are God’s offspring, i.e. God’s own, His nearest neighbors as it were. For lest, when he says, “Being the offspring of God”

(v. 29), they should again say, Thou bringest certain strange things to our ears, he produces the poet. He does not say, “Ye ought not to think the Godhead like to gold or silver,” ye accursed and execrable: but in more lowly sort he says, “We ought not.” For what (says he)? God is above this? No, he does not say this either: but for the present this — “We ought not to think the Godhead like unto such,” for nothing is so opposite to men. “But we do not affirm the Godhead to be like unto this, for who would say that?” Mark how he has introduced the incorporeal (nature of God) when he said, “In Him,” etc., for the mind, when it surmises body, at the same time implies the notion of distance. (Speaking) to the many he says, “We ought not to think the Godhead like unto gold, or silver, or stone, the shaping of art,” for if we are not like to those as regards the soul, much more God (is not like to such). So far, he withdraws them from the notion. But neither is the Godhead, he would say, subjected to any other human conception. For if that which art or thought has found — this is why he says it thus, “of art or imagination of man” — if that, then, which human art or thought has found, is God, then even in the stone (is) God’s essence. — How comes it then, if “in Him we live,” that we do not find Him? The charge is twofold, both that they did not find Him, and that they found such as these. The (human) understanding in itself is not at all to be relied upon. — But when he has agitated their soul by showing them to be without excuse, see what he says: “The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.” (v. 30.) What then? Are none of these men to be punished? None of them that are willing to repent. He says it of these men, not of the departed, but of them whom He commands to repent. He does not call you to account, he would say. He does not say, Took no notice (*παρεῖδεν*); does not say, Permitted: but, Ye were ignorant. “Overlooked,” i.e. does not demand punishment as of men that deserve punishment. Ye were ignorant. And he does not say, Ye willfully did evil.; but this he showed by what he Said above — “All men everywhere to repent:” again he hints at the whole world. Observe how he takes them off from the parcel deities! “Because He has 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 to all men, in that He raised Him from the dead.” (v. 31.) Observe how he again declares the Passion. Observe the terror again: for, that the judgment is true, is clear from the raising Him up: for it is alleged

in proof of that. That all he has been saying is true, is clear from the fact that He rose again. For He did give this “assurance to all men,” His rising from the dead: this (i.e. judgment), also is henceforth certain.

These words were spoken indeed to the Athenians: but it were seasonable that one should say to us also, “that all men everywhere must repent, because he hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world.” See how he brings Him in as Judge also: Him, both provident for the world, and merciful and forgiving and powerful and wise, and, in a word possessing all the attributes of a Creator. “Having given assurance to all men,” i.e. He has given proof in the rising (of Jesus) from the dead. Let us repent then: for we must assuredly be judged. If Christ rose not, we shall not be judged: but if he rose, we shall without doubt be judged. “For to this end,” it is said, “did He also die, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.” (Romans 14:9.) “For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive according to that he hath done.” (Romans 14:10, and 2 Corinthians 5:10.) Do not imagine that these are but words. Lo! he introduced also the subject of the resurrection of all men; for in no other way can the world be judged. And that, “In that He hath raised Him from the dead,” relates to the body: for that was dead, that had fallen. Among the Greeks, as their notions of Creation, so likewise of the Judgment, are children’s fancies, ravings of drunken men. But let us, who know these things accurately, do something that is to the purpose: let us be made friends unto God. How long shall we be at enmity with Him? How long shall we entertain dislike towards Him? “God forbid!” you will say: “Why do you say such things?” I would wish not to say the things I say, if ye did not do the things ye do: but as things are, what is the use now in keeping silence from words, when the plain evidence of deeds so cries aloud? How then, how shall we love Him? I have told you thousands of ways, thousands of times: but I will speak it also now. One way I seem to myself to have discovered, a very great and admirable way. Namely, after acknowledging to Him our general obligations, — what none shall be able to express (I mean), what has been done for each of us in his own person, of these also let us bethink ourselves, because these are of great force: let each one of us reckon them up with himself, and make diligent search, and as it were in a book let him have the benefits of God written down; for instance, if at any time having

fallen into dangers he has escaped the hands of his enemies; if ever having gone out on a journey at an untimely hour, he has escaped danger; if ever, having had an encounter with wicked men, he has got the better of them; or if ever, having fallen into sickness, he has recovered when all had given him over: for this avails much for attaching us to God. For if that Mordecai, when the services done by him were brought to the king's remembrance, found them to be so available, that he in return rose to that height of splendor (Esther 6:2-11): much more we, if we call to mind, and make diligent enquiry of these two points, what sins we have committed against God, and what good He has done to us, shall thus both be thankful, and give Him freely all that is ours. But no one gives a thought to any of these things: but just as regarding our sins we say that we are sinners, while we do not enquire into them specifically, so with regard to God's benefits (we say), that God has done us good, and do not specifically enquire, where, and in how great number and at what time. But from this time forth let us be very exact in our reckoning. For if any one can recall even those things which happened long ago, let him reckon up all accurately, as one who will find a great treasure. This is also profitable to us in keeping us from despair. For when we see that he has often protected us, we shall not despair, nor suppose that we are cast off but we shall take it as a strong pledge of His care for us, when we bethink us how, though we have sinned, we are not punished, but even enjoy protection from Him. Let me now tell you a case, which I heard from a certain person, in which was a child, and it happened on a time that he was in the country with his mother, being not yet fifteen years old. Just then there came a bad air, in consequence of which a fever attacked them both, for in fact it was the autumn season. It happened that the mother succeeded in getting into the town before (they could stop her); but the boy, when the physicians on the spot ordered him, with the fever burning within him, to gargle his throat, resisted, having forsooth his own wise view of the matter, and thinking he should be better able to quench the fire, if he took nothing whatever, therefore, in his unseasonable spirit of opposition, boy-like, he would take nothing. But when he came into the town, his tongue was paralyzed, and he was for a long time speechless, so that he could pronounce nothing articulately; however, he could read indeed, and attended masters for a long time, but that was all, and there was nothing to mark his progress. So all his hopes (in life) were cut off, and his mother

was full of grief: and though the physicians suggested many plans, and many others did so too, yet nobody was able to do him any good, until the merciful God loosed the string of his tongue (cf. Mark 7:35), and then he recovered, and was restored to his former readiness and distinctness of speech. His mother also related, that when a very little child, he had an affection in the nose, which they call a polypus: and then too the physicians had given him over and his father cursed him (for the father was then living), and (even) his mother prayed for him to die; and all was full of distress. But he on a sudden having coughed, owing to the collection of mucus, by the force of the breath expelled the creature (τὸ θηρίον) from his nostrils, and all the danger was removed. But this evil having been extinguished, an acrid and viscid running from the eyes formed such a thick gathering of the humors (τὰς λήμας), that it was like a skin drawn over the pupil, and what was worse, it threatened blindness, and everybody said this would be the issue. But from this disease also was he quickly freed by the grace of God. So far what I have heard from others: now I will tell you what I myself know. Once on a time a suspicion of tyrants was raised in our city — at that time I was but a youth — and all the soldiers being set to watch without the city as it chanced, they were making strict inquisition after books of sorcery and magic. And the person who had written the book, had flung it unbound (ἄκατασκέυαστον) into the river, and was taken, and when asked for it, was not able to give it up, but was carried all around the city in bonds: when, however, the evidence being brought home to him, he had suffered punishment, just then it chanced that I, wishing to go to the Martyrs' Church, was returning through the gardens by the riverside in company with another person. He, seeing the book floating on the water at first thought it was a linen cloth, but when he got near, perceived it was a book, so he went down, and took it up. I however called shares in the booty, and laughed about it. But let us see, says he, what in the world it is. So he turns back a part of the page, and finds the contents to be magic. At that very moment it chanced that a soldier came by: then having taken from within, he went off. There were we congealed with fear. For who would have believed our story that we had picked it up from the river, when all were at that time, even the unsuspected, under strict watch? And we did not dare to cast it away, lest we should be seen, and there was a like danger to us in tearing it to pieces. God gave us means, and we cast it away, and at last we were free for that

time from the extreme peril. And I might mention numberless cases, if I had a mind to recount all. And even these I have mentioned for your sakes, so that, if any have other cases, although not such as these, let him bear them in mind constantly: for example, if at any time a stone having been hurled, and being about to strike thee, has not struck thee, do thou bear this ever in thy mind: these things produce in us great affection towards God. For if on remembering any men who have been the means of saving us, we are much mortified if we be not able to requite them, much more (should we feel thus) with regard to God. This too is useful in other respects. When we wish not to be overmuch grieved, let us say: "If we have received good things at the hand of the Lord, shall not we endure evil things?" (Job 2:10.) And when Paul told them from whence he had been delivered, (2 Timothy 4:17) the reason was that he might put them also in mind. See too how Jacob kept all these things in his mind: wherefore also he said: "The Angel which redeemed me from my youth up (Genesis 48:16); and not only that he redeemed him, but how and for what purpose. See accordingly how he also calls to mind the benefits he had received in particular. "With my staff," he says, "I passed over Jordan." (Genesis 32:10.) The Jews also always remembered the things which happened to their forefathers, turning over in their minds the things done in Egypt. Then much more let us, bearing in mind the special mercies which have happened to us also, how often we have fallen into dangers and calamities, and unless God had held his hand over us, should long ago have perished: I say, let us all, considering these things and recounting them day by day, return our united thanks all of us to God, and never cease to glorify Him, that so we may receive a large recompense for our thankfulness of heart, through the grace and compassion of His only begotten Son, with Whom to the Father, together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, might, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 39

ACTS 17:32-34. 18:1

“And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris, and others with them. After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth.”

WHAT can be the reason that, having persuaded (some so far as to say) that they would hear him again, and there being no dangers, Paul is so in haste to leave Athens? Probably he knew that he should do them no great good; moreover he was led by the Spirit to Corinth. (b) For the Athenians, although fond of hearing strange things, nevertheless did not attend (to him); for this was not their study, but only to be always having something to say; which was the cause that made them hold off from him. But if this was their custom, how is it that they accuse him, “he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods?” (ch. 17:18.) Yes, but these were matters they did not at all know what to make of. Howbeit, he did convert both Dionysius the Areopagite, and some others. For those who were careful Of (right) living, quickly received the word; but the others not so. It seemed to Paul sufficient to have cast the seeds of the doctrines. (a) To Corinth then, as I said, he was led by the Spirit, in which city he was to abide. (c) “And having found a certain Jew named Aquila, of Pontus by birth, lately come from “Italy” for the greater part of his life had been passed there — “ and Priscilla his wife, because that Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome.” (v. 2.) For though it was in the reign of Nero that the war against the Jews was consummated, yet from the time of Claudius and thenceforward it was fanning up, at a distance indeed, so that, were it but so, they might come to their senses, and from Rome they were now driven as common pests. This is why it is so ordered by Providence that Paul was led thither as a prisoner, that he might not as a Jew be driven away, but as acting under military custody might even be guarded there. (Having found these,) “he came to them, and because he was of the same craft, he abode with them and wrought: for by occupation they were tent-makers.” (v. 3.) Lo, what a justification he

found for dwelling in the same house with them! For because here, of all places, it was necessary that he should not receive, as he himself says, “That wherein they glory, they may be found, even as we” (2 Corinthians 11:12), it is providentially ordered that he there abides. “And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was straitened in the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ.” (v. 4, 5.) “And when the Jews opposed and blasphemed,” i.e. they tried to bear him down (ἐπιηρέαζον), they set upon him — What then does Paul? He separates from them, and in a very awful manner: and though he does not now say, “It was need that the word should be spoken unto you,” yet he darkly intimates it to them? — “and when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.” (v. 6.) “And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man’s house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.” See how having again said, “Henceforth —” for all that, he does not neglect them; so that it was to rouse them that he said this, and thereupon came to Justus, whose house was contiguous to the synagogue, so that a even from this they might have jealousy, from the very proximity. “And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house.” This also was, of all things, enough to bring them over. “And many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.” (v. 8-10.) See by how many reasons He persuades him, and how He puts last the reason which of all others most prevailed with him, “I have much people in this city.” Then how was it, you may ask, that they set upon him? And yet, the writer tells us, they prevailed nothing, but brought him to the proconsul. “And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. And when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews; made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment-seat.” (v. 11, 12.) Do you mark why those men were ever contriving to give a public turn to the misdemeanors (they accused them of)? Thus see here: (b) “Saying, This fellow seduceth men contrary to the law to worship God. And when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio

said: If indeed it were any wrong-doing or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you. But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters. And he drave them from the judgment-seat.” (v. 13-16.) This Gallio seems to me to have been a sensible man. (a) Thus observe, when these had said, “Against the law he seduceth men to worship God,” he “cared for none of these things:” and observe how he answers them: “If indeed it were” any matter affecting the city, “any wrong-doing or wicked lewdness,” etc. (c) “Then all the Jews? took Sosthenes the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-seat: and Gallio cared for none of these things” (v. 17): but their beating him he did not take as an insult to himself. So petulant were the Jews. But let us look over again what has been said.

(Recapitulation.) “And when they heard,” (ch. 17:32) what great and lofty doctrines, they did not even attend, but jeered at the Resurrection! “For the natural man,” it saith, “receiveth not the things of the Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 2:14.) “And so,” it says, “Paul went forth.” (v. 33.) How? Having persuaded some; derided by others. “But certain men,” it says, “clave unto him, and believed, among whom was also Dionysius the Areopagite and some others.” (v. 34.) “And after these things,” etc. “And having found a certain Jew by name Aquila, of Pontus by birth, lately come from Italy, because that Claudius had ordered all Jews to depart from Rome, he came to them, and because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tent-makers.” (ch. 18:1-3.) Being of Pontus, this Aquila. Observe how, not in Jerusalem, nor near it (the crisis), was hasting to come, but at a greater distance. And with him he abides, and is not ashamed to abide, nay, for this very reason he does abide, as having a suitable lodging-place, for to him it was much more suitable than any king’s palace. And smile not thou, beloved, to hear (of his occupation). For (it was good for him) even as to the athlete the palaestra is more useful than delicate carpets; so to the warrior the iron sword (is useful), not that of gold. “And wrought,” though he preached. Let us be ashamed, who though we have no preaching to occupy us, live in idleness. “And he disputed in the synagogue every sabbath day, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks” (v. 4): but “when they opposed and blasphemers” he withdrew, by this expecting to draw them

more. For wherefore having left that house did he come to live hard by the synagogue? was it not for this? For it was not that he saw any danger here. But therefore it is that Paul having testified to them — not teaches now, but testifies — “having shaken his garments,” to terrify them not by word only but by action, “said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads” (v. 6): he speaks the more vehemently as having already persuaded many. “I,” says he, “am clean.” Then we also are accountable for the blood of those entrusted to us, if we neglect them. “From this time forth I will go to the Gentiles.” So that also when he says, “Henceforth let no man trouble me” (Galatians 6:17), he says it to terrify. For not so much did the punishment terrify, as this stung them. “And having removed thence he came into the house of one named Justus, that worshipped God, whose house was contiguous to the synagogue” (v. 7), and there abode, by this wishing to persuade them that he was in earnest (πρὸς τὰ ἔθνη ἠπείγεται) to go to the Gentiles. Accordingly, mark immediately the ruler of the synagogue converted, and many others, when he had done this. “Crispus the ruler of the synagogue believed in the Lord, with his whole house: and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.” — (v. 8.) “With his whole house:” observe the converts in those times doing this with their entire household. This Crispus he means where he writes, “I baptized none save Crispus and Gaius.” (1 Corinthians 1:14.) This (same) I take to be called Sosthenes — (evidently) a believer, insomuch that he is beaten, and is always present with Paul. “And the Lord said in the night,” etc. Now even the number (of the “much people”) persuaded him, but Christ’s claiming them for His own (moved him) more. Yet He says also, “Fear not:” for the danger was become greater now, both because more believed, and also the ruler of the synagogue. This was enough to rouse him. Not that he was reproved as fearing; but that he should not suffer aught; “I am with thee, and none shall set upon thee to hurt thee.” (v. 9, 10.) For He did not always permit them to suffer evil, that they might’ not become too weak. For nothing so grieved Paul, as men’s unbelief and setting themselves (against the Truth) this was worse than the dangers. Therefore it is that (Christ) appears to him now. “And he continued a year and six months,” etc. (v. 11.) After the year and six months, they set upon him. “And when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia,” etc. (v. 12, 13), because they had no longer the use of their own laws. (c) And observe how prudent he is: for he does not say straightway, I care

not, but, “If,” says he, “it were a matter of wrong-doing or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you but if it be a question of doctrine and words and of your law, see ye to it, for I do not choose to be a judge of such matters.” (v. 14, 15.) (g) He taught them that not such are the matters which crave a judicial sentence, but they do all things out of order. And he does not say, It is not my duty, but, “I do not choose,” that they may not trouble him again. Thus Pilate said in the case of Christ, “Take ye Him, and judge him according to your law.” (John 18:31.) But they were just like men drunken and mad. (d) “And he drave them from the judgment-seat” (v. 16) — he effectually closed the tribunal against them. “Then all” (the Jews) “having seized Sosthenes the ruler of the synagogue, beat him before the judgment-seat. And Gallio cared for none of these things.” (v. 17). (a) This thing, of all others, set them on (to this violence) — their persuasion that the governor would not even let himself down (to notice it). (e) It was a splendid victory. O the shame they were put to! (b) For it is one thing to have come off victorious from a controversy, and another for those to learn that he cared nothing for the affair. (f) “And Gallio cared for none of these things:” and yet the whole was meant as an insult to him! But, forsooth, as if they had received authority (they did this). Why did he (Sosthenes), though he also had authority, not beat (them)? But they were (otherwise) trained: so that the judge should learn which party was more reasonable. This was no small benefit to those present — both the reasonableness of these, and the audacity of those. (h) He was beaten, and said nothing.

This man let us also imitate: to them that beat us, let us return blow for blow, by meekness, by silence, by long-suffering. More grievous these wounds, greater this blow, and more heavy. For to show that it is not the receiving a blow in the body that is grievous, but the receiving it in the mind, we often smite people, but since it is in the way of friendship, they are even pleased: but if you smite any indifferent person in an insolent manner, you have pained him exceedingly, because you have touched his heart. So let us smite their heart. But that meekness inflicts a greater blow than fierceness, come, let us prove, so far as that is possible, by words. For the sure proof indeed is by acts and by experience: but if you will, let us also make the enquiry by word, though indeed we have often made it already. Now in insults, nothing pains us so much, as the opinion passed

by the spectators; for it is not the same thing to be insulted in public and in private, but those same insults we endure even with ease, when we suffer them in a solitary place, and with none by to witness them, or know of them. So true is it that it is not the insult, as it is in itself, that mortifies us, but the having to suffer it in the sight of all men: since if one should do us honor in the sight of all men, and insult us in private, we shall notwithstanding even feel obliged to him. The pain then is not in the nature of the insult, but in the opinion of the beholders; that one may not seem to be contemptible. What then, if this opinion should be in our favor? Is not the man attempting to disgrace us himself more disgraced, when men give their opinion in our favor? Say, whom do the bystanders despise? Him who insults, or him who being insulted keeps silence? Passion indeed suggests, that they despise him who is insulted: but let us look into it now while we are free from that excitement, in order that we may not be carried away when the time comes. Say, whom do we all condemn? Plainly the man who insults: and if he be an inferior, we shall say that he is even mad; if an equal, that he is foolish; if a superior, still we shall not approve of it. For which man, I ask, is worthy of approval, the man who is excited, who is tossed with a tempest of passion, who is infuriated like a wild beast, who demeans himself in this sort against our common nature, or he who lives in a state of calm, in a haven of repose, and in virtuous equanimity? Is not the one like an angel, the other not even like a man? For the one cannot even bear his own evils, while the other bears even those of others also: here, the man cannot even endure himself; there, he endures another too: the one is in danger of shipwreck, the other sails in safety, his ship wafted along the favoring gales: for he has not suffered the squall of passion to catch his sails and overturn the bark of his understanding: but the breath of a soft and sweet air fanning upon it, the breath of forbearance, wafts it with much tranquillity into the haven of wise equanimity. And like as when a ship is in danger of foundering, the sailors know not what they cast away, whether what they lay hands upon be their own or other men's property, but they throw overboard all the contents without discrimination, alike the precious and what is not such: but when the storm has ceased, then reckoning up all that they have thrown out, they shed tears, and are not sensible of the calm for the loss of what they have thrown overboard: so here, when passion blows hard, and the storm is raised, people in flinging out their words know not how to use

order or fitness; but when the passion has ceased, then recalling to mind what kind of words they have given utterance to, they consider the loss and feel not the quiet, when they remember the words by which they have disgraced themselves, and sustained most grievous loss, not as to money, but as to character for moderation and gentleness. Anger is a darkness. "The foot," saith Scripture, "hath said in his heart, There is no God." (Psalm 13:1.) Perhaps also of the angry man it is suitable to say the same, that the angry man hath said, There is no God. For, saith Scripture, "Through the multitude of his anger he will not seek" (after God). (Psalm 10:4.) For let what pious thought will enter in, (passion) thrusts and drives all out, flings all athwart. (b) When you are told, that he whom you abused uttered not one bitter word, do you not for this feel more pain than you have inflicted? (a) If you in your own mind do not feel more pain than he whom you have abused, abuse still; (but) though there be none to call you to account, the judgment of your conscience, having taken you privately, shall give you a thousand lashes, (when you think) how you poured out a flood of railings on one so meek, and humble, and forbearing. We are forever saying these things, but we do not see them exhibited in works. You, a human being, insult your fellow-man? You, a servant, your fellow-servant? But why do I wonder at this, when many even insult God? Let this be a consolation to you when suffering insult. Are you insulted? God also is insulted. Are you reviled? God also was reviled. Are you treated with scorn? Why, so was our Master also. In these things He shares with us, but not so in the contrary things. For He never insulted another unjustly: God forbid! He never reviled, never did a wrong. So that we are those who share with Him, not ye. For to endure when insulted is God's part: to be merely abusive, is the part of the devil. 'See the two sides. "Thou hast a devil" (John 7:20; ib. 18:22), Christ was told: He received a blow on the face from the servant of the high-priest. They who wrongfully insult, are in the same class with these. For if Peter was even called "Satan" (Matthew 16:23) for one word; much more shall these men, when they do the works of the Jews, be called, as those were called, "children of the devil" (John 8:44), because they wrought the works of the devil. You insult; who are you, I ask (that you do so)? Nay, rather the reason why you insult, is this, that you are nothing: no one that is human insults. So that what is said in quarrels, "Who are you?" ought to be put in the contrary way: "Insult: for you are nothing." Instead of that the phrase

is, "Who are you, that you insult?" "A better man than you," is the answer. And yet it is just the contrary: but because we put the question amiss, therefore they answer amiss: so that the fault is ours. For as if we thought it was for great men to insult, therefore we ask, "Who are you, that you insult?" And therefore they make this answer. But, on the contrary, we ought to say: "Do you insult? insult still: for you are nobody:" whereas to those who do not insult this should be said: "Who are you that you insult not? — you have surpassed human nature." This is nobility, this is generosity, to speak nothing ungenerous, though a man may deserve to have it spoken to him. Tell me now, how many are there who are not worthy to be put to death? Nevertheless, the judge does not this in his own person, but interrogates them; and not this either, in his own person. But if it is not to be suffered, that the judge, sitting in judgment, should (in his own person) speak with a criminal, but he does all by the intervention of a third person, much more is it our duty not to insult our equals in rank; for all the advantage we shall get of them will be, not so much to have disgraced them, as to be made to learn that we have disgraced ourselves. Well then, in the case of the wicked, this is why we must not insult (even them); in the case of the good there is another reason also because they do not deserve it: and for a third, because it is not right to be abusive. But as things are, see what comes of it; the person abused is a man, and the person abusing is a man, and the spectators men. What then? must the beasts come between them and settle matters? for only this is left. For when both the wrong-doers and those who delight in the wrong-doing are men, the part of reconciler is left for the beasts: for just as when the masters quarrel in a house, there is nothing left but for the servants to reconcile them, — even if this be not the result, for the nature of the thing demands this, — just so is it here. — Are you abusive? Well may you be so, for you are not even human. Insolence seemed to be a high-born thing; it seemed to belong to the great; whereas it belongs rather to slaves; but to give good words belongs to free men. For as to do ill is the part of those, so to suffer ill is the part of these. — Just as if some slave should steal the master's property, some old hag, — such a thing as that is the abusive man. And like as some detestable thief and runaway, with studied purpose stealing in, looks all around him, wishing to filch something: so does this man, even as he, look narrowly at all on every side, studying how to throw out some (reproach). Or perhaps we may set

him forth by a different sort of example. Just as if one should steal filthy vessels out of a house, and bring them out in the presence of all men, the things purloined do not so disgrace the persons robbed, as they disgrace the thief himself: just so this man, by bringing out his words in the presence of all men, casts disgrace not on others but on himself by the words, in giving vent to this language, and be-fouling both his tongue and his mind. For it is all one, when we quarrel with bad men, as if one for the sake of striking a man who is immersed in putrefying filth should defile himself by plunging his hands into the nastiness. Therefore, reflecting on these things, let us flee the mischief thence accruing, and keep a clean tongue, that being clear from all abusiveness, we may be enabled with strictness to pass through the life present, and to attain unto the good things promised to those that love Him, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory, might, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 40

ACTS 18:18

“And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.”

SEE how the Law was breaking up; see how they were bound by conscience. This, namely, was a Jewish custom, to shear their heads agreeably with a vow. But then there ought to be also a sacrifice (ch. 21:26), which was not the case here. — “Having yet tarried:” after the beating of Sosthenes. For it was necessary that he should yet tarry, and comfort them concerning these things. “He sailed for Syria.” Why does he desire again to come to Syria? It was there that “the disciples were ordered to be called Christians” (ch. 11:26): there, that he had been “commended to the grace of God” (14:26): there, that he had effected such things concerning the doctrine. “And with him Priscilla” — lo, a woman also — “and Aquila.” But these he left at Ephesus. With good reason, namely, that they should teach. For having been with him so long time, they were learning many things: and yet he did not at present withdraw them from their custom as Jews. “And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not; but bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem.” Therefore it was that he was hindered from coming into Asia, being impelled to what was of pressing moment. Thus observe him here, entreated (by them) to stay, but because he could not comply, being in haste to depart, “he bade them farewell.” However, he did not leave them without more ado, but with promise (to return): “But I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.” (v. 19-21.) “And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the Church, he went down to Antioch. And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.” (v. 22-23.) He came again to those places which he had previously visited. “And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the

Scriptures, came to Ephesus.” (v. 24.) Lo, even learned men are now urgent, and the disciples henceforth go abroad. Do you mark the spread of the preaching? “This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the Spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.” (v. 25-26.) If this man knew only the baptism of John, how is it that he was “fervent in the Spirit,” for the Spirit was not given in that way? And if those after him needed the baptism of Christ, much more would he need it. Then what is to be said? For it is not without a meaning that the writer has strung the two incidents together. It seems to me that this was one of the hundred and twenty who were baptized with the Apostles: or, if not so, then the same that took place in the case of Cornelius, took place also in the case of this man. But neither does he receive baptism. That expression, then, “they expounded more perfectly,” seems to me to be this, that he behooved also to be baptized. Because the other twelve knew nothing accurate, not even what related to Jesus. And it is likely that he did in fact receive baptism. But if these (disciples) of John, after that baptism again received baptism, was this needful for the disciples also? And wherefore the need of water? These are very different from him, men who did not even know whether there were a Holy Ghost. “He was fervent,” then, “in the Spirit, knowing only the baptism of John:” but these “expounded to him more perfectly. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace.” (v. 27.) He wished then also to depart into Achaia, and these also encouraged (him to do so), having also given him letters. “Who when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: for he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ.” (v. 28.) “And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper coasts” — meaning what we have read as to Caesarea and the other places — came to Ephesus, and having found certain disciples (ch. 19:1), “he said to them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism.

Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him who should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” (v. 2-4.) For that they did not even believe in Christ is plain from his saying, “that they should believe on Him that was to come after him.” And he did not say, The baptism of John is nothing, but, It is incomplete. Nor does he add this (in so many words), but he taught them, and many received the Holy Ghost. “When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve” (v. 5-7): so that it was likely they had the Spirit, but it did not appear “And all the men were about twelve.” (Recapitulation.) “And they came to Ephesus, and there he left them” (v. 19): for he did not wish to take them about with him, but left them at Ephesus. But they subsequently dwelt at Corinth, and he bears high testimony to them, and writing to the Romans, salutes them. (Romans 16:3.) Whence it seems to me that they afterwards went back to Rome, in the time of Nero, as having an attachment for those parts whence they had been expelled in the time of Claudius. “But he himself went into the synagogue.” It seems to me that the faithful still assembled there, for they did not immediately withdraw them. “And when they besought him to stay, he consented not” (v. 20, 21), for he was hastening to Caesarea. “And having arrived at Caesarea,” etc., “passing through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, confirming all the disciples.” (v. 22, 23.) Through these regions also he merely passes again, just enough to establish them by his presence. “And a certain Jew, Apollos by name,” etc. (v. 24.) For he was an awakened man, traveling in foreign parts for this very purpose. Writing of him the Apostle said, “Now concerning Apollos our brother.” (1 Corinthians 16:12.) (β) Whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard,” etc. (v. 26.) It was not for nothing that he left them at Ephesus, but for Apollos’ sake, the Spirit so ordered it, that he might come with greater force to the attack (επιβήναι) upon Corinth. What may be the reason that to him they did nothing, but Paul they assault? They knew that he was the leader, and great was the name of the man. “And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia” (v. 27) i.e. in faith, he did all by faith; “the brethren wrote,” etc. nowhere envy, nowhere an evil eye. Aquila teaches, or rather this man lets himself be taught. He was minded to depart, and they send letters. (a) “For he mightily

convinced the Jews, and that publicly,” etc. (v. 28.) Now by this, that he “publicly” convinced them, his boldness was shown: by the clearness of his arguing, his power was declared: by his convicting them out of the Scriptures, his skill (of learning). For neither boldness by itself contributes aught, where there is not power, nor power where there is not boldness. “He mightily convinced,” it says. “And it came to pass,” etc. (ch. 19:1.) But whence had those, being in Ephesus, the baptism of John? Probably they had been on a visit at Jerusalem at the time (of John’s preaching), and did not even know Jesus. And he does not say to them, Do ye believe in Jesus? but what? “Have ye received the Holy Ghost?” (v. 2.) He knew that they had not, but wishes themselves to say it, that having learnt what they lack, they may ask. “John verily baptized,” etc. (v. 4.) From the baptism itself he (John) prophesies: and he leads them (to see) that this is the meaning of John’s baptism. (a) “That they should believe on Him that was to come:” on what kind (of Person)? “I indeed baptize you with water, but He that cometh after me, shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost? (Matthew 3:11.) And when Paul,” it says, “had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.” (v. 6.) The gift is twofold: tongues and prophesyings. Hence is shown an important doctrine, that the baptism of John is incomplete. And he does not say, “Baptism” of forgiveness, but, “of repentance.” What (is it) then? These had not the Spirit: they were not so fervent, not even instructed. And why did (Apollos) not receive baptism? (The case) seems to me to be this: Great was the boldness of the man. “He taught diligently the things concerning Jesus,” but he needed more diligent teaching. Thus, though not knowing all, by his zeal he attracted the Holy Ghost, in the same manner as Cornelius and his company.

Perhaps it is the wish of many, Oh that we had the baptism of John now! But (if we had), many would still be careless of a life of virtue, and it might be thought that each for this, and not for the kingdom of heaven’s sake, aimed at virtue. There would be many false prophets: for then “they which are approved” would not be very “manifest.” (1 Corinthians 11:19.) As, “blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20, 29), so they that (believe) without signs. “Except,” saith (Christ), “ye see signs, ye will not believe.” (Ib. 4:48.) For we lose nothing (by lack of miracles), if we will but take heed to ourselves. We have the sum and

substance of the good things: through baptism we received remission of sins, sanctification, participation of the Spirit, adoption, eternal life. What would ye more? Signs? But they come to an end (ἀλλὰ καταργεῖται). Thou hast “faith, hope, charity,” the abiding things: these seek thou, these are greater than signs. Nothing is equal to charity. For “greater than all,” saith he, “is charity.” (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:5.) But now, love is in jeopardy, for only its name is left behind, while the reality is nowhere (seen), but we are divided each from the other. What then shall one do to reunite (ourselves)? For to find fault is easy, but how may one make friendship, this is the point to be studied; how we may bring together the scattered members. For be it so, that we have one Church, or one doctrine — yet this is not the (main) consideration: no, the evil is, that in these we have not fellowship — “living peaceably,” as the Apostle says, “with all men” (Romans 12:18), on the contrary, we are at variance one with another. For be it that we are not having fights every day, yet look not thou to this, but (to this), that neither have we charity, genuine and unswerving. There is need of bandages and oil. Let us bear it in mind, that charity is the cognizance of the disciples of Christ: that without this, all else avails nothing: that it is an easy task if we will. Yes, say you, we know all this, but how (to go to work) that it may be achieved? What (to do), that it may be effected? in what way, that we may love one another? First, let us put away the things which are subversive of charity, and then we shall establish this. Let none be resentful, none be envious, none rejoicing in (others’) misfortunes: these are the things that hinder love; well then, the things that make it are of the other sort. For it is not enough to put away the things that hinder; the things that establish must also be forthcoming. Now Sirach tells us the things that are subversive (of friendship), and does not go on to speak of the things which make union. “Reproaching,” he says, “and revealing of a secret, and a treacherous wound.” (Ecclus. 22, 27.) But in speaking of the men of those times, these things might well be named, seeing they were carnal: but in our case, God forbid they should be (even) named. Not from these things do we bring our inducements for you, but from the others. For us, there is nothing good without friendship. Let there be good things without number, but what is the benefit — be it wealth, be it luxury — without friendship? No possession equal to this, even in, matters of this life, just as there is nothing worse than men hating (us). “Charity hides a multitude of sins” (1

Peter 4:8): but enmity, even where sins are not, suspects them to be. It is not enough not to be an enemy; no, one must also love. Bethink thee, that Christ has bidden, and this is enough. Even affliction makes friendships, and draws (men) together. “What then,” say you, “now, when there is no affliction? say, how (are we to act) to become friends?” Have ye not other friends, I ask? In what way are ye their friends, how do ye continue such? For a beginning, let none have any enemy: this (in itself) is not a small matter: let none envy; it is not possible to accuse the man who envies not. (b) How then shall we be warmly affected? What makes love of persons? Beauty of person. Then let us also make our souls beautiful, and we shall be amiable one to another: for it is necessary, of course, not only to love, but also to be loved. Let us first achieve this point, that we may be loved, and the other will be easy. How to act that we may be loved? Let us become beautiful, and let us do this, that we may always have lovers. Let none make it his study to get money, to get slaves, to get houses, (so much) as to be loved, as to have a good name. Better is a name than much wealth. For the one remains, the other perishes: and the one it is possible to acquire, the other impossible. For he that has got an evil character, will with difficulty lay it aside: but by means of his (good) name the poor man may quickly be rich. Let there be a man having ten thousand talents, and another a hundred friends; the latter is more rich in resources than the former. Then let us not merely do this, but let us work it as a kind of trade. “And how can we?” say you. “A sweet mouth multiplieth its friends, and a gracious tongue.” Let us get a well-spoken mouth, and pure manners. It is not possible for a man to be such, and not to be known.

(a) We have one world that we all inhabit, with the same fruits we all are fed. But these are small matters: by the same Sacraments we partake of the same spiritual food. These surely are justifications of loving! (c) Mark how many (inducements and pleas) for friendship they that are without have excogitated; community of art or trade, neighborhood, relationships: but mightier than all these are the impulses and ties which are among us: this Table is calculated more (than all else) to shame us into friendliness. But many of us who come thereto do not even know one another. The reason, it may be said, is that there are so many of them. By no means; it is only our own sluggish indifference. (Once) there were three thousand (ch. 2:41) — there were five thousand (iv. 4) — and yet they had all one

soul: but now each knows not his brother, and is not ashamed to lay the blame on the number, because it is so great! Yet he that has many friends is invincible against all men: stronger he than any tyrant. Not such the safety the tyrant has with his body-guards, as this man has with his friends. Moreover this man is more glorious than he: for the tyrant is guarded by his own slaves, but this man by his peers: the tyrant, by men unwilling and afraid of him, this man by willing men and without fear. And here too is a wonderful thing to be seen — many in one, and one in many. (a) Just as in an harp, the sounds are diverse, not the harmony, and they all together give out one harmony and symphony, (c) I could wish to bring, you into such a city, were it possible, wherein (all) should be one soul: then shouldest thou see surpassing all harmony of harp and flute, the more harmonious symphony. (b) But the musician is the Might of Love: it is this that strikes out the sweet melody, (d) singing (withal) a strain in which no note is out of tune. This strain rejoices both Angels, and God the Lord of Angels; this strain rouses (to hear it) the whole audience that is in heaven; this even lulls (evil) passions — it does not even suffer them to be raised, but deep is the stillness. For as in a theater, when the band of musicians plays, all listen with a hush, and there is no noise there; so among friends, while Love strikes the chords, all the passions are still and laid to sleep, like wild beasts charmed and unnerved: just as, where hate is, there is all the contrary to this. But let us say nothing just now about enmity; let us speak of friendship. Though thou let fall some casual hasty word, there is none to catch thee up, but all forgive thee; though thou do (some hasty thing), none puts upon it the worse construction, but all allowance is made: every one prompt to stretch out the hand to him that is failing, every one wishing him to stand. A wall it is indeed impregnable, this friendship; a wall, which not the devil himself, much less men, can overpower. It is not possible for that man to fall into danger who has gotten many friends. (Where love is) no room is there to get matter of anger, but only for pleasantness of feeling: no room is there to get matter of envying; none, to get occasion of resentment. Mark him, how in all things both spiritual and temporal, he accomplishes all with ease. What then, I pray you, can be equal to this man? Like a city walled on every side is this man, the other as a city unwalled. — Great wisdom, to be able to be a creator of friendship! Take away friend: ship, and thou hast taken away all, thou hast confounded all. But if the likeness of friendship have

so great power, what must the reality itself be? Then let us, I beseech you, make to ourselves friends, and let each make this his art. But, lo! you will say, I do study this, but the other does not. All the greater the reward to thee. True, say you, but the matter is more difficult. How, I ask? Lo! I testify and declare to you, that if but ten of you would knit yourselves together, and make this your work, as the Apostles made the preaching theirs, and the Prophets theirs the teaching, so we the making of friends, great would be the reward. Let us make for ourselves royal portraits. For if this be the common badge of disciples, we do a greater work than if we should put ourselves into the power to raise the dead. The diadem and the purple mark the Emperor, and where these are not, though his apparel be all gold, the Emperor is not yet manifest. So now thou art making known thy lineage. Make men friends to thyself, and (friends) to others. There is none who being loved will wish to hate thee. Let us learn the colors, with what ingredients they are mixed, with what (tints) this portrait is composed. Let us be affable: let us not wait for our neighbors to move. Say not, if I see any person hanging back (for me to make the first advances), become worse than he: but rather when thou seest this, forestall him, and extinguish his bad feeling. Seest thou one diseased, and addest to his malady? This, most of all, let us make sure of — “in honor to prefer one another, to account others better than one’s self” (Romans 12:10), deem not this to be a lessening of thyself. If thou prefer (another) in honor, thou hast honored thyself more, attracting to thyself a still higher extinction. On all occasions let us yield the precedence to others. Let us bear nothing in mind of the evil done to us, but if any good has been done (let us remember only that). Nothing so makes a man a friend, as a gracious tongue, a mouth speaking good things, a soul free from self-elation, a contempt of vainglory, a despising of honor. If we secure these things, we shall be able to become invincible to the snares of the Devil, and having with strictness accomplished the pursuit of virtue, to attain unto the good things promised to them that love Him, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory, dominion, honor, now and ever, world without end Amen

HOMILY 41

ACTS 19:8, 9

“And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separate the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.”

(a) SEE him in every place forcing his way into the synagogue, and in this manner departing thence. For in every place, he wished to have the occasion given him by them. (c) He wished to separate the disciples thence, and to have the beginning for ceasing to assemble with them, given by (the Jews) themselves. And it was not for nothing that he did this (b)which have said. He was henceforth “provoking them to jealousy.” For both the Gentiles readily received him, and the Jews, upon the Gentiles receiving him, repented. (a) This is why he continually made a stir among them, “for three months arguing and persuading concerning the kingdom of God:” for you must not suppose because you hear of his “speaking boldly,” that there was any harshness: it was of good things that he discoursed, of a kingdom: who would not have heard him? “But when divers were hardened, speaking evil of the way.” They might well call it “the way;” this was indeed the way, that led into the kingdom of heaven. “He departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. And this was done for the space of two years, so that all that were in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.” (v. 10.) (a) Do you mark how much was effected by his persisting? “Both Jews and Greeks heard: (c) all that dwelt in Asia:” it was for this also that the Lord suffered him not to go into Asia (oh. 16:6) (on a former occasion); waiting, as it seems to me, for this same conjuncture. (Hom. 40:p. 245.) (b) “And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits. went out of them.” (v. 11, 12.) Not touched the wearer only (and so were healed), but also receiving them, they laid them upon the sick (and so healed them). (g)” He that believed on Me,” saith Christ, “doeth greater

works than those which do.” (John 14:12.) This, and the miracle of the shadows is what He meant (in those words). (d) “Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.” (v. 13.) So entirely did they do all by way of trade! Observe: vagabond, or, itinerant, Jewish exorcists. And to believe indeed, they had no mind; but by that Name they wished to cast out the demons. “By Jesus, whom Paul preacheth.” Only see what a name Paul had got! “And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus know, and Paul know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.” (v. 14-16.) They did it in secret: then their impotence is publicly exposed. (f) Then not the Name does anything, unless it be spoken with faith. (h) See how they used their weapons against themselves! (j) So far were they from thinking Jesus to be anything great: no, they must needs add Paul, as thinking him to be something great. Here one may marvel how it was that the demon did not cooperate with the imposture of the exorcists, but on the contrary exposed them, and laid open their stage-play. He seems to me (to have done this) in exceeding wrath: just as it might be, if a person being in uttermost peril, should be exposed by some pitiful creature, and wish to vent all his rage upon him. “Jesus know, and Paul know.” For, that there may not seem to be any slight put upon the Name of Jesus, (the demon) first confesses (Him), and then has permission given him. For, to show that it was not any weakness of the Name, but all owing to the imposture of those men, why did not the same take place in the case of Paul? “They fled out of that house naked and wounded.” he sorely battered their heads, perhaps rent their garments. (e) “And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, that dwelt at Ephesus, and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many of them that had believed came confessing and making known their practices.” (v. 17, 18.) For since they had got to possess such power as, by means of the demons, to do such things, well might this be the consequence, “And many of them that practiced curious arts, brought their books together, and burnt them in the presence of all men; — having seen that there was no more use of them now that the demons themselves do these things — “ and reckoned up the price of

them, and found the amount fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.” (v. 19, 20.) (i) “And” (so) “he disputed,” in the school of one Tyrannus for two years:” where were believers, and believers exceedingly (advanced in the faith). Moreover (Paul) writes (to them) as to great men.

(Recapitulation.) (b) “And having entered in to the synagogue,” etc. (v. 8.) But why ἐπαρρησιάζετο? It means, he was ready to confront dangers, and disputed more openly, not veiling the doctrines. (a) “But when some were hardened, and spake evil of the way, having departed from them, he separated the disciples.” (v. 9.) He put a stop, it means, to their evil-speaking: he did not wish to kindle their envy, nor to bring them rate more contention. (c) Hence let us also learn not to put ourselves in the way of evil-speaking men, but to depart from them: he did not speak evil, when himself evil spoken of. “He disputed daily,” and by this gained the many, that, being evil intreated and (evil) spoken of, he did not (utterly) break away from them, and keep aloof. (e) The evil-speakers are defeated. They calumniated the doctrine itself; (therefore) so as neither to rouse the disciples to wrath, nor them he withdrew, showing that everywhere alike they repel salvation from them. Here now he does not even apologize, seeing that the Gentiles everywhere have believed. “n the school of one Tyrannus:” it was not that he sought the place, but without more ado where there was a school (there he discoursed). (d) And look, no sooner is the trial from those without over, than this from the demons begins. Mark the infatuated Jewish hardness. Having seen his garments working miracles, they paid no heed to it. What could be greater than this? But, on the contrary, it resulted in just the opposite effect. f any of the heathens believe not, having seen the (verb,) dust working these effects, let him believe. (f) Wonderful, how great the power of them that have believed! Both Simon for the sake of merchandise sought the grace of the Spirit, and these for this object did this. What hardness (of heart)! Why does not Paul rebuke them? would have looked like envy, therefore it is so ordered. This same took place in the case of Christ (Mark 9:36): but then the person is not hindered, for it was the beginning of the new state of things: since Judas also is not hindered, whereas Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead: and many Jews even for opposing (Christ) suffered nothing, while Elymas was blinded. “For am not come,” saith Christ, “to judge the world,

but that the world might be saved.” (John 3:17.) “And seven sons,” etc. (v. 14.) See the villany of the men! They still continued to be Jews, while wishing to make a gain of that Name. All that they did was for glory and profit. (g) Look, in every case, how men are converted not so much in consequence of good things as of things fearful. In the case of Sapphira, fear fell upon the Church, and men dared not join themselves to them: here they received handkerchiefs and aprons, and were healed: and after this, then they came confessing their sins. (Hereby) the power of the demons is shown to be a great one, when it is against unbelievers. For why did he not say, “Who is Jesus?” He was afraid, lest he also should suffer punishment; but, that it might be permitted him to take revenge upon those who mocked him, he did this; “Jesus,” says he, “know,” etc. He was in dread of Paul. For why did not those wretched men say to him, We believe? How much more splendid an appearance they would have made had they said this, that is, if they had claimed Him as their Master? But instead of that, they spoke even those senseless words, “By Jesus, whom Paul preacheth.” Do you mark the forbearance (of the writer), how he writes history and does not call names? This makes the Apostles admirable. “And the evil spirit,” etc. (v. 15), for what had happened at Philippi (ch. 16:16) had given a lesson to these also. He mentions the name, and the number, thereby giving to the persons then living a credible proof of what he wrote. And why were they itinerant? For the sake of merchandise: not assuredly to bear tidings of the word; how should that be their object? And how ran they anon, preaching by the things they suffered? “Insomuch,” it says, “that all that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord.” Ought not this to have converted all? And marvel not, for nothing convinces malice. But come now, let us look at the affair of the exorcists, with what an evil disposition (they acted). Why the same was not done in the case of Christ, is an inquiry for another time, and not for the present, save that this also was well and usefully ordered. It seems to me that they did this also in mockery, and that in consequence of this (punishment), none dared even at random to name that Name. Why did this put them upon confession? Because this was a most mighty argument of God’s omniscience (therefore), before they should be exposed by the demons, they accused themselves, fearing lest they should suffer the same things. For when the demons their helpers are their accusers, what hope is there thenceforth, save the confession by deeds?

But see, I pray you, after such signs had been wrought, what evils within a short space ensue. Such is human nature: it soon forgets. Or, do ye not remember what has been the case among ourselves? Did not God last year shake our whole city? Did not all run to baptism? Did not whoremongers and effeminate and corrupt persons leave their dwellings, and the places where they spent their time, and change and become religious? But three days passed, and they returned again to their own proper wickedness. And whence is this? From the excessive laziness. And what marvel if, when the things have passed away (this be the case), seeing that, the images lasting perpetually, the result is such? The fate of Sodom — say, does it not still last (in its effects)?” Well, did the dwellers beside it become any the better? And what say you to the son of Noah? Was he not such (as he is represented), did he not see with his eyes so vast a desolation, and yet was wicked? Then let us not marvel how, when such things had been done, these Jews (at Ephesus) believe not, when we see that belief itself often comes round for them into its opposite, into malignity; as, for instance, when they say that He hath a devil, He, the Son of God! Do you not see these things even now, and how men are many of them like serpents, both faithless and thankless, men who, viper-like, when they have enjoyed benefits and have been warmed by some, then they sting their benefactors? This we have said, lest any should marvel, how, such signs having been wrought, they were not all converted, For behold, in our own times happened those (miracles) relating to the martyr Babylas, those relating to Jerusalem, those relating to the destruction of the temples, and not all were converted. Why need I speak of ancient things? I have told you what happened last year; and none gave heed to it, but again little by little they fell off and sunk back. The heaven stands perpetually crying aloud that it has a Master, and that it is the work of an Artificer, all this that we see — I mean the world — and yet some say that it is not so. What happened to that Theodorus last year — whom did it not startle? And yet nothing came of it, but having for a season become religious, they returned to the point from which they had started in their attempt to be religious. So it was with the Jews. This is what the Prophet said of them: “When He slew them, then they sought Him, and turned early unto God,” (Psalm 78:34.) And what need to speak of those things that are common to all? How many have fallen into diseases, how many have promised, if raised up, to work so great a change, and yet they have

again become the same as ever! This, if nothing else, shows that we have natural free-will — our changing all at once. Were evil natural, this would not be: things that are natural and necessary, we cannot change from. “And yet,” you will say, “we do change from them. For do we not see some, who have the natural faculty to see, but are blinded by fear?” (True — because this also is natural: [] if a different (necessity of) nature come not also into operation: (thus) it is natural to us, that being terrified we do not see; it is natural to us that when a greater fear supervenes, the other gives way. “What then,” you will say, “if right-mindedness be indeed according to nature, but fear having overpowered it cast it out?” What then if I shall show that some even then are not brought to a right mind, but even in these fears are reckless? Is this natural? Shall I speak of ancient things? Well then, of recent? How many in the midst of those fears continued laughing, mocking, and experienced nothing of the sort? Did not Pharaoh change immediately, and (as quickly) run back to his former wickedness? But here, as if (the demons) knew Him not, they (the exorcists) added, “Whom Paul preacheth,” whereas they ought to have said, “the Savior of the world.” “Him that rose again.” By this they show that they do know, but they did not choose to confess His glory. Wherefore the demon exposes them, leaping upon them, and saying, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?” So that not ye are believers, but ye abuse that Name when ye say this. Therefore the Temple is desolate, the implement easy to be overcome. So that ye are not preachers; mine, says he, ye are. Great was the wrath of the demon. The Apostles had power to do this to them, but they did it not as yet. For they that had power over the demons that did these things to them, much more had power over the men themselves. Mark how their forbearance is shown, in that they whom they repulsed do these things, while the demons whom they courted do the contrary. “Jesus,” says he, “I know.” Be ashamed, ye that are ignorant (of Him). “And Paul I know.” Well said, “Think not that it is because I despise them, that I do these things.” Great was the fear of the demon. And why without these words did he not rend their garments? For so he would both have sated his wrath, and established the delusion. He feared as I said, the unapproachable force, and would not have had such power had he not said this. But observe how we find the demons everywhere more right minded (than the Jews), not daring to contradict nor accuse the Apostles, or Christ. There they say, “We know Thee who Thou art”

(Matthew 8:29); and, “Why art Thou come hither before the time to torment us” (Mark 1:24): and again, “I know Thee who Thou art, the Son of God.” And here, “These men are servants of the most high God” (ch. 16:17): and again, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know.” For they exceedingly feared and trembled before those holy persons. Perhaps some one of you, hearing of these things, wishes he were possessed of this power, so that the demons should not be able to look him in the face, and accounts those saints happy for this, that they had such power. But let him hear Christ saying, “Rejoice not because the demons are subject unto you” (Luke 10:20), because He knew that all men rejoice most in this, through vainglory. For if thou seekest that which pleaseth God, and that which is for the common good, there is another, a greater way. It is not so great to free from a demon as it is to rescue from sin. A demon hinders not to attain unto the kingdom of Heaven, nay, even cooperates, unwillingly indeed, but nevertheless cooperates by making him that has the demon more sober-minded; but sin casts a man out.

But it is likely some man will say, “God forbid it should ever befall me to be sobered in this way!” Nor do I wish it for you, but a very different way, that you should do all from love of Christ: if however, which God forbid, it should so befall you, then even on this behalf I would comfort you. If then the demon does not cast out (from the kingdom of heaven), but sin does cast out, to free a man from sin is greater beneficence.

From this let us study to free our neighbors, and before our neighbors, our own selves. Let us see to it, lest we have a demon: let us examine ourselves strictly. More grievous than a demon is sin, for the demon makes men humble. See ye not those possessed with a demon, when they have recovered from the attack, how downcast they are, of how sad a countenance, how fraught with shame their faces are, how they have not even courage to look one in the face? See the strange inconsistency! While those are ashamed on account of the things they suffer, we are not ashamed on account of the things we do; while they are abashed being wronged, we are not abashed when doing wrong: and yet their condition is not a subject for shame, but for pity and tenderness and indulgence: nay, great is the admiration it calls for, and many the praises, when struggling against such a spirit, they bear all thankfully: whereas our condition in very deed is a subject for ridicule, for shame, for accusation, for correction,

for punishment, for the worst of evils, for hell-fire; calling for no compassion whatever. Seest thou, that worse than a demon is sin? And those indeed, from the ills they suffer, reap a double profit: first, their being sobered and brought to more self-control; then, that having suffered here the chastisement of their own sins, they depart hence to their Master, purified. For indeed upon this we have often discoursed to you, that those who are punished here, if they bear it thankfully, may naturally be supposed to put away thereby many of their sins. Whereas from sins the mischief resulting is twofold; first, that we offend; secondly, that we become worse. Attend to what I say. Not this is the only injury we get from sin, that we commit a sin: but another and a worse is this, that our soul receives a habit. Just as it is in the case of the body — for it will be more plain when put in the form of an example — as he who has taken a fever has got harm not only in this respect, that he is sick, but also that after the sickness he is become weaker, even though he may return to health after a long disease: just so in the case of sin, though we may regain health, yet we are far from having the strength we need. For take the case of one who has been insolently abusive: does he not suffer his deserts for his abusive conduct? Aye, but there is another and a worse thing to rue (which is), that his soul is become more insensible to shame. For from each several sin that is committed, even after the sin has been done and has ceased, there remains a kind of venom instilled into our souls. Do you not hear people saying, when they are recovered from sickness, “I dare not drink water now?” And yet the man has regained his health: aye, but the disease has done him this harm also. And whereas those (possessed) persons, albeit suffering ill, are thankful, we, when faring well, blaspheme God, and think ourselves very ill used: for you will find more persons behaving thus in health and wealth than in poverty and sickness. For there stands the demon over (the possessed), like a very hangman, fierce, uttering many (menaces), even as a schoolmaster brandishing the lash, and not suffering them to give way to any laxity. And suppose that some are not at all brought to a sober mind, neither are these liable to punishment; no small thing this: even as fools, even as madmen and children, are not called to account, so neither are these: since for things that are done in a state of unconsciousness, none can be so merciless as to call the doers to account. Why then, in a far worse condition than those who are possessed of evil spirits are we that sin. We do not, indeed, foam at the mouth, nor

distort our eyes, or throw about our hands convulsively; but as for this, would that we did it in our body and not in our soul! Will you that I show you a soul, foaming, filthy, and a distortion of the mind's eyes? Think of those who are in a passion and drunken with rage; can any form be filthier than the words they discharge? In very deed it is like a sputtering of noisome slaver. And just as the possessed know none of those who are present, so neither do these. Their understanding darkened, their eyes distorted, they see not who is friend, who foe, who worthy of respect, who contemptible, but they see all alike without a difference. And then, do you not see them, how they tremble, just like those others? But they do not fall to the ground, say you? True, but their soul lies on the ground and fails there in convulsions: since had it stood upright, it would not have come into the condition it is in. Or think you not that it betokens a soul abjectly sprawling and lost to all self-possession, the things men can do and say when drunken with rage? There is also another form of madness worse than this. What may this be? When men cannot so much as suffer themselves to vent their anger, but instead of that nourish within their own bosoms, to their own proper hurt, as it were a very hangman with his lash, the rancorous remembrance of wrongs. For it is a bane to themselves first, (he malice that they bear. To say nothing of the things to come, what torture, think you, must that man undergo in the scourging of his soul, as day by day he looks how he may avenge himself on his enemy? He chastises himself first, and suffers punishment, swelling (with suppressed passion), fighting against himself, setting himself on fire. For needs must the fire be always burning within thee: while raising the fever to such a height, and not suffering it to wane, thou thinkest thou art inflicting some evil on the other, whereas thou art wasting thyself, ever bearing about with thee a flame which is always at its height, and not letting thy soul have rest, but evermore being in a state of fury, and having thy thoughts in a turmoil and tempest. What is more grievous than this madness, to be always smarting with pain, and ever swelling and inflamed? For such are the souls of the resentful: when they see him on whom they wish to be revenged, straightway it is as if a blow were struck them: if they hear his voice, they cower and tremble: if they be on their bed, they picture to themselves numberless revenges, hanging, torturing that enemy of theirs: and if, beside all this, they see him also to be in renown, O! the misery they suffer! Forgive him the offense, and free thyself from the torment.

Why continue always in a state of punishment, that thou wayest once punish him, and take thy revenge? Why establish for thyself a hectic disease? Why, when thy wrath would fain depart from thee, dost thou keep it back? Let it not remain until the evening, says Paul. (Ephesians 4:26.) For like some eating rot or moth, even so does it gnaw through the very root of our understanding. Why shut up a beast within thy bowels? Better a serpent or an adder to lie within thy heart, than anger and resentment: for those indeed would soon have done with us, but this remains forever fixing in us its fangs, instilling its poison, letting loose upon us an invading host of bitter thoughts. "That he should laugh me to scorn," say you, "that he should despise me!" O wretched, miserable man, wouldest thou not be ridiculed by thy fellow-servant, and wouldest thou be hated by thy Master? Wouldest thou not be despised by thy fellow-servant, and despisest thou thy Master? To be despised by him, is it more than thou canst bear, but thinkest thou not that God is indignant, because thou ridiculest Him, because thou despisest Him, when thou wilt not do as He bids thee? But that thine enemy will not even ridicule thee, is manifest froth hence (that), whereas if thou follow up the revenge, great is the ridicule, great the contempt, for this is a mark of a little mind; on the contrary, if thou forgive him, great is the admiration, for this is a mark of greatness of soul. But you will say, he knows not this. Let God know it, that thou mayest have the greater reward. For He says," Lend to those of whom ye hope not to receive." (Luke 6:34.) So let us also do good to those who do not even perceive that one is doing them good, that they may not, by returning to us praise or any other thing, lessen our reward. For when we receive nothing from men, then we shall receive greater things from God. But what is more worthy of ridicule, what more paltry, than a soul which is always in anger, and wishing to take revenge? It is womanly, this disposition, it is babyish. For as the babes are angry even with lifeless things, and unless the mother beats the ground, they will not let go their anger: so do these persons wish to revenge themselves on those who have aggrieved them. Why then, it is they who are worthy of ridicule: for to be overcome by, passion, is the mark of a childish understanding, but to overcome it, is a sign of manliness. Why then, not we are the objects of ridicule, when we keep our temper, but they. It is not this that makes men contemptible — not to be conquered by passion: what makes them contemptible is this — to be so afraid of ridicule from without, as on this

account to choose to subject one's self to one's besetting passion, and to offend God, and take revenge upon one's self. These things are indeed worthy of ridicule. Let us flee them. Let a man say, that having done us numberless ills, he has suffered nothing in return: let him say that he might again frantically assault us, and have nothing to fear. Why, in no other (better) way Could he have proclaimed our virtue; no other words would he have sought, if he had wished to praise us, than those which he seems to say in abuse. Would that all men said these things of me: "he is a poor tame creature; all men heap insults on him, but he bears it: all men trample upon him, but he does not avenge himself." Would that they added, "neither, if he should wish to do so, can he:" that so I might have praise from God, and not from men. Let him say, that it is for want of spirit that we do not avenge ourselves. This does us no hurt, when God knows (all): it does but cause our treasure to be in greater safety. If we are to have regard to them, we shall fall away from everything. Let us not look to what they say, but to what becomes us. But, says he, "Let no man ridicule me," and some make a boast of this. O! what folly! "No man," says he, "having injured me, has ridiculed me:" that is, "I had my revenge." And yet for this thou deservest to be ridiculed, that thou didst take revenge. Whence came these words among us — being, as they are, a disgrace to us and a pest, an overthrow of our own proper life and of our discipline? It is in downright opposition to God that thou (so) speakest. The very thing which makes thee equal to God — the not avenging thyself — this thou thinkest a subject for ridicule! Are not we for these things worthy to be laughed at, both by ourselves, and by the heathen, when we thus speak against God? I wish to tell you a story of a thing that happened in the old times (which they tell) not on the subject of anger, but of money. A man had an estate in which there was a hidden treasure, unknown to the owner: this piece of ground he sold. The buyer, when digging it for the purpose of planting and cultivation, found the treasure therein deposited, and came and wanted to oblige the seller to receive the treasure, urging that he had bought a piece of ground, not a treasure. The seller on his part repudiated the gift, saying, "The piece of ground (is not mine), I have sold it, and I have no concern whatever with this (treasure)." So they fell to altercation about it, the one wishing to give it, the other standing out against receiving it. So chanting upon some third person, they argued the matter before him, and said to him, "To whom ought the treasure to be assigned?" The man

could not settle that question; he said, however, that he would put an end to their dispute — he would (if they pleased) be master of it himself. So he received the treasure, which they willingly gave up to him; and in the sequel got into troubles without end, and learnt by actual experience that they had done well to have nothing to do with it. So ought it be done likewise with regard to anger; both ourselves ought to be emulous not to take revenge, and those who have aggrieved us, emulous to give satisfaction. But perhaps these things also seem to be matter of ridicule: for when that madness is widely prevalent among men, those who keep their temper are laughed at, and among many madmen he who is not a madman seems to be mad. Wherefore I beseech you that we may recover (from this malady), and come to our senses, that becoming pure from this pernicious passion, we may be enabled to attain unto the kingdom of heaven, through the grace and mercy of His only-begotten Son, with Whom to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory, might, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 42

ACTS 19:21, 23

“After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season. And the same time there arose no small stir about the Way.”

HE sends Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia, but himself remains at Ephesus. Having made a long enough stay in that city, he wishes to remove elsewhere again. But how is it, that having from the first chosen to depart into Syria, he turns back to Macedonia? “He purposed,” it says, “in the Spirit,” showing that all (that he did) was done not of his own power. Now he prophesies, saying, “I must also see Rome:” perhaps to comfort them with the consideration of his not remaining at a distance, but coming nearer to them again, and to arouse the minds of the disciples by the prophecy. At this point, I suppose, it was that he wrote his Epistle to the Corinthians from Ephesus, saying, “I would not have you ignorant of the trouble which came to us in Asia.” (2 Corinthians 1:8.) For since he had promised to go to Corinth, he excuses himself on the score of having loitered, and mentions the trial relating the affair of Demetrius. “There arose no small stir about the Way.” Do you see the renown (acquired)? They contradicted, it says: (then) came miracles, twofold: (then) again, danger: such is the way the threads alternate throughout the whole texture (of the history). “For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver temples of Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen.” (v. 24.). “Which made,” it says, “silver temples of Diana.” And how is it possible that temples could be made of silver? Perhaps as small boxes (κιβώρια). Great was the honor paid to this (Diana) in Ephesus; since, when (*Hom. in Ephesians* Prol.) their temple was burnt it so grieved them, that they forbade even the name of the incendiary ever to be mentioned. See how, wherever there is idolatry, in every case we find money at the bottom of it. Both in the former instance it was for money, and in the case of this man, for money. (ch. 19:13.) It was not for their

religion, because they thought that in danger; no, it was for their lucrative craft, that it would have nothing to work upon. Observe the maliciousness of the man. He was wealthy himself, and to him indeed it was no such great loss; but to them the loss was great, since they were poor, and subsisted on their daily earnings. Nevertheless, these men say nothing, but only he. And observe: “Whom having collected, and the workmen of like occupation,” having themselves common cause with him, “he said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth” (v. 25); then he brought the danger home to them, that we are in danger of falling from this our craft into starvation. “Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: so that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at naught; but also, that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians ” (v. 26-28.) And yet the very things he spoke were enough to bring them to true religion: but being poor senseless creatures, this is the part they act. For if this (Paul being) man is strong enough to turn away all, and the worship of the gods is in jeopardy, one ought to reflect, how great must this man’s God be, and that he will much more give you those things, for which ye are afraid. Already (at the outset) he has secured a hold upon their minds by saying, “This Paul hath turned away much people, saying, that they be no gods, which are made with men’s hands.” See what it is that the heathen are so indignant at; because he said that “they which be made of men are no gods.” throughout, he drives his speech at their craft. Then that which most grieved them he brings in afterwards. But, with the other gods, he would say, we have no concern, but that “the temple also of the great goddess Diana is in danger to be destroyed.” Then, lest he should seem to say this for the sake of lucre, see what he adds: “Whom the whole world worshippeth.” Observe how he showed Paul’s power to be the greater, proving all (their gods) to be wretched and miserable creatures, since a mere man, who was driven about, a mere tentmaker, had so much power. Observe the testimonies born to the Apostles by their enemies, that they overthrew their worship. There (at Lystra) they brought “garlands and oxen.” (ch. 14:13.) Here he says, “This our craft is in danger to be set at

naught. — Ye have filled (all) everywhere with your doctrine.” (ch. 5:28.) So said the Jews also with regard to Christ: “Ye see how the world is going after Him” (John 12:19); and, “The Romans shall come and take away our city.” (ch. 11:48). And again on another occasion, “These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.” (ch. 17:6). — “And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath.” Upon what was that wrath called forth? On hearing about Diana, and about their source of gain. “And cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians And the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed with one accord into the theater.” (v. 29). Such is the way with vulgar minds, any trivial occasion shall hurry them away and inflame their passions. Therefore it behooves to do (things) with (strict) examination. But see how contemptible they were, to be so exposed to all (excitements)! “Having caught Gains and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul’s companions in travel, they dragged them:” (here) again recklessly, just as did the Jews in the case of Jason; and everywhere they set upon them. “And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not,” (v. 30) so far were they from all display and love of glory. “And certain of the Asiarchs, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theater” (v. 31) to a disorderly populace and tumult. And Paul complies for he was not vaingloriously was confused.” Such is the nature of the multitude: it recklessly follows, like fire when it has fallen upon fuel; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.” (v. 32.) “And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward.” It was the Jews that thrust him forward; but as providence ordered it, this man did not speak. “And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defense unto the people” (v. 33.) “But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians?” (v. 34.) A childish understanding indeed! as if they were afraid, lest their worship should be extinguished, they shouted without intermission. For two years had Paul abode there, and see how many heathen there were still! “And when the town clerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is temple-keeper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell thing were not palpable. With this saying first he extinguished their wrath. “And of the Diopetes.” There was

another sacred object (ἱερὸν) that was so called. Either he means the piece of burnt earth or her image. This (is) a lie. “Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.” (v. 36, 37.) All this however he says to the people; but in order that those (workmen) also might become more reasonable, he says: “Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another. But if ye enquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. For we are in danger to be called in question for this day’s uproar, there being no cause, for which (matter) we shall not be able to give an account for this concourse” 5:38-40.) “A lawful assembly,” he says, for there were three assemblies according to law in each month; but this one was contrary to law. Then he terrified them also by saying, “We are in danger to be called to account” for sedition. But let us look again at the things said.

(Recapitulation.) “After these things were ended,” it says, “Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia to go to Jerusalem,” saying, “After I have been there, I must also see Rome.” (v. 21.) He no longer speaks here after the manner of a man, or, He purposed to pass through those regions, without tarrying longer. Wherefore does he send away Timothy and Erastus? Of this I suppose he says, “Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone. He sent away,” it says, “two of those who ministered to him” (1 Thessalonians 3:1), both to announce his coming, and to make them more eager. “But he himself tarried awhile in Asia.” (v. 22.) Most of all does he pass his time in Asia; and with reason: there, namely, was the tyranny, of the philosophers. (Afterwards) also he came and discoursed to them again. “And the same time” etc. (v. 23), for indeed the superstition was excessive (a) “Ye both see and hear,” so palpable was the result that was taking place — “that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul by persuading hath turned away,” not by violence: this is the way to persuade a city. Then, what touched them closely, “that they be no gods which are made with hands.” (v. 26.) He overturns, says he, our craft: (e) “From this work we have our wealth. Hath persuaded.” How did he

persuade — he, a man of mean consideration? How prevail over so great a force of a man. Even this is enough, that he said, it ought to have been condemned long ago: if it was strong, it ought not to have been overthrown so quickly. (b) For, lest they should that a human being should have such power as this, and if a human being has power to effect such things, why then one ought to be persuaded by that man, he adds: (f) “not only is this our craft in danger to be set at naught, but also,” as if forsooth alleging a greater consideration, “the temple of the great goddess Diana,” etc. (c) “whom all with wrath, and shouted, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!” (v. 28.) For each city had its proper gods. (d) They thought to make their voice a barrier against the Divine Spirit. Children indeed, these Greeks! (h) And their feeling was as if by their voice they could reinstate the worship of her, and undo what had taken place! “And the whole city,” etc. (v. 29.) See a disorderly multitude! “And when Paul,” etc. (v. 30.) Paul then wished to enter in that he might harangue them: for he took his persecutions as occasions for teaching:” but the disciples suffered him not.” Mark, how great forethought we always find them taking for him. At the very first they brought him out that they might not (in his person) receive a mortal blow; and yet they had heard him say “I must also see Rome.” But it was providential that he so predicts beforehand, that they might not be confounded at the event. But they would not that he should even suffer any evil. “And certain of the Asiarchs besought him that he would not enter into the theater.” Knowing his eagerness, they “besought him:” so much did all the believers love him. — “And they drew Alexander,” etc. (v. 33.) This Alexander, why did he wish to plead? Was he accused? No, but it was to find an opportunity, and overturn the whole matter, and inflame the anger of the people. “But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians ” (v. 34.) Do you mark the inordinate rage? Well, and with rebuke does the town clerk say, “What man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians — “(v. 35)coming to the point) which they were frightened about. Is it this, says he, that ye do not worship her? And he does not say, “That knoweth not” Diana, but, “our city,” that it always worshipped her. “Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against.”(v. 36.) Why then do ye make a question about them, as if these things were not plain?(b) Then he quietly chides them, showing that they had come together without reason. “And to do nothing

rashly” he says. Showing that they had acted rashly.(a) “For ye have brought hither” etc.(v. 37.) They wanted to make religion the pretext for what concerned their own money-making (c) and it was not fight on account of private charges to hold a public assembly. For he put them to a nonplus, and left them not a word to say for themselves. “There being no cause,” he says, “for this concourse, for which” matter) “we shall not be able to give the account.” (v. 40.) See how prudently, how cleverly, the unbelievers act). Thus he extinguished their wrath. For as it is early kindled, so also is it easily extinguished. “And when he had thus spoken,” it says, “he dismissed the assembly.” (v. 41.)

Seest thou how God permits trials, and by them stirs up and awakens the disciples, and makes them more energetic? Then let us not sink down under trials: for He Himself will “also make the way of escape, that we may be able to bear them.” (1 Corinthians 10:13.) Nothing so makes friends, and rivets them so firmly, as affliction: nothing so fastens and compacts the souls of believers: nothing is so seasonable for us teachers in order that the things said by us may be heard. For the hearer when he is in ease is listless and indolent, and seems to suffer annoyance from the speaker: but when he is in affliction and distress, he falls into a great longing for the hearing. For when distressed in his soul, he seeks on all sides to find comfort for his affliction: and the preaching brings no small comfort. “What then,” you will say, “of the Jews? How was it that in consequence of their weakheartedness, they did not hear?” Why, they were Jews, those ever weak and miserable creatures: and besides, the affliction in their case was great, but we speak of affliction in moderation. For observe: they expected to be freed from the evils that encompassed them, and they fell into numberless greater evils: now this is no common distress to the soul. Afflictions cut us off from the sympathy we have for the present world as appears in this, that we wish for death immediately, and cease to be loving of the body: which very thing is the greatest part of wisdom, to have no hankering, no ties to the present life. The soul which is afflicted does not wish to be concerned about many things: repose and stillness are all it desired, content for its part to have done with the things present, even though there be nothing else to follow. As the body when wearied and distressed does not wish to indulge in amours, or gormandizing, but only to repose and lie down in quiet; so the soul,

harassed by numberless evils, is urgent to be at rest and quit. The soul which is at ease is apt to be) fluttered, alarmed, unsettled: whereas in this there is no vacuity, no running to waste: and the one is more manly, the other more childish; the one has more water, is tossed to and fro, just so is the soul that our greatest faults arise out of overmuch pleasure, any one may see. Come, if you will, let us represent to ourselves two houses, the one where people are marrying, the other where they are mourning: let us enter in imagination into each: let us see which is better than the other. Why, that of the mourner will be found full of seriousness (*φιλοσοφίας*); that of the marrying person, full of indecency. For look, here are shameful words, unrestrained laughter, more unrestrained motions, both dress and gait full of indecency, words fraught with mere nonsense and foolery: in short, all is ridicule there, all ridiculous. I do not say the marriage is this; God forbid; but the accompaniments of the marriage. Then nature is beside itself in excess of riot. Instead of human beings, those present become brute creatures, some neighing like horses, others kicking like asses: such utter license, such dissolute unrestraint: nothing serious, nothing noble, it is the devil's pomp, cymbals, and pipes, and songs teeming with fornication and adultery. But not so in that house where there is mourning; all is well-ordered there: such silence, such repose, such composure; nothing disorderly, nothing extravagant: and if any one does speak, every word he utters is fraught with true philosophy: and then the wonderful circumstance is, that at such times not men only, but even servants and women speak like philosophers — for such is the nature of sorrow — and while they seem to be consoling the mourner, they in fact utter numberless truths full of sound philosophy. Prayers are there to begin with, that the affliction may stop there, and go no further: many a one comforting the sufferer, and recitals without number of the many who have the like cause for mourning. “For what is man?” they ask and thereupon a serious examination of our nature — “aye, then, what a reminding one another of things to come, of the Judgment. So from both these scenes each returns home: from the wedding, grieved, because he himself is not in the enjoyment of the like good fortune; from the mourning, light-hearted, because he has not himself undergone the like affliction, and having all his inward fever quenched. But what will you? Shall we take for another contrast the prisons and the theatres? For the one is a place of suffering, the other of where there is sadness, there must needs be seriousness. He

who aforetime was rich, and inflated with his own importance, now will even suffer any common person to converse with him, fear and sorrow, like some mightier fire, having fallen on his soul, and softening down his harshness: then he becomes humble, then of a sad countenance, then he feels the changes of life, then he bears up manfully against everything. But in a theater all is the reverse of this — laughter, ribaldry, devil's pomp, dissoluteness, waste of time, useless spending of days, planning for extravagant lust, adultery made a study of, practical training to fornication, schooling in intemperance, encouragement to filthiness, matter for laughter, patterns for the practice of indecency. Not so the prison: there you will find humbleness of mind, exhortation incentive to seriousness, contempt of worldly things; these are all trodden under foot and spurned and, fear stands over the man there, as a schoolmaster over a child, controlling him to all his duties. But if you will, let us examine in a different way. I should like you to meet a man on his return from a theater, and another coming out of prison; and while you would see the soul of the one fluttered, perturbed, actually tied and bound, that of the other you would see enlarged, set free, buoyant as on wings. For the one returns from the theater, enfettered by the sight of the women there, bearing about chains harder than any iron, the scenes, the words, the gestures, that he saw there. But the other on his return from the prison, released from all bounds, will no longer his own case with that of those others. To think that he is not in bonds will make him thankful ever after; he will despise human affairs, as seeing so many rich men there in calamity, men once having power to do many and great things, and now lying bound there: and if he should suffer anything unjustly, he will bear up against this also; for of this too there were many examples there: he will be led to reflect upon the Judgment to come and will shudder, seeing here on the earthly prison how it will be there. For as it is with one here shut up in prison, so in that world also before the Judgment, before the Day that is to come. Towards wife, children, and servants, he will be more gentle. Not so he that comes from the theater: he will look upon his wife with more dislike, he will be peevish with his servants, bitter towards his children, and savage towards all. Great are the evils theatres cause to cities, great indeed, and we do not even know that they are great. Shall we examine other scenes of laughter also, I mean the feasts, with their parasites, their flatterers, and abundance of luxury, and compare with them places where are the halt and blind? As

before, in the former is drunkenness, luxury, and dissoluteness, in the latter the reverse.-See also with regard to the body, when it is hot-blooded, when it is in good case, it undergoes the quickest change to sickness: not so, when it has been kept low. Then let me make my meaning clearer to you: — let there be a body having plenty of blood, plenty of flesh, plump With good living: this body will be apt even from any chance food to engender a fever, if it be simply idle. But let there be another, struggling rather with hunger and hardship: this is not easily overcome, not easily wrestled down by disease. Blood, though it may be healthy in us, does often by its very quantity engender disease: but if it be small in quantity, even though it be not healthy, it can be easily worked off. So too in the case of the soul, that which leads an easy, luxurious life, has its impulses quickly swayed to sin: for such a soul is next neighbor to folly, to pleasure, to vainglory also, and envy, and plottings, and slanderings. Behold this great city of ours, what a size it is! Whence arise the evils? is it not from those who are rich? is it not from those who are in enjoyment? Who are they that “drag” men “before the tribunals?” Who, that dissipate properties? Those who are wretched and outcasts, or those who are inflated with consequence, and in enjoyment? It is not possible that any evil can happen from a soul that is afflicted. (James 2:6.) Paul knew the gain of this: therefore he says, “Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed.” (Romans 5:3.) Then let us not sink in our afflictions, but in all things give thanks, that so we may get great gain, that we may be well-pleasing to God, who permits afflictions. A great good is affliction: and we learn this from our own children: for without afflictions (a boy) would learn nothing useful. But we more than they, need affliction. For if there, when the passions (as yet) are quiet, (chastisement) benefits them, how much more us, especially possessed as we are by so many! Nay, we behoove rather to have schoolmasters than they: since the faults of children cannot be great. Our schoolmaster is affliction. Let us then not draw it down willingly upon ourselves, but when it is come let us bear it bravely, being, as it is, always the cause of numberless good things; that so we may both obtain grace from God, and the good things that are laid up for them that love Him, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with Whom to the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory, might, honor, now and evermore, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 43

ACTS 20:1

“And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.”

THERE was need of much comforting after that uproar. Accordingly, having done this, he goes into Macedonia, and then into Greece. For, it says, “when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, and there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.” (v. 2, 3.) Again he is persecuted by the Jews, and goes into Macedonia. “And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Trophimus. These going before tarried for us at Troas.” (v. 4, 5.) But how does he call Timothy a man “of Thessalonica?” This is not his meaning, but, “Of Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus and Gaius: of Derbe, Timothy,” v. 1) etc., these, he says, went before him to Troas, preparing the way for him. “And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.” (v. 6.) For it seems to me that he made a point of keeping the feasts in the large cities. “From Philippi,” where the affair of the prison had taken place. This was his third coming into Macedonia, and it is a high testimony that he bears to the day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.” (v. 7.) It was then the (season between Easter and) Pentecost. See how everything was subordinate to the preaching. It was also, it says, then, because of stillness. Mark how he both made a long discourse, and beyond the time of supper itself. But the Devil disturbed the feast — not that he prevailed, however — by plunging the hearer in sleep, and causing him to fall down. “And,” it says, “there were many lights in the upper chamber, Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him, said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. When he therefore

was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.” (v. 8-12.) But observe, I pray you, the theater, how crowded it was: and the miracle, what it was. “He was sitting in a window,” at dead of night. Such was their eagerness to hear him! Let us take shame to our selves! “Aye, but a Paul” say you, “was discoursing then.” Yes, and Paul discourses now, or rather not Paul, either then or now, window in the case now, no importunity of hunger, or sleep, and yet we do not care to hear: no crowding in a narrow space here, nor any other such comfort. And the wonderful circumstance is, that though he was a youth, he was not listless and indifferent; and danger of falling down. It was not from listlessness that he slumbered, but from necessity of nature. But observe, I beseech you, so fervent was their zeal, that they even assembled in a third loft: for they had not a Church yet. “Trouble not yourselves,” he says. He said not, “He shall come to life again, for I will raise him up:” but mark the unassuming way in which he comforts them: “for his life,” says he, “is in him. When he was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten.” This thing cut short the discourse; it did no harm, however. “When he had eaten,” it says, “and discoursed a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.” Do you mark the frugality of the supper? Do you observe how they passed the whole night? Such were their meals, that the hearers came away sober, and fit for hearing. But we, in what do we differ from dogs? Do you mark what a difference between us and those men)? “And they brought the young man alive, and,” it says, “were not a little comforted,” both because they received him back alive and because a miracle had been wrought.) “And we went before to ship, and sated unto Thasos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.” (v. 13.) We often find Paul parting from the disciples. For behold again, he himself goes ardent: giving them the easier way, and himself choosing the more painful. He went afoot, both that he might arrange many matters, and by way of training them to bear a parting from him. “And when he had joined us at Thasos, having taken him on board, we came to Mytilene; and having sailed thence on the morrow, we come over against Chios — then they pass the island — “ and on the next day we touched at Samos, and having stopped at Trogylium, on the following day we came to Miletus. For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the

Pentecost.” (v. 14-16.) Why this haste? Not for the sake of the feast, but of the multitude. At the same time, by this he conciliated the Jews, as being one that did honor the feasts, wishing to gain even his adversaries: at the same time also he delivers the word. Accordingly, see what great gain accrued, from all being present. But that the interests of the people of Ephesus might not be neglected on that account, he managed for this in a different way. But let us look over again what has been said.

(Recapitulation.) “And having embraced them,” it says, “he departed for to go into Macedonia.” (v. 1.) By this again he refreshed them (**ἀνεκτίσαστο**), giving them much consolation. “And having exhorted” the Macedonians, “with much discourse, he came into Greece.” (v. 2.) Observe how we every where find him accomplishing all by means of preaching, not by miracles. “And we, sailed,” etc. The writer constantly shows him to us as hasting to get to Syria; and the reason of it was the Church, and Jerusalem, but still he restrained his desire, so as to set all right in those parts also And yet Troas is not a large place: why then do they pass seven days in it? Perhaps it was large as regarded the number of believers. And after he had passed seven days there, on the following day he spent the night in teaching: so hard did he find it to tear himself away from them, and they from him. “And when we came together” it says, “to break bread.” (v. 7-12.) At the very time (of breaking bread) the discourse having taken its commencement, extended: as representing that they were hungry, and it was not unseasonable: for the principal object (which brought them together) was not teaching, but they came together “to break bread;” discourse however having come up, he prolonged the teaching. See how all partook also at Paul’s table. It seems to me, that he discoursed while even sitting at table, teaching us to consider all other things as subordinate to this. Picture to yourselves, I beseech you, that house with its lights, with its crowd, with Paul in the midst, discoursing, with even the windows occupied by many: what a thing it was to see, and to hear that trumpet, and behold that gracious countenance! But why did he discourse during night time? Since “he was about to depart,” it says, and was to see them no more: though this indeed he does not tell them, they being too weak (to bear it), but he did tell it to the others. At the same time too the mirage which took place would make them evermore to remember that evening; so that the fall turned out to the advantage of the

teacher. Great was the delight of the hearers, and even when interrupted it was the more increased. That (young man) was to rebuke all that are careless (of the word), he whose death was caused by nothing else than this, that he wished to hear Paul. “And we went before to ship,” etc. (v. 13.) Wherefore does the writer say where they came, and where they went to? To show in the first place that he was making the voyage more leisurely — and this upon human grounds — and sailing past (some): also (for the same reason he tells) where he made a stay, and what parts he sailed past; (namely,) “that he might not have to spend the time in Asia.” (v. 16.) Since had he come there, he could not have sailed by; he did not like to pain those who would have begged him to remain. “For he hasted,” it says, “if it were possible for him to keep the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem:” and (this) was not possible of he stayed). Observe, how he is also moved like other men. For therefore it is that all this is done, that we may not fancy that he was above human nature: (therefore) you see him desiring (something), and hastening, and in many instances not obtaining (his object): for those great and holy men were partakers of the same nature with us; it was in the will and purpose that they differed, and so it was that also they attracted upon themselves the great grace they did. See, for instance, how many things they order by an economy of their own. “That we give not offense” (2 Corinthians 6:3) to those who wish (to take offense), and, “That our ministry be not blamed.” Behold, both an irreproachable life and on the other hand condescension. This is (indeed to be) called economy, to the (very) summit and height (of it). For he that went beyond the commandments of Christ, was on the other hand more humble than all. “I am made all things to all men,” he says, “that I might gain all.” (1 Corinthians 9:22.) He cast himself also upon dangers, as he says in another place; “In much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes in imprisonments.” (2 Corinthians 6:4, 5.) And great was his love for Christ. For if there be not this, all else is superfluous, both the economy (of condescending accommodation), and the irreproachable life, and the exposing himself to dangers. “Who is weak,” he says, “and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?” (2 Corinthians 11:29.) These words let us imitate, and let us cast ourselves upon dangers for our brethren’s sake. Whether it be fire, or the sword, cast thyself on it, beloved, that thou mayest rescue (him that is) thy member: cast thyself, be not afraid. Thou art a disciple of Christ, Who laid down

His life for His brethren: a fellow-disciple with Paul, who chose to suffer numberless ills for his enemies, for men that were and avenged him; he despised royal luxury, and for the sake of those who were afflicted he became a fugitive, a wanderer, lonely and deserted; he passed his days in a foreign land; and yet he blamed not himself, nor said, "What is this? I despised royalty, with all that honor and glory: I chose to avenge those who were wronged, and God hath overlooked me: and not only hath He not brought me back to my former honor, but even forty years am I passing in a foreign land. Truly, handsomely have I received my wages, have I not!" But nothing of the kind did he say or think. So also do thou: be it that (thou have to wait) a long time, be not thou offended, be not discomposed: God will of a surety give thee thy reward. The more the recompense is delayed, the more is the interest of it increased. Let us have a soul apt to sympathize, let us have a heart that knows how to feel with others in their sorrows: no unmerciful temper (*ὀμόν*), no inhumanity. Though thou be able to confer no relief, yet weep thou, groan, grieve over what has happened: even this is not to no purpose. If it behooves us to feel for those who are justly punished by God, much more for those who suffer unjustly at the hands of men. (They of) "Aenan," it saith, "came not forth to mourn for the house which was near her" (Micah 1:11): they shall receive pain, "in return for that they built for derision." And again, Ezekiel makes this an accusation against them, that they did not grieve for (the afflicted). (Ezekiel 16:2.) What sayest thou, O Prophet? God punisheth, and shall I grieve for those that He is punishing? Yea verily: for God Himself that punisheth wisheth this: since neither does He Himself wish to punish, nay, even Himself grieves when punishing. Then be not thou glad at it. You will say, "If they are justly punished, we ought not to grieve." Why, the thing we ought to grieve for is this — that they were found worthy of punishment. Say, when thou seest thy son undergoing cautery or the knife, dost thou not grieve? and sayest thou not to thyself, "What is this? It is for health this cutting, to quicken his recovery; it is for his deliverance, this burning?" but for all that, when thou hearest him crying out, and not able to health being restored is not enough to carry off the shock to nature. So also in the case of these, though it be in order to their health that they are punished, nevertheless let us show a brotherly feeling, a fatherly disposition. They are cuttings and cauteries, the punishments sent by God: but it is for this we ought to weep, that they

were sick, that they needed such a mode of cure. If it be for crowns that any suffer these things, then grieve not; for instance, as Paul, as Peter suffered: but when it is for punishment that one suffers justice, then weep, then groan. Such was the part the prophets acted; thus one of them said, “Ah! Lord, dost thou destroy the residue of Israel?” (Ezekiel 9:8.) We see men-slayers, wicked men, suffering punishment, and we are distressed, and grieve for them. Let us not be philosophical beyond measure: let us show ourselves pitiful, that we may be pitied; there is nothing equal to this beautiful trait: nothing so marks to us the stamp of human nature as the showing pity, as the being kind to our fellow-men. In fact, therefore do the laws consign to public executioners the whole business of punishment: having compelled the judge to punish so far as to pronounce the sentence, thereafter they call forth those to perform the act itself. So true is it, that though it be justly done, it is not the part of a generous (φιλοσόφου) soul to inflict punishment, but it requires another sort of person for this: since even God punishes not by His own hand, but by means of the angels. Are they then executioners, the angels? God forbid: I say not this, but they are avenging powers. When Sodom was destroyed, the whole was done by them as the instruments: when the judgments in Egypt were inflicted, it was through them. For, “He sent,” it says, “evil angels among them.” (Psalm 77:50.) But when there is need of saying, God does this by Himself: thus, He sent the Son: — (b) but, “He that receiveth you, receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me.” (Matthew 10:40.) (a) And again He saith, “Then will I say unto the angels, Gather together them that do iniquity, and cast them into the furnace.” (Matthew 13:30, 41, 42.) But concerning the just, not so. (c) And again, “Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness.” (Matthew 22:13.) Observe how in that case His servants minister: but when the point is to do good, see Himself doing the good, Himself calling: “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.” (Matthew 25:34.) When the matter is, to converse with Abraham, then Himself comes to him: when it is, to depart to Sodom, He sends His servants, like a judge raising up those who are to punish. “Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things” (Matthew 25:21); I (will make thee): but that other, not Himself, but His servants bind. Knowing these things, let us not rejoice over those who are suffering punishment, but even grieve: for these let us mourn, for these let

us weep, that for this also we may receive a reward. But now, many rejoice even over those who suffer evil unjustly. But not so, we: let us show all sympathy: that we also may have God vouchsafed us, through the grace and mercy of His only-begotten Son, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory, might, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 44

ACTS 20:17-21

“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the Church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

SEE him, hasting to sail by, and yet not overlooking them, but taking order for all. Having sent for the rulers, through those he discourses to them (the Ephesians): but it is worthy of admiration, how finding himself under a necessity of saying certain great things about himself, he tries to make the least he can of it (πειρᾶτα μετριάζειν). “Ye know.” For just as Samuel, when about to deliver up the government to Saul says in their presence, “Have I taken aught of your hands? Ye are witnesses, and God also” (1 Samuel 12:3, 5); (so Paul here). David also, when disbelieved, says, “I was with the flock keeping my father’s sheep: and when the bear came, I scared her away with my hands” (1 Samuel 17:34, 35): and Paul himself too says to the Corinthians “I am become a fool; ye have compelled me.” (2 Corinthians 12:11.) Nay, God Himself also does the same, not speaking of himself upon any and every occasion, but only when He is disbelieved, then He brings up His benefits. Accordingly, see what Paul does here: first he adduces their own testimony: that you may not imagine his words to be mere boasting, he calls the hearers themselves as witnesses of the things he says, since he was not likely to speak lies in their presence. This is the excellence of a teacher, to have for witnesses of his merits those who are his disciples. And what is wonderful, Not for one day nor for two, says he, have I continued doing this. He wishes to cheer them for the future, that they may bravely bear all things, both the parting from him, and the trials about to take place — just as it was in the case of Moses and Joshua. And see how he begins: “How I have been with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility of mind.” Observe, what most becomes rulers: “hating pride” (Exodus 18:21, LXX.), says (Moses): which (qualification) is especially in point for rulers, because to them there

is (almost) a necessity of becoming arrogant. This (humility) is the groundwork of all that is good, as in fact Christ saith, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” (Matthew 5:3.) And (here) not simply, “with humility of mind,” but, “with all humility.” For there are many kinds of humility, in word and in action, towards rulers, and toward the ruled. Will you that I mention to you some kinds of humility? There are some who are lowly towards those who are lowly, and high towards the high: this is not the character of humility. Some then are such. Then, that he may not seem to be arrogant, he lays a foundation beforehand, removing that suspicion: For, “if, says he, I have acted ‘with all humility of mind,’ it is not from arrogance that I say the things I say.” Then for his gentleness, ever with much condescension making them his fellows. “With you,” he says, “have I been, serving the Lord;” he makes the good works common to them with himself: none of it his own peculiar. “What?” (you will say) “why, against God could he possibly bear himself arrogantly?” And yet there are many who do bear themselves arrogantly against God: but this man not even against his own disciples. This is the merit of a teacher, by his own achievements of virtue to form the character of his disciples. Then for his fortitude, upon which also he is very concise. “With many tears,” he says, “and temptations which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews.” Do you see that he grieves at their doings? But here too he seems to show how sympathizing he was: for he suffered for those who were going to perdition, for the doers themselves: what was done to himself, he even rejoiced at it; for he belonged to that band which “rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for that Name (Acts 5:41): and again he says, “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you” (Colossians 1:24): and again, “For our light affliction, which is but for the moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” (2 Corinthians 4:17). These things, however, he says, by way of making the least of his merits (*μετριάζων*). But there he show his fortitude, not so much of daring, as of enduring: “I,” says he, “have been evil entreated, but it was with you: and what is indeed the grievous part of the business, at the hands of Jews.” Observe, he puts here both love and fortitude. Mark, here, I pray you, a character of teaching: “I kept back nothing,” he says, ungrudging fullness, unshrinking promptness — “of what was profitable unto you:” because there were things which they did not need to learn. For as the hiding some things would have been like grudging, so the saying all things would be

folly. This is why he adds, “that was profitable unto you. But have showed you, and have taught you:” have not only said, but also taught: not doing this either as a mere matter of form. For that this is what he means, observe what he says: “publicly, and from house to house:” thereby representing the exceeding toil, the great earnestness and endurance. “Both Jews, and Greeks.” Not (addressing myself) to you alone. “Testifying:” here, the boldness of speech: and that, even though we do no good, yet we must speak: for this is the meaning of “testifying,” when we speak to those who do not pay attention: and so the word **διαμαρτύρασθαι** is for the most part used. “I call heaven and earth to witness “(Deuteronomy 4:26), **διαμαρτύρομαι**, Moses, says: and now Paul himself, **Διαμαρτυρόμενος** “both to Jews and Greeks repentance toward God.” What testifiest thou? That they should be careful about their manner of life: that they should repent, and draw near to God. “Both to Jews and Greeks” — for neither did the Jews know Him — both by reason of their works, he says, “repentance towards God,” and, by reason that they knew not the Son, he adds, “and faith in the Lord Jesus” To what end, then, sayest thou these things? to what end dost thou put them in mind of them? What has come of it? hast thou anything to lay to their charge? Having first alarmed their feeling, then he add, “And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.” (v. 22-24). Wherefore says he this? By way of preparing them to be always ready to meet dangers, whether seen or unseen, and in all things to obey the Spirit. He shows that it is for great objects that he is led away from them. “Save that the Holy me, saying “ — to show that he departs willingly; that (see Hom. 45:p. 273) you may not imagine it any bond or necessity, when he says, “bound in the Spirit — that in every city bonds and afflictions await me.” Then also he adds this, “I count not my life dear, until I shall have fulfilled my course and the ministry, which I received of the Lord Jesus.” Until I shall have finished my course, says he, with joy. Do you mark how (clearly) these were the words not of one lamenting, but of one who forbore to make the most (of his troubles) (**μετριάζοντος**) of one who would instruct those (whom he addressed), and sympathize with them in

the things which were befalling He says not, “I grieve indeed, but one must needs bear it:” “but,” says he, “of none of those things do I make account, neither do I have,” i.e. account “my life dear to me.” Why this again? not to extol himself, but to teach them, as by the former words, humility, so by these, fortitude and boldness: “I have it not precious,” i.e. “I love it not before this: I account it more precious to finish my course, to testify.” And he says not, “to preach,” “to teach “ — but what says he? “to testify (**διαμαρτύρασθαι**) — the Gospel of the grace of God.” He is about to say something more uncomfortable (**πορτικώτερον**), namely, “I am pure from the blood of all men (because on my part) there is nothing lacking:” he is about to lay upon them the whole weight and burden: so he first mollifies their feelings by saying, “And now behold I know that ye shall see my face no more.” The consolation is twofold: both that “my face ye shall see no more,” for in heart I am with you: and that it was not they alone (who should see him no more): for, “ye shall see my face no more, ye all, among whom I have gone about preaching the Kingdom.” So that he may well (say), “Wherefore I take you to record (read **διὸ μαρτ.** for **διαμαρτ.**), — seeing I shall be with you no more — “ that I am pure from the blood of all men.” (v. 26.) Do you mark how he terrifies them, and troubled and afflicted as their souls are, how hard he rubs them (**ἐπιτρίβει**)? But it was necessary. “For I have not shunned,” he says, “to declare unto you all the counsel of God.” (v. 27.) Why then, he who does not speak, has blood to answer for: that is, murder! Nothing could be more terrifying than this. He shows that they also, if they do it not, have blood to answer for. So, whereas he seems to be justifying himself, in fact he is terrifying them. “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers (or, bishops) to feed the Church of God (see note 8), which He hath purchased with His own blood.” (v. 28.) Do you mark? he enjoins them two things. Neither success in bringing others right of itself is any gain — for, I fear, he says, “lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away” (1 Corinthians 9:27); nor the being diligent for one’s self alone. For such an one is selfish, and seeks his own good only, and is like to him who buried his talent. “Take heed to yourselves:” this he says, not because our own salvation is more precious than that of the flock, but because, when we take heed to ourselves, then the flock also is a gainer. “In which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the

Church of God.” See, it is from the Spirit ye have your ordination. This is one constraint: then he says, “To feed the Church of the Lord.” Lo! another obligation: the Church is the Lord’s. And a third: “which He hath purchased with His own blood.” It shows how precious the concern is; that the peril is about no small matters, seeing that even His own blood He spared not. He indeed, that he might reconcile those who were enemies, poured out even His blood: but thou, even when they are become thy friends, art not able to retain them. “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.” (v. 29.) Again he engages (ἐπιστρέφει) them from another quarter, from the things which should come after: as when he says, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood. After my departing,” he says, “grievous wolves shall enter in among you” (Ephesians 6:12); twofold the evil, both that he himself would not be present, and that others would assail them. “Then why depart, if thou knowest this beforehand?” The Spirit draws me, he says. Both “wolves,” and “grievous, not sparing the flock;” and what is worse, even “from among your own selves:” the grievous thing (this), when the war is moreover an intestine War. The matter is exceeding serious, for it is “the Church of the Lord:” great the peril for with blood He redeemed it: mighty the war, and twofold. “Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” (v. 30.) “How then? what comfort shall there be?” “Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.” (v. 31.) See how many strong expressions are here: “with tears,” and “night and day,” and “every one.” For it was not that if he saw many, then he came in (to the work), but even were it for a single soul, he was capable of doing everything (for that one soul). So it was, in fact, that he compacted them together (συνεκρότησεν) (so firmly as he did). “Enough done on my part: three years have I remained:” they had establishing enough, he says; enough of roofing. “With tears,” he says. Seest thou that the tears were on this account? The bad man grieves not: grieve thou: perhaps he will grieve also. As, when the sick man sees his physician partaking of food, he also is incited to do the same: so likewise here, when he sees thee weeping, he is softened: he will be a good and great man.

(Recapitulation.) “Not knowing,” he says, “the things that shall befall me.” (v. 22, 23.) Then is this why thou departest? By no means; on the contrary (I know that), “bonds and afflictions await me.” That (there are) trials, I know, but of what kind I know not: which was more grievous. “But none of these things move me” (v. 24): for do not suppose that I say these things as lamenting them: for “I hold not my own life dear. It is to raise up their minds that he says all” this, and to persuade them not only not to flee, but also to bear nobly. Therefore it is that he calls it a “course” and a “ministry,” on the one hand, showing it to be glorious from its being a race, on the other, showing what was due from it, as being a ministry. I am a minister: nothing more. Having comforted them, that they might not grieve that he was so evil entreated, and having told them that he endured those things “with joy,” and having shown the fruits of them would give them pain, that he may not overwhelm their minds. “And now behold,” etc. “Wherefore I take you to record, that I am pure from the blood of all men, because I have not shrunk from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God” (v. 25-27): that (counsel) which concerns the present matter. “For I know this,” etc. (v. 29.) “What then,” someone might say, “thinkest thou thyself so great? if thou shouldest depart, are we to die?” I say not this, he replies, that my absence causeth this: but what? That there should rise up against you certain of another sort: he says not, “because of my departing,” but “after my departing:” that is, after his going on his journey. — And yet this thing has happened already: much more (then will it happen) hereafter. Then we have the cause, “to draw away disciples after them.” (v. 30). That there are heresies, this is the cause, and no other than this. Then comes also consolation. But if He “purchased” it” with His own blood,” He will assuredly stand forward in its defense. “Night and day,” he says, “I cease not to warn with tears.” (v. 31.) This might well be said in our case also: and though the speech seems to refer peculiarly to the teachers, it is common also to the disciples. For what, though I speak and exhort and weep night and day, while the disciple obeys not? Therefore it is that he says, “I take you to record:” since also himself says, “I am pure from the blood of all men: for I have not shunned to declare unto you.” (v. 26, 27.) Why then, this only is to be a teacher, to declare, to preach, to instruct, shrink from nothing, to exhort night and day: but if, while one is doing all this, nothing comes of it, ye know what remains. Then ye have another justification: “I am pure from the blood of all men.”

Think not that these words are spoken to us only: for indeed this speech is addressed to you also, that ye should attend to the things spoken, that ye should not start away from the hearing. What can I do? Lo! each day I rend myself with crying out, "Depart from the theatres:" and many laugh at us: "Desist from swearing, from covetousness:" numberless are our exhortations, and there is none to hear us. But I do not discourse during night? Fain would I do this also in the night time, and at your tables, if it were possible that one could be divided into ten thousand pieces, so as to be present with you and discourse. But if once in the week we call to you, and ye shrink back, and some of you do not even come here, and you that do come, depart having received no profit, — what shall we do? Many I know even sneer at us, that we are forever discoursing about the same things: so wearisome are we become to you by very satiety. But for this not we are to blame, but the hearers may thank themselves. For he indeed who is making good progress, rejoices to hear the same things always; it seems to be his praises that he hears spoken: but he who does not wish to get on, seems even to be annoyed, and though he hear the same thing but twice, it seems to him that he is hearing it often.

"I am pure," he says, "from the blood of all men." (v. 26.) This was fit and proper for Paul to say, but we dare not say it, conscious as we are of numberless faults. Wherefore for him the ever vigilant, ever at hand, the man enduring all things for the sake of the salvation of his disciples, it was fit and proper to say this: but we must say that of Moses, "The Lord was wroth with me for your sakes" (Deuteronomy 3:26), because ye lead us also into many sins. For when we are dispirited at seeing you make no progress, is not the greater part of our strength struck down? For what, I ask you has been done? Lo! by the grace of God we also have now passed the space of three years, not indeed night and day exhorting you, but doing this, often every third day, or every seventh. What more has come of it? We accuse, we rebuke, we weep, we are in anguish, although not openly, yet in heart. But those (inward) tears are far more bitter than these (outward ones): for these indeed bring a kind of relief to the feelings of the sorrowful, whereas those aggravate it, and bind it fast. Since when there is any cause of grief, and one cannot give vent to the sorrow, lest he should seem to be vainglorious, think what he suffers! Were it not that people would tax me with excessive love of display, you would see me each day

shedding fountains of tears: but to those my chamber is witness, and my hours of solitude. For believe me I have (at times) despaired of my own salvation, but from my mourning on your account, I have not even leisure to bemoan my own evils: so entirely are ye all in all to me. And whether I perceive you to be advancing, then, for very delight, I am not sensible of my own evils: or whether I see you not advancing, such is my grief, I again dismiss my own cares from my thoughts: brightening up on account of your good things, though I myself have evils without number, and saddened on account of your painful things, though my own successes are without number. For what hope is there for the teacher, when his flock is destroyed? What kind of life, what kind of expectation is there for him? With what sort of confidence will he stand up before God? what will he say? For grant that he has nothing laid to his charge, has no punishment to suffer, but is “pure from the blood of all men:” yet even so will he suffer a grief incurable: since fathers also though they be not liable to be called to account for their children’s sins, nevertheless have grief and vexation. And this profits them nothing, nor shields them (προϊσταται) For it is they that watch for our souls, as those that must give account.” (Hebrews 13:17.) This seems to be a fearful thing: to me this gives no concern after your destruction. For whether I give account, or not, it is no profit to me. Might it be, that ye were saved, and I to give account because of you: ye saved, and I charged with not having fulfilled my part! For my anxiety is not that you should be saved through me as the means, but only that you should be saved, no matter by what person as the instrument. Ye know not the pangs of spiritual childbirth, how overpowering they are; how he who is in travail with this birth, would rather be cut into ten thousand pieces, than see one of those to whom he has given birth perishing and undone. Whence shall we persuade you? By no other argument indeed, but by what has been done, in all that regards you we shall clear ourselves. We too shall be able to say, that in nothing have we “shrunk from declaring” to you the whole truth: nevertheless we grieve: and that we do grieve, is manifest from the numberless plans we lay and contrivances we devise. And yet we might say to ourselves, What matters it to me? I have done my part, “I am pure from” (their) “blood:” but this is not enough for comfort. If we could tear open our heart, and show it to you, ye would see with what largeness it holds (you) within it, both women and children and men; for such is the power of love, that it makes the soul more spacious

than the heaven. "Receive us," says (Paul): "we have wronged no man, ye are not straitened in us." (2 Corinthians 7:2; 6:12.) He had all Corinth in his heart, and says, "Ye are not straitened: be ye also enlarged (2 Corinthians 6:13); but I myself could not say this, for I well know, that ye both love me and receive me. But what is the profit either from my love or from yours, when the things pertaining to God thrive not in us? It is a ground for greater sorrow, an occasion of worse mischief (*λύμης*, al. *λύπης*). I have nothing to lay to your charge: "for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me." (Galatians 4:15.) "We yearn not only to [give you the Gospel, but also our own souls." (1 Thessalonians 2:8.) We are loved and we love (you): but this is not the question. But let us love Christ, "for the first commandment is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God: and the second is like unto it, And thy neighbor as thyself." (Matthew 22:37-39.) We have the second, we need the first: need the first, exceedingly, both I and you. We have it, but not as we ought. Let us love Him: ye know how great a reward is laid up for them that love Christ: let us love Him with fervor of soul, that, enjoying his goodwill, we may escape the stormy waves of this present life, and be found worthy to obtain the good things promised to them that love Him, through the grace and mercy of His only-begotten Son, with whom to the Father, together with the Holy Ghost, be glory, might, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 45

ACTS 20:32

*“And now, brethren, I commend you to God,
and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up,
and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.”*

WHAT he does when writing in an Epistle, this he does also when speaking in council from exhorting, he ends with prayer: for since he had much alarmed them by saying, “Grievous wolves shall enter in among you” (v. 29), therefore, not to overpower them, and make them lose all self-possession, observe the consolation (he gives). “And now,” he says, as always, “I commend you, brethren, to God, and to the word of His grace: that is, to His grace: it is grace that saveth. He constantly puts them in mind of grace, to make them more earnest as being debtors, and to persuade them to have confidence. “Which is able to build you up.” He does not say, to build, but, “to build up,” showing that they had (already) been built. Then he puts them in mind of the hope to come; “to give you an inheritance,” he says, “among all them which are sanctified.” Then exhortation again: “I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel.” (v. 33.) He takes away that which is the root of evils, the love of money. “Silver, or gold,” he says. He says not, I have not taken, but, not even “coveted.” No great thing this, but what follows after is great. “Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so laboring, ye ought to support the weak.” (v. 34, 35.) Observe him employed in work and not simply that, but toiling. “These hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me:” so as to put them to shame. And see how worthily of them. For he says not, Ye ought to show yourselves superior to money, but what? “to support the weak “ — not all indiscriminately — “ and to hear the word of the Lord which He spake, It is more blessed to give than to receive.” For lest any one should think that it was spoken with reference to them, and that he gave himself for an ensample, as he elsewhere says, “giving an ensample to you” (Philippians 3:17), he added the declaration of Christ, Who said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” He prayed over them while

exhorting them: he shows it both by action, — “And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all,” (v. 36) — he did not simply pray, but with much feeling: (κατανύξεως): great was the consolation — and by his saying, “I commend you to the Lord. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul’s neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more.” (v. 37, 38.) He had said, that “grievous wolves should enter in;” had said, “I am pure from the blood of all men:” and yet the thing that grieved them most of all was this, “that they should see him no more:” since indeed it was this that made the war grievous. “And they accompanied them,” it says, “unto the ship. And it came to pass, that after we had torn ourselves from them” — so much did they love him, such was their affection towards him “and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara: and finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth. Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre” (Acts 21:1-3): he came to Lycia, and having left Cyprus, he sailed down to Tyre — “for there the ship was to unlade her burden. And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.” (v. 4.) They too prophesy of the afflictions. It is so ordered that they should be spoken by them also, that none might imagine that Paul said those things without cause, and only by way of boasting. And there again they part from each other with prayer. “And when we had accomplished those days, we departed, and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed. And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again. And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day. And the next day we that were of Paul’s company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.” (v. 5-8.) Having come to Caesarea, it says, we abode with Philip, which was one of the seven. “And the same man had four-daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.” (v. 9.) But it is not these that foretell to Paul, though they were prophetesses; it is Agabus. “And as we tarried there many days, there came down from

Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." (v. 10, 11.) He who formerly had declared about the famine, the same says, This "man, who owneth this girdle, thus shall they bind." (ch. 11:28.) The same that the prophets used to do, representing events to the sight, when they spoke about the captivity — as did Ezekiel — the same did this (Agabus). "And," what is the grievous part of the business, "deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem." (v. 12.) Many even besought him not to depart, and still he would not comply. "Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart?" (v. 13.) Do you mark? Lest, having heard that saying, "I go bound in the Spirit" (ch. 20:22), you should imagine it a matter of necessity, or that he fell into it ignorantly, therefore these things are foretold. But they wept, and he comforted them, grieving at their tears. For, "what mean ye," he says, "to weep and to break my heart?" Nothing could be more affectionate: because he saw them weeping, he grieved, he that felt no pain at his own trials. "For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done." (v. 13, 14.) Ye do me wrong in doing this: for do I grieve? Then they ceased, when he said, "to break my heart." I weep, he says, for you, not on account of my own sufferings: as for those men, I am willing even to die for them. But let us look over again what has been said.

(Recapitulation.) "Silver, or gold, or apparel," etc. (ch. 20:33, 34; 1 Corinthians 9; 2 Corinthians 11.) So then, it was not in Corinth only that they did this — they that corrupted the disciples, but in Asia as well. But he nowhere casts this up as a reproach to the Ephesians, when writing to them. And why? Because he did not fall upon any subject that obliged him to speak of this. But to the Corinthians he says, "My boasting has not been stopped in the regions of Achaia." (2 Corinthians 11:10.) And he does not say, Ye did not give to me; but, "Silver, or gold, or apparel, I coveted not," that it might not seem to be their doing, that they had not given. And he does not say, From no man have I coveted the necessaries of

life, that again it might not look like accusing them: but he covertly hints as much, seeing that he provided subsistence for others as well as himself. See how he worked with earnestness, “night and day” (discoursing to others), “with tears warning each one of them.” (v. 31.) (Here) again he puts them in fear: “I have showed you all things,” he says: ye cannot take refuge in the plea of ignorance: “have shown you” by works “how that so laboring ye ought to work.” And he does not say, that to receive is bad, but that not to receive is better. For, “remember,” he says, “the words of the Lord which he spake: It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (v. 35.) And where said He this? Perhaps the Apostles delivered it by unwritten tradition; or else it is plain from recorded sayings, from) which one could infer it. For in fact here he has shown both boldness in meeting dangers, sympathy with those over whom he ruled, teaching with (unshrinking) boldness, humility, (voluntary) poverty: but, what we have here is even more than that poverty. For if He says there (in the Gospel), “If thou wilt be perfect, sell what thou hast and give to the poor” (Matthew 19:21), when, besides receiving nothing himself, he provides sustenance for others also, what could equal this? It is one degree to fling away one’s possessions; a second, to be sufficient for the supply of one’s own necessities: a third, to provide for others also; a fourth, for one to do all this) who preaches and has a right to receive. So that here is a man far better than those who merely forego possessions. “Thus it is right to support the weak:” this is indeed) sympathy with the weak; for to give from the labors of others, is easy. “And they fell on his neck,” it says, “and wept.” (v. 37.) He shows their affection also by saying, “Upon his neck,” as taking a last and yet a last embrace, such was the love they conceived from his discourse, such the spell of love that bound them. For if we groan when simply parting from each other, although we know that we shall receive one another back again, what a tearing away of themselves it must have been to them! Methinks Paul also wept. “Having torn ourselves away,” he says: he shows the violence of it by saying, “having torn ourselves away from them.” And with reason: otherwise they could never have got to sea. What means, “We came with a straight course unto Coos?” Instead of saying, “we did not go round nor make stay in other places.” Then “unto Rhodes.” (ch. 21:1.) See how he hastes on. “And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia. (v. 2.) Possibly that ship (in which they had come) was making a stay there: wherefore they shifted to

another, and not having found one going to Caesarea, but (finding this) for Phenice, they embarked in it (and pursued their voyage), having left Cyprus also and Syria: but the expression, “having left it on the left hand,” is not said simply in that meaning), but that they made speed not to get to Syria either. “We landed at Tyre.” (v. 3.) Then they tarry with the brethren seven days. Now that they were come near to Jerusalem, they no longer run. (b) “Who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.” (v. 4.) Observe how, when the Spirit does not forbid, he complies. They said, “Adventure not thyself into the theater, and he did not adventure” (ch. 19:31): often they bore him off (from dangers), and he complied: again he escaped by a window: and now, though numberless persons, so to say, beseech him, both those at Tyre and those at Caesarea, weeping also and predicting numberless dangers, he refuses to comply. And yet it is not merely), they predicted the dangers, but “said by the Spirit.” If then the Spirit bade, why did he gainsay? “By the Spirit,” that is, they knowing “by the Spirit” what would be the consequences, said to him): for of course it does not mean that the exhortation they made was by the Spirit. For they did not simply foretell to him the dangers through the Spirit), but added of themselves) that it behooved him not to go up — sparing him. But “after we had accomplished the days,” i.e. had fulfilled the appointed days, “we separated, and went on our way: they all bringing us on our way with wives and children.” (v. 5.) — See how great was the entreaty. And again they part with prayer. Also in Ptolemais they stay one day, but in Caesarea many. (v. 6-8.) (a) Now that they are near to Jerusalem, they no longer hurry. For observe, I pray you, all the days. “After the day of unleavened bread” they came “to Troas in five days” (ch. 20:6); then they there spent “seven;” in all, twelve: then to “Thasos,” to “Mytilene,” to “Trogylium” and “over against Chios,” and to “Samos” and “Miletus” (ib. 13-17); eighteen in all. Then to “Cos,” to “Rhodes,” to “Patara,” twenty-one: then say five to “Tyre;” twenty-six: there “seven;” thirty-three; “Ptolemais,” thirty-four; then to “Caesarea, many days” (ch. 21:1-10); and then, thereafter, the prophet puts them up thence. (c) When Paul has heard that he has to suffer numberless perils, then he is in haste, not flinging himself upon the dangers but accounting it to be the command of the Spirit.(e) And Agabus does not say, “They shall bind” Paul, that he may not seem to speak upon agreement with Paul), but “the man that owneth this girdle” (v. 11) — so then he had a girdle also. But when they

could not persuade him — this was why they wept — then they “held their peace.” Do you mark the resignation? do you mark the affection? “They held their peace,” it says, “saying, The will of the Lord be done.” (v. 12-14.) (g) The Lord, say they, Himself will do that which is pleasing in his sight. For they perceived that it was the will of God. Else Paul would not be so bent (upon going) — he that on all other occasions delivers himself out of dangers. (d) “And after these, days,” it says, “having taken up our baggage” — i.e. having received the supplies) necessary for the journey — “we went up to Jerusalem.” (v. 15.) “And there went with us also certain of the disciples from Caesarea, bringing us to one with whom we should lodge, one Muason, an ancient disciple of Cyprus.” (v. 16.) “And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.” (v. 17.) (f) “Bringing us,” it says, “(to him) with whom we should lodge” — not to the church: for on the former occasion (ch. 15:4), when they went up concerning the decrees, they lodged with the Church, but now with a certain “ancient disciple.” The expression) shows that the preaching had been going on a long time: whence it seems to me that this writer in the Acts epitomizes the events of many years, relating (only) the matters of chief importance. (h) So unwilling were they to burthen the Church, when there was another to lodge them; and so little did they stand upon their dignity. “The brethren,” it says, “received us gladly.” Affairs among the Jews were now full of peace: there was not much war fare among them). “Bringing us,” it says, “to one with whom we should lodge.” Paul was the guest he entertained. Perchance some one of you says: Aye, if it were given me to entertain Paul as a guest, I readily and with much eagerness would do this. Lo! it is in thy power to entertain Paul’s Master for thy guest, and thou wilt not: for “he that receiveth one of these least,” he saith, “receiveth Me.” (Matthew 18:5; Luke 9:48.) By how much the brother may be least, so much the more does Christ come to thee through him. For he that receives the great, often does it from vainglory also; but he that receives the small, does it purely for Christ’s sake. It is in thy power to entertain even the Father of Christ as thy guest, and thou wilt not: for, “I was a stranger,” He says, “and ye took me in” (Matthew 25:35): and again, “Unto one of the least of these the brethren that believe on Me, ye have done it unto Me.” (ib. 40.) Though it be not Paul, yet if it be a believer and a brother, although the least, Christ cometh to thee through him. Open thine house, take Him in. “He that receiveth a

prophet,” He saith, “shall receive a prophet’s reward.” (Matthew 10:41.) Therefore too he that receives Christ, shall receive the reward of him who has Christ for his guest. Do not thou disbelieve His words, but be believing. Himself hath said, Through them I come to thee: and that thou mayest not disbelieve, He lays down both punishments for those who do not receive, and honors for those who do receive; since He would not have done this, unless both the person honored and the person insulted were Himself. “Thou receivedst Me,” He saith, “into thy lodging, I will receive thee into the Kingdom of My Father; thou tookest away My hunger, I take away thy sins; thou sawest Me bound, I see thee loosed; thou sawest Me a stranger, I make thee a citizen of heaven; thou gavest Me bread, I give thee an entire Kingdom, that thou mayest inherit and possess it.” He saith not, “Receive,” but, “Inherit,” the word which is spoken of those who have possession by right of ownership; as when we say, “This have I inherited.” Thou didst it to Me in secret, I will proclaim it openly: and of thine acts indeed I say, that they were of free gift, but Mine are of debt. “For since thou,” He saith, “didst begin, I follow and come after: I am not ashamed to confess the benefits conferred on Me, nor from what things thou didst free Me, hunger and nakedness and wandering. Thou sawest Me bound, thou shalt not behold the fire of hell; thou sawest Me sick, thou shalt not behold the torments nor the punishments.” O hands, truly blessed, which minister in such services as these, which are accounted worthy to serve Christ! Feet which go into prisons for Christ’s sake, with ease defy the fire: no trial of bonds have they, (the hands) which saw Him bound! Thou clothedst Him with a garment, and thou puttest on a garment of salvation: thou wast in prison with Him, and with Him thou findest thyself in the Kingdom, not ashamed, knowing that thou visitedst Him. The Patriarch knew not that he was entertaining Angels, and he did entertain them. (Genesis 18:3.) Let us take shame to ourselves, I beseech you: he was sitting in mid-day, being in a foreign land, where he had none inheritance, “not so much as to set his foot on” (ch. 7:5): he was a stranger, and the stranger entertained strangers: for he was a citizen of heaven. Therefore, not even while he was on earth was he a stranger (to Him). We are rather strangers than that stranger, if we receive not strangers. He had no home, and his tent was his place of reception. And mark his liberality — he killed a calf, and kneaded fine meal: mark his ready mind — by himself and his wife: mark the unassuming manner — he worships and

beseeches them. For all these qualities ought to be in that man who entertains strangers — readiness, cheerfulness, liberality. For the soul of the stranger is abashed, and feels ashamed; and unless (his host) show excessive joy, he is as (if) slighted, and goes away, and it becomes worse than not to have received him, his being received in this way. Therefore he worships them, therefore he welcomes them with speech, therefore with a seat. For who would have hesitated, knowing that this work was done unto Him? “But we are not in a foreign land.” If we will, we shall be able to imitate him. How many of the brethren are strangers? There is a common apartment, the Church, which we call the “Xenon.” Be inquisitive (περιεργάζεσθε), sit before the doors, receive those who come yourselves; though you may not wish to take them into your houses, at any rate in some other way (receive them), by supplying them with necessaries. “Why, has not the Church means” you will say? She has: but what is that to you? that they should be fed from the common funds of the Church, can that benefit you? If another man prays, does it follow that you are not bound to pray? Wherefore do you not say, “Do not the priests pray? then why should I pray?” “But I,” you will say, “give to him who cannot be received there.” Give, though it be to that one: for what we are anxious for is this, that you should give at any rate. Hear what Paul says: “That it may relieve them that are widows indeed; and that the Church be not burdened.” (1 Timothy 5:16.) Be it how you will, only do it. But I put it, not, “that the Church be not burdened,” but, “that thou be not burdened;” for at this rate thou wilt do nothing, leaving all to the Church. This is why there is a common room set apart by the Church, that you may not say these things. “The Church,” say you, “has lands, has money, and revenues.” And has she not charges? I ask; and has she not a daily expenditure? “No doubt,” you will say. Why then do you not lend aid to her moderate means? I am ashamed indeed to say these things: however, I compel no man, if any one imagines what I am saying to be for gain. Make for yourself a guest-chamber in your own house: set up a bed there, set up a table there and a candlestick. (comp. 2 Kings 4:10.) For is it not absurd, that whereas, if soldiers should come, you have rooms set apart for them, and show much care for them, and furnish them with everything, because they keep off from you the visible war of this world, yet strangers have no place where they might abide? Gain a victory over the Church. Would you put us to shame? This do: surpass us in liberality:

have a room, to which Christ may come; say, "This is Christ's cell; this building is set apart for Him." Be it but an underground chamber, and mean, He disdains it not. "Naked and a stranger," Christ goes about, it is but a shelter He wants: afford it, though but this. Be not uncompassionate, nor inhuman; be not so earnest in worldly matters, so cold in spiritual. Let also the most faithful of thy servants be the one entrusted with this office, and let him bring in the maimed, the beggars, and the homeless. These things I say to shame you. For ye ought indeed to receive them in the upper part of your house; but if ye will not do this, then though it be below, though but where thy mules are housed, and thy servants, there receive Christ. Perchance ye shudder at hearing this. What then, when ye do not even this? Behold, I exhort, behold, I bid you; let this be a matter to be taken up in earnest. But ye do not wish it thus, perhaps? Do it some other way. There are many poor men and poor women: set apart some one (of these) constantly to remain there: let the poor man be (thine inmate) though but as a guard to thy house: let him be to thee wall and fence, shield and spear. Where alms are, the devil dares not approach, nor any other evil thing. Let us not overlook so great a gain. But now a place is set apart for a chariot, and for litters (**βαστερνίοις**) another; but for Christ Who is wandering, not even one! Abraham received the strangers in the place where he abode himself; his wife stood in the place of a servant, the guests in the place of masters. He knew not that he was receiving Christ; knew not that he was receiving Angels; so that had he known it, he would have lavished his whole substance. But we, who know that we receive Christ, show not even so much zeal as he did who thought that he was receiving men. "But they are impostors," you will say, "many of them, and unthankful." And for this the greater thy reward. when thou receivest for the sake of Christ's name. For if thou knowest indeed that they are impostors, receive them not into thy house: but if thou dost not know this, why dost thou accuse them lightly? "Therefore I tell them to go to the receiving house." But what kind of excuse is there for us, when we do not even receive those whom we know, but shut our doors against all? Let our house be Christ's general receptacle: let us demand of them as a reward, not money, but that they make our house the receptacle for Christ; let us run about everywhere, let us drag them in, let us seize our booty: greater are the benefits we receive than what we confer. He does not bid thee kill a calf: give thou bread to the hungry, raiment to the naked,

shelter to the stranger. But that thou mayest not make this thy pretext, there is a common apartment, that of the Church; throw thy money into that, and then thou hast received them: since (Abraham) there had the reward of those things also which were done by his servants. "He gave the calf to a young man, and he hastened to dress it." (Genesis 18:7.) So well trained were his servants also! They ran, and murmured not as ours do: for he had made them pious. He drew them out to war, and they murmured not: so well disciplined were they. (Genesis 14:14.) For he had equal care for all as for himself: he all but said as Job did, "We were alike formed in the same womb." (Job 33:6.) Therefore let us also take thought for their salvation, and let us make it our duty to care for our servants, that they may be good; and let our servants also be instructed in the things pertaining to God. Then will virtue not be difficult to us, if we train them orderly. Just as in war, when the soldiers are well-disciplined, the general carries on war easily, but the contrary happens, when this is not so; and when the sailors too are of one mind, the pilot easily handles the rudder-strings; so here likewise. For say now, if thy servants have been so schooled, thou wilt not be easily exasperated, thou wilt not have to find fault, wilt not be made angry, wilt not need to abuse them. It may be, thou wilt even stand in awe of thy servants, if (they), are worthy of admiration, and they will be helpers with thee, and will give thee good counsel. But from all these shall all things proceed that are pleasing to God, and thus shall the whole house be filled with blessing, and we, performing things pleasing to God, shall enjoy abundant succor from above, unto which may we all attain, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost, together be glory, might, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 46

ACTS 21:18, 19

“And the day following Paul went in with us unto James: and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.”

THIs was the Bishop of Jerusalem; and to him (Paul) is sent on an earlier occasion. This (James) was brother of the Lord; a great and admirable man. (To him, it says,) “Paul entered in with us.” Mark the (Bishop’s) unassuming behavior: “and the elders” (were present). Again Paul relates to them the things relating to the Gentiles, not indulging in vainglory, God forbid, but wishing to show forth the mercy of God, and to fill them with great joy. (ch. 15.) See accordingly: “when they heard it,” it says, “they glorified God,” — not praised nor admired Paul: for in such wise had he narrated, as referring all to Him— “and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believed.” Observe with what modest deference they too speak: “they said to him:” not (James) as Bishop discourses authoritatively, but they take Paul as partner with them in their view; “Thou seest, brother:” as though immediately and at the outset apologizing for themselves, and saying, “We did not wish this. Seest thou! the necessity of the thing? ‘how many thousands,’ say they, ‘of Jews there are which’ have come together.” And they say not, “how many thousands we have made catechumens,” but, “there are. And these,” say they, “are all zealous for the law.” (v. 20.) Two reasons — the number of them, and their views. For neither had they been few, would it have been right to despise them: nor, if they were many and did not all cling to the law, would there have been need to make much account of them. Then also a third cause is given: “And they all,” it says, “have been informed of thee “ — they say not, “have heard,” but *κατηχήθησαν*, that is, so they have believed, and have been taught, “that thou teachest apostasy from Moses to all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, by telling them not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.” (v. 21.) “What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee” (v. 22, 23): they say these things as advising, not

as commanding. “We have four men which have a vow on them; them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them.” Make thy defense in act, not in word — “that they may shave themselves,” it says, “and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law” (v. 23, 24): they say not, “teachest,” but, of superabundance, “that thou thyself also keepest the law.” For of course not this was the matter of chief interest, whether he did not teach others, but, that he did himself observe the law. “What then” (he might say), “if the Gentiles should learn it? I shall injure them.” How so? say they, seeing that even we, the teachers of the Jews, have sent unto them. “As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have, written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.” (v. 25.) Here with a kind of remonstrance (ἐντροπετικῶς), As “we,” say they, commanded them, although we are preachers to the Jews, so do thou, although a preacher to the Gentiles, cooperate with us. Observe Paul: he does not say, “Well, but I can bring forward Timothy, whom I circumcised: well, but I can satisfy them by what I have to say (of myself):” but he complied, and did all: for in fact thus was it expedient (to do). For it was one thing to take (effectual) measures for clearing himself, and another to have done these things without the knowledge of any (of the parties). It was a step open to no suspicion, the fact of his even bearing the expenses. “Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, signifying the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.” (v. 26.) “Signifying,” **διαγγέλλον**, i.e. **καταγγέλλον**, publicly notifying: so that it was he who made himself conspicuous. “And when the seven days were about to be completed, the Jews from Asia” — for (his arrival) most keeps times with theirs — “when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.” (v. 27, 28.) Mark their habitual conduct, how turbulent we everywhere find it, how men who with or without reason make a clamor in the midst. “For they had seen before with him in the city

Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple. And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple and forthwith the doors were shut,” (v. 29, 30.) “Men of Israel,” it says, “help: this is the man that (teaches) against the people, and the law, and this place.” — the things which most trouble them, the Temple and the Law. And Paul does not tax the Apostles with being the cause of these things to him. “And they drew him,” it says, “out of the Temple: and the doors were shut.” For they wished to kill him; and therefore were dragging him out, to do this with greater security. “And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the tribune of the cohort, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul. Then the tribune came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done. And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude.” (v. 31-34.) But the tribune having come down delivered him, and “commanded him to be bound with two chains:” (hereby) appeasing the anger of the people. “And when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle. And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was born of the Soldiers for the violence of the people. For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him!” (v. 34-36.) What means, “Away with him?” that is, what they say with us according to the Roman custom, To the standards with him! “And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the tribune, May I speak unto thee?” (v. 37.) In the act of being born along up the stairs, he requests to say something to the tribune: and observe how quietly he does it. “May I speak unto thee?” he says. “Who said, Canst thou speak Greek? Art thou not then that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?” (v. 38.) For (this Egyptian) was a revolutionary and seditious person. With regard to this then Paul clears himself, and

(Recapitulation.) “Do therefore this that we say unto thee,” etc. (v. 23, 24.) He shows that it was not necessary to do this upon principle (**προηγουμένως**) — whence also they obtain his compliance — but that it was economy and condescension. “As touching the Gentiles,” etc. (v. 25.)

Why, then, this was no hindrance to the preaching, seeing they themselves legislated for them to this effect. Why, then, in his taking Peter to task he does not absolutely ($\acute{\alpha}\pi\lambda\acute{\omega}\varsigma$) charge him with doing wrong: for precisely what he does on this occasion himself, the same does Peter on that occasion, (merely) holding his peace, and establishing his doctrine. (Galatians 2:11.) And he says not, For why? it is not right to teach those among the Gentiles. "It is not enough to have not (so) preached there, but there was need also to do something more, that those may be persuaded that thou observest the law. The affair is one of condescension, be not alarmed." They do not advise him (to this course) sooner, until they have first spoken of the economy and the gain. "And besides, the doing this in Jerusalem, is a thing to be born. 'Do thou this thing therefore' here, that it may be in thy power abroad to do the other." (b) "The next day," it says, "he took them" (v. 26): he deferred it not; for when there is economy in the case, this is the way of it. (a) "Jews from Asia having seen him," for it was natural that they were spending some days there, "in the Temple." (v. 27.) (c) Mark the economy (of Providence) that appeared (in this). (p. 279 note) After the (believing) Jews had been persuaded (concerning him), then it is that those (Jews of Asia) set upon him in order that those (believing Jews) may not also set upon him. Help, say they, "ye men of Israel!" as though it were some (monster) difficult to be caught, and hard to be overcome, that has fallen into their hands. "All men," they say, "everywhere, he teaseth not to teach;" not here only. And then the accusation (is) more aggravated by the present circumstances. "And yet more," say they, "he has polluted the temple, having brought into it men who are Greeks." (v. 28.) And yet in Christ's time there "came up (Greeks) to worship" (John 12:20): true, but here it speaks of Greeks who had no mind to worship. "And they seized Paul," etc. (v. 30-35.) They no longer wanted laws nor courts of justice: they also beat him. But he forbore to make his defense then; he made it afterward: with reason; for they would not even have heard him then. Pray, why did they cry, "Away with him?" (v. 36.) They feared he might escape them. Observe how submissively Paul speaks to the tribune. "May I speak unto thee? Then art not thou that Egyptian?" (v. 37, 38.) This Egyptian, namely, was a cheat and impostor, and the devil expected to cast a cloud over (the Gospel) through him, and implicate both Christ and His Apostles in the charges pertaining to those (impostors): but he prevailed nothing, nay the

truth became even more brilliant, being nothing defeated by the machinations of the devil, nay rather shining forth all the more. Since if there had not been impostors, and then these (Christ and His Apostles) had prevailed, perhaps some one might have laid hold upon this: but when those impostors did actually appear, this is the wonder. "In order," says (the Apostle), "that they which are approved may be made manifest." (1 Corinthians 11:19.) And Gamaliel says, "Before these days stood up Theudas." Then let us not grieve that heresies exist, seeing that false Christs wished to attack even Christ both before this and after; with a view to throw Him into the shade, but on every occasion we find the truth shining out transparent. So it was with the Prophets: there were false prophets, and by contrast with these they shone the more: just as disease enhances health, and darkness light, and tempest calm. There is no room left for the Greeks to say that (our teachers) were impostors and mountebanks: for those (that were such) were exposed. It was the same in the case of Moses: God suffered the magicians, on purpose that Moses might not be suspected to be a magician: He let them teach all men to what length magic can go in making a fantastic show: beyond this point they deceived not, but themselves confessed their defeat. Impostors do us no harm, rather do us good, if we will apply our mind to the matter. What then, you will say, if we are partners with them in common estimation? The estimation is not among us, but with those who have no judgment. Let not us greatly care for the estimation of the many, nor mind it more than needs. To God we live, not to men: in heaven we have our conversation, not on earth: there lie the awards and the prizes of our labors, thence we look for our praises, thence for our crowns. Thus far let us trouble ourselves about men — that we do not give and afford them a handle against us. But if, though we afford none, those choose to accuse us thoughtlessly and without discrimination, let us laugh, not weep. "Provide" thou "things honest before the Lord and before men" (2 Corinthians 8:21): if, though thou provide things honest, that man derides, give thyself no more concern (for that). Thou hast thy patterns in the Scriptures. For, saith he, "do I now persuade men or God?" (Galatians 1:10) and again, "We persuade men, but we are made manifest unto God." (2 Corinthians 5:11.) And Christ (spoke) thus of them that take offense: "Let them alone, they be blind guides of the blind (Matthew 15:14); and again, "Woe unto you, when all men speak well of you" (Luke 6:26): and

again, “Let your works shine, that men may see, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16.) And, “Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depths of the sea.” (Matthew 18:6.) These sayings are not contrary, nay, they are exceedingly in accord. For when the offense is with us, then woe unto us, but when not with us, not so. And again, Woe to (that man) through whom “the name of God is blasphemed.” (Romans 2:24.) How then if I do what is right in anything, but another blasphemes? That is nothing to me, but only to him: for through him (God) was blasphemed. “And how is it possible to do what is right in anything, and, yet give a handle to the rest?” Whence will ye that. I bring examples — from present, or from old times? Not to be easily scared (ψοφοδεεῖς), shall we speak to the very point now in hand? Paul judaized in Jerusalem, but in Antioch not so: he judaized, and they were offended (p. 282, note), but those had no right to be offended. He is said to have saluted both Nero’s cupbearer and his concubine: what, think ye, must they have said against him because of this? But they had no right to do so. Since, if he drew them to him for loose living or any wicked acts, one might well be offended: but if in order to right living, what is there to be offended at? Let me mention something that happened to one of my acquaintance. The wrath of God once fell upon (a city), and he being very young (was) in the order of deacon. The bishop was absent at the time, and of the presbyters none took thought for the matter, but indiscriminately they caused in one night immense numbers of people to be baptized all at once, and they did indiscriminately receive baptism, all of them ignorant of everything: these he took apart by a hundred or two hundred together, and discoursed to them, not upon any other subject, but only on the sacraments, so that the unbaptized also were not allowed to be present. Many thought he did this because he coveted rule. But he cared not for that: neither however did he continue the thing for a (longer) time, but immediately desisted. When then? Was he the cause of the scandal? I think not. For if indeed he had done this without cause, they might with reason have ascribed it to him: and so again, if he had continued to do so. For when aught of what is pleasing to God is hindered by another’s taking offense, it is right to take no notice: but then is the time to mind it, when we are not forced because of him to offend God. For, say, if, while we are discoursing and putting drunkards to shame (σκωπτόντων), any one take

offense — am I to give over speaking? Hear Christ say, “Will ye also go away?” (John 6:67.) So then, the right thing is, neither to take no notice, nor to take too much, of the weakness of the many. Do we not see the physicians acting thus: how, when it may be done, they humor the whims of their patients, but when the gratification does harm, then they will not spare? Always it is good to know the right mean. Many reviled, because a certain beautiful virgin stayed, and they railed upon those who catechized (her). What then? Was it their duty to desist for that? By no means. For let us not look to this only, whether some be offended, but whether they are justly offended, and so that it is no hurt to ourselves (to give way). “If meat,” saith (Paul), “offend my brother, I will eat no meat as long as the world lasts.” (1 Corinthians 8:13.) With reason: for the not eating did (him) no harm. If however it offend him, that I wish to renounce (**ἀποτάξασθαι**) (the world), it is not right to mind him. And whom, you will ask, does this offend? Many, to my knowledge. When therefore the hindrance is a thing indifferent, let (the thing) be done . Else, if we were to look only to this, many are the things we have to desist from: just as, on the other hand, if we should despise (all objections), we have to destroy many (brethren). As in fact Paul also took thought beforehand concerning offense: “Lest,” he says, “in this liberality which is administered by us:” for it was attended with no loss (to him) to obviate an ill surmise. But when we fall into such a necessity as that great evils should ensue through the other’s taking offense let us pay no heed to that person. He has to thank himself for it, and we are not now accountable, for it was not possible to spare him without hurt (to ourselves). Some were offended, because certain believers sat down to meat in (heathen) temples. It was not right to sit down: for no harm came of this (their not doing it). They were offended, because Peter ate with the Gentiles. But he indeed spared them, but (Paul) not so. On all occasions it behooves us in following the laws of God to take great pains that we give no matter of offense; that both ourselves may not have to answer for it, and may have mercy vouchsafed us from God, by the grace and loving-kindness of His only-begotten Son, with Whom to the Father and Holy Ghost together be glory, dominion, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 47

ACTS 21:39, 40

“But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people. And when he had given him license, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying.”

OBSERVE how, when he discourses to those that are without, he does not decline availing himself of the aids afforded by the laws. Here he awes the tribune by the name of his city. And again, elsewhere he said, “Openly, uncondemned, Romans as we are, they have cast us into prison.” (ch. 19:37.) For since the tribune said, “Art thou that Egyptian?” he immediately drew him off from that surmise: then, that he may not be thought to deny his nation, he says at once, “I am a Jew:” he means his religion? (b) What then? he did not deny (that he was a Christian): God forbid: for he was both a Jew and a Christian, observing what things he ought: since indeed he, most of all men, did obey the law: (a) as in fact he elsewhere calls himself, “Under the law to Christ.” (1 Corinthians 9:21.) What is this, I pray? (c) The man that believes in Christ. And when discoursing with Peter, he says: “We, Jews by nature. — But I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.” (Galatians 2:15.) And this is a proof, that he does not speak lies, seeing he takes all as his witnesses. Observe again how mildly he speaks. This again is a very strong argument that he is chargeable with no crime, his being so ready to make his defense, and his wishing to come to discourse with the people of the Jews. See a man well-prepared (*τεταγμένον ἄνδρα*)! — Mark the providential ordering of the thing: unless the tribune had come, unless he had bound him, he would not have desired to speak for his defense, he would not have obtained the silence he did. “Standing on the stairs.” Then there was the additional facility afforded by the locality, that he should have a high place to harangue them from — in chains too! What spectacle could be equal to this, to see Paul, bound with two chains, and haranguing the people! (To see him,) how he was not a whit perturbed, not a whit confused; how, seeing as he did so great a multitude all hostility against

him, the ruler standing by, he first of all made them desist from their anger: then, how prudently (he does this). Just what he does in his Epistle to the Hebrews, the same he does here: first he attracts them by the sound of their common mother tongue: then by his mildness itself. “He spake unto them,” it says, “in the Hebrew tongue, saying, Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defense which I make now unto you.” (ch. 22:1.) Mark his address, at once so free from all flattery, and so expressive of meekness. For he says not, “Masters,” nor “Lords,” but, “Brethren,” just the word they most liked: “I am no alien from you,” he says, nor “against you.” “Men,” he says, “brethren, and fathers:” this, a term of honor, that of kindred. “Hear ye,” says he, “my” — he says not, “teaching,” nor “harangue,” but, “my defense which I now make unto you.” He puts himself in the posture of a suppliant. “And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence.” (v. 2.) Do you observe how the using the same tongue subdued them? In fact, they had a sort of awe for that language. Observe also how he prepares the way for his discourse, beginning thus: “I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cihcia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.” (v. 3.) “I am a man,” he says, “which am a Jew:” which thing they liked most of all to hear; “born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia.” That they may not again think him to be of another nation, he adds his religion: “but brought up in this city.” (p. 282, note .) He shows how great was his zeal for the worship, inasmuch as having left his native city, which was so great and so remote too, he chose to be brought up here for the Law’s sake. See how from the beginning he attached himself to the law. But this he says, not only to defend himself to them, but to show that not by human intent was he led to the preaching of the Gospel, but by a Divine power: else, having been so educated, he would not have suddenly changed. For if indeed he had been one of the common order of men, it might have been reasonable to suspect this: but if he was of the number of those who were most of all bound by the law, it was not likely that he should change lightly, and without strong necessity. But perhaps some one may say: “To have been brought up here proves nothing: for what if thou camest here for the purpose of trading, or for some other cause?” Therefore he says, “at the feet of Gamaliel:” and not simply, “by Gamaliel,” but “at his feet,” showing his perseverance, his

assiduity, his zeal for the hearing, and his great reverence for the man. “Taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers.” Not simply, “the law,” but “the law of the fathers;” showing that he was such from the beginning, and not merely one that knew the Law. All this seems indeed to be spoken on their side, but in fact it told against them, since he, knowing the law, forsook it. “Yes: but what if thou didst indeed know the law accurately, but dost not vindicate it, no, nor love it?” “Being a zealot,” he adds: not simply (one that knew it). Then, since it was a high encomium he had passed upon himself, he makes it theirs as well as his, adding, “As ye all are this day.” For he shows that they act not from any human object, but from zeal for God; gratifying them, and preoccupying their minds, and getting a hold upon them in a way that did no harm. Then he brings forward proofs also, saying, “and I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders” (v. 4, 5): “How does this appear.” As witnesses he brings forward the high-priest himself and the elders. He says indeed, “Being a zealot, as ye” (Hom. 19:p. 123): but he shows by his actions, that he went beyond them. “For I did not wait for an opportunity of seizing them: I both stirred up the priests, and undertook journeys: I did not confine my attacks, as ye did, to men, I extended them to women also: “both binding, and casting into prisons both men and women.” This testimony is incontrovertible; the (unbelief) of the Jews (is left) without excuse. See how many witnesses he brings forward, the elders, the high-priest, and those in the city. Observe his defense, how it is not of cowardly fear (for himself, that he pleads), no, but for teaching and indoctrination. For had not the hearers been stones, they would have felt the force of what he was saying. For up to this point he had themselves as witnesses: the rest, however, was without witnesses: “From whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished. And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And I answered, Who are Thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, Whom thou persecutest.” (v. 6, 7, 8.) Why then, these very things ought to have been held worthy of credit, from those

that went before: otherwise he would not have undergone such a revolution. How if he is only making a fine story of it, say you? Answer me, Why did he suddenly fling away all this zeal? Because he looked for honor? And yet he got just the contrary. But an easy life, perhaps? No, nor that either. Well but something else? Why it is not in the power of thought to invent any other object. So then, leaving it to themselves to draw the inference, he narrates the facts. "As I came nigh," he says, "unto Damascus, about noonday." See how great was the excess of the light. What if he is only making a fine story, say you? Those who were with him are witnesses, who led him by the hand, who saw the light. "And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of Him that spake to me." (v. 9.) But in another place he says, "Hearing the voice, but seeing no man." (Acts 9:7.) It is not at variance: no, there were two voices, that of Paul and the Lord's voice: in that place, the writer means Paul's voice (Horn. 19:P. 124, note); as in fact (Paul) here adds, "The voice of Him that spake unto me. Seeing no man:" he does not say, that they did not see the light: but, "no man," that is, "none speaking." And good reason that it should be so, since it behooved him alone to have that voice vouchsafed unto him. For if indeed they also had heard it, (the miracle) would not have been so great. Since persons of grosser minds are persuaded more by sight, those saw the light, and were afraid. In fact, neither did the light take so much effect on them, as it did on him: for it even blinded his eyes: by that which befell him, (God) gave them also an opportunity of recovering their sight, if they had the mind. It seems to me at least, that their not believing was providentially ordered, that they might be unexceptionable witnesses. "And he said unto me" it says, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, Whom thou persecutest." (comp. ch. 9:5.) Well is the name of the city (Nazareth) also added, that they might recognize (the Person): moreover, the Apostles also spoke thus. (ch. 2:22; 4:10; 10:38.) And Himself bore witness, that they were persecuting Him. "And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of Him that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews

which dwelt there, came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. Enter into the city," it says, "and there it shall be spoken to thee of all that is appointed for thee to do." (v. 10-13.) Lo! again another witness. And see how unexceptionable he makes him also. "And one Ananias," he says, "a devout man according to the law," — so far is it from being anything alien! — "having a good report of all the Jews that dwelt" (there). "And I in the same hour received sight." Then follows the testimony born by the facts. Observe how it is interwoven, of persons and facts; and the persons, both of their own and of aliens: the priests, the elders, and his fellow-travelers: the facts, what he did and what was done to him: and facts bear witness to facts, not persons only. Then Ananias, an alien; then the fact itself, the recovery of sight; then a great prophecy. "And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know His will, and see That Just One." (v. 14.) It is well said, "Of the fathers," to show that they were not Jews, but aliens from the law, and that it was not from zeal (for the law) that they were acting. "That thou shouldest know His will." Why then His will is this. See how in the form of narrative it is teaching. "And see That Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. For thou shall be His witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And see," he says, "that Just One." (v. 15.) For the present he says no more than this: if He is Just, they are guilty. "And hear the voice of His mouth." See how high he raises the fact! "For thou shall be His witness — for this, because thou wilt not betray the sight and hearing (i.e. "prove false to") — "both of what thou hast seen, and of what thou hast heard:" by means of both the senses he claims his faith, fullness — "to all men. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on His name." (v. 16.) Here it is a great thing he has uttered. For he said not, "Be baptized in His name:" but, "calling on the name of Christ." It shows that He is God: since it is not lawful to "call upon" any other, save God. Then he shows also, that he himself was not compelled: for, "I said," says he, "What must I do?" Nothing is (left) without witness: no; he brings forward the witness of a whole city, seeing they had beheld him led by the hand. But see the prophecy fulfilled. "To all men," it is said. For he did become a witness to Him, and a witness as it ought to be; by what he suffered, by what he did, and by what he said. Such witnesses ought we also to be, and not to betray the things we have been entrusted withal: I

speak not only of doctrines, but also of the manner of life. For observe: because he had seen, because he had heard, he bears witness to all men, and nothing hindered him. We too bear witness (Mod. text "have heard") that there is a Resurrection and numberless good things: we are bound to bear witness of this to all men. "Yes, and we do bear witness," you will say, "and do believe." How; when ye act the contrary? Say now: if any one should call himself a Christian, and then having apostatized should hold with the Jews, would this testimony suffice? By no means: for men would desire the testimony which is born by the actions. Just so, if we say that there is a Resurrection and numberless good things, and then despise those things and prefer the things here, who will believe us? Not what we say, but what we do, is what all men look to. "Thou shalt be a witness," it says, "unto all men:" not only to the friendly, but also to the unbelievers: for this is what witnesses are for; not to persuade those who know, but those who know not. Let us be trustworthy witnesses. But how shall we be trustworthy? By the life we lead. The Jews assaulted him: our passions assault us, bidding us abjure our testimony. But let us not obey them: we are witnesses from God. (Christ) is judged that He is not God: He has sent us to bear witness to Him. Let us bear witness and persuade those who have to decide the point: if we do not bear witness, we have to answer for their error also. But if in a court of justice, where worldly matters come in question, nobody would receive a witness full of numberless vices, much less here, where such (and so great) are the matters to be considered. We say, that we have heard Christ, and that we believe the things which He has promised: Show it, say they, by your works: for your life bears witness of the contrary — that ye do not believe. Say, shall we look at the money-getting people, the rapacious, the covetous? the people that mourn and wail, that build and busy themselves in all sorts of things, as though they were never to die? "Ye do not believe that ye shall die, a thing so plain and evident: and how shall we believe you when ye bear witness?" For there are, there are many men, whose state of mind is just as if they were not to die. For when in a lengthened old age they set about building and planting, when will they take death into their calculations? It will be no small punishment to us that we were called to bear witness, but were not able to bear witness of the things that we have seen. We have seen Angels with our eyes, yea, more clearly than those who have (visibly) beheld them. We shall be (Mud. text "Then let us be") witnesses to Christ:

for not those only are “martyrs,” (or witnesses, whom we so call), but ourselves also. This is why they are called martyrs, because when bidden to abjure (the faith), they endure all things, that they may speak the truth: and we, when we are bidden by our passions to abjure, let us not be overcome. Gold saith: Say that Christ is not Christ. Then listen not to it as to God, but despise its biddings. The evil lusts “profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him.” (Titus 1:16.) For this is not to witness, but the contrary. And indeed that others should deny, (Him) is nothing wonderful: but that we who have been called to bear witness should deny Him, is a grievous and a heinous thing: this of all things does the greatest hurt to our cause. “It shall be to (your)selves for a testimony.” (Luke 21:13), He saith: but (this is) when we ourselves stand to it firmly. If we would all bear witness to Christ, we should quickly persuade the greater number of the heathen. It is a great thing, my beloved, the life (one leads). Let a man be savage as a beast, let him openly condemn thee on account of thy doctrine, yet he secretly approves, yet he will praise, yet he will admire. For say, whence can an excellent life proceed? From no source, except from a Divine Power working in us. “What if there be heathen also of such a character?” If anywhere any of them be such, it is partly from nature, partly from vainglory. Wilt thou learn what a brilliancy there is in a good life, what a force of persuasion it has? Many of the heretics have thus prevailed, and while their doctrines are corrupt, yet the greater part of men out of reverence for their (virtuous) life did not go on to examine their doctrine: and many even condemning them on account of their doctrine, reverence them on account of their life: not rightly indeed, but still so it is, that they do thus feel (towards them). This has brought slanders on the awful articles of our creed, this has turned everything upside down, that no one takes any account of good living: this is a mischief to the faith. We say that Christ is God; numberless other arguments we bring forward, and this one among the rest, that He has persuaded all men to live rightly: but this is the case with few. The badness of the life is a mischief to the doctrine of the Resurrection, to that of the immortality of the soul, to that of the Judgment: many other (false doctrines) too it draws on with itself, fate, necessity, denial of a Providence. For the soul being immersed in numberless vices, by way of consolations to itself tries to devise these, that it may not be pained in having to reflect that there is a Judgment, and that virtue and vice lie in our

own power. (Such a) life works numberless evils, it makes men beasts, and more irrational than beasts: for what things are in each several nature of the beasts, these it has often collected together in one man, and turned everything upside down. This is why the devil has brought in the doctrine of Fate: this is why he has said that the world is without a Providence (Hom. 2:p. 15): this is why he advances his hypothesis of good natures, and evil natures, and his hypothesis of evil (uncreated and) without beginning, and material (in its essence): and, in short, all the rest of it, that he may ruin our life. For it is not possible for a man who is of such a life either to recover himself from corrupt doctrines, or to remain in a sound faith: but of inevitable necessity he must receive all this. For I do not think, for my part, that of those who do not live aright, there could be easily found any who do not hold numberless satanical devices — as, that there is a nativity (or birth-fate) (γένεσις), that things happen at random, that all is haphazard and chancemedley. Wherefore I beseech you let us have a care for good living, that we may not receive evil doctrines. Cain received for punishment that he should be (ever) groaning and trembling. (Genesis 4:14.) Such are the wicked, and being conscious within themselves of numberless bad things, often they start out of their sleep, their thoughts are full of tumult, their eyes full of perturbation; everything is fraught for them with misgivings, everything alarms them, their soul is replete with grievous expectation and cowardly apprehension, contracted with impotent fear and trembling. Nothing can be more effeminate than such a soul, nothing more inane. Like madmen, it has no self-possession. For it were well for it that in the enjoyment of calm and quiet it were enabled to take knowledge of its proper nobility. But when all things terrify and throw it into perturbation, dreams, and words, and gestures, and forebodings, indiscriminately, when will it be able to look into itself, being thus troubled and amazed? Let us therefore do away with its fear, let us break asunder its bonds. For were there no other punishment, what punishment could exceed this — to be living always in fear, never to have confidence, never to be at ease? Therefore knowing these things assuredly, let us keep ourselves in a state of calm and be careful to practice virtue, that maintaining both sound doctrines and an upright life, we may without offense pass through this life present, and be enabled to attain unto the good things which God hath promised to them that love Him, through the grace and mercy of His only-begotten Son, with Whom to the Father and

the Holy Ghost together be glory, might, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 48

ACTS 22:17-20

“And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, 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.”

SEE how he thrusts himself (into danger), I came, he says, after that vision, “to Jerusalem. I was in a trance,” etc. Again, this is without witness: but observe, the witness follows from the result. He said, “They will not receive thy testimony:” they did not receive it. And yet from calculations of reason the surmise should have been this, that they would assuredly receive him. For I was the man that made war upon the Christians: so that they ought to have received him. Here he establishes two things: both that they are without excuse, since they persecuted him contrary to all likelihood or calculation of reason; and, that Christ was God, as prophesying things contrary to expectation, and as not looking to past things, but fore-knowing the things to come. How then does He say, “He shall bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and children of Israel?” (Acts 9:15.) Not, certainly persuade. Besides which, on other occasions we find the Jews were persuaded, but here they were not. Where most of all they ought to have been persuaded, as knowing his former zeal (in their cause), here they were not persuaded. “And when the blood of Thy martyr Stephen,” etc. See where again his discourse terminates, namely, in the forcible main point (εἰς τὸ ἰσχυρὸν κεφάλαιον): that it was he that persecuted, and not only persecuted but killed, nay, had he ten thousand hands (μυρίασι χερσὶν ἀναιρῶν) would have used them all to kill Stephen. He reminded them of the murderous spirit heinously indulged (by him and them). Then of course above all they would not endure him, since this convicted them; and truly the prophecy was having its fulfillment: great the zeal, vehement the accusation, and the Jews themselves witnesses of the truth of Christ! “And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the

Gentiles. And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.” (v. 21, 22.) The Jews would not endure to hear out all his harangue, but excessively fired by their wrath, they shouted, it says, “Away with him; for it is not fit that he should live. And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air, the tribune commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.” (v. 23, 24.) Whereas both the tribune ought to have examined whether these things were so — yes, and the Jews themselves too — or, if they were not so, to have ordered him to be scourged, he “bade examine him by scourging, that he might know for what cause they so clamored against him.” And yet he ought to have learnt from those clamorers, and to have asked whether they laid hold upon aught of the things spoken: instead of that, without more ado he indulges his arbitrary will and pleasure, and acts with a view to gratify them: for he did not look to this, how he should do a righteous thing, but only how he might stop their rage unrighteous as it was. “And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman and uncondemned?” (v. 25.) Paul lied not, God forbid: for he was a Roman. if there was nothing else, he would have been afraid (to pretend this), lest he should be found out, and suffer a worse punishment. (See Sueton. Vit. Claud. 25.) And observe he does not say it peremptorily (ἀπλῶς), but, “Is it lawful for you?” The charges brought are two, both its being without examination, and his being a Roman. They held this as a great privilege, at that time: for they say that (it was only) from the time of Hadrian that all were named Romans, but of old it was not so. He would have been contemptible had he been scourged: but as it is, he puts *them* into greater fear (than they him). Had they scourged him, they would also have dismissed the whole matter, or even have killed him; but as it is, the result is not so. See how God permits many (good results) to be brought about quite in a human way, both in the case of the Apostles and of the rest (of mankind). Mark how they suspected the thing to be a pretext, and that in calling himself a Roman, Paul lied: perhaps surmising this from his poverty. “When the centurion heard that, he went and told the tribune, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. Then the tribune came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He

said, Yea. And the tribune answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the tribune also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.” (v. 26-29.) — “But I,” he says, “was free born.” So then his father also was a Roman. What then comes of this? He bound him, and brought him down to the Jews. “On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty whereof he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.” (v. 30.) He discourses not now to the multitude, nor to the people. “And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.” (ch. 23:1.) What he means is this: I am not conscious to myself of having wronged you at all, or of having done anything worthy of these bonds. What then said the high priest? Right justly, and ruler-like, and mildly: “And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God’s high priest? Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.” (v. 3-5.) Because “I knew not that he was high priest.” Some say, Why then does he defend himself as if it was matter of accusation, and adds, “Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people?” For if he were not the ruler, was it right for no better reason than that to abuse (him or any) other? He says himself, “Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it” (1 Corinthians 4:12); but here he does the contrary, and not only reviles, but curses. They are the words of boldness, rather than of anger; he did not choose to appear in a contemptible light to the tribune. For suppose the tribune himself had spared to scourge him, only as he was about to be delivered up to the Jews, his being beaten by their servants would have more emboldened him: this is why Paul does not attack the servant, but the person who gave the order. But that saying, “Thou whited wall, and dost thou sit to judge me after the law?” (is) instead of, Being (thyself) a culprit: as if he had said, And (thyself) worthy of stripes without number. See accordingly how greatly they were struck with his boldness; for

whereas the point was to have overthrown the whole matter, they rather commend him. (*infra*, 5:9.) “For it is written,” etc. He wishes to show that he thus speaks, not from fear, nor because (Ananias) did not deserve to be called this, but from obedience to the law in this point also. And indeed I am fully persuaded that he did not know that it was the high priest, since he had returned now after a long interval, and was not in the habit of constant intercourse with the Jews; seeing him too in the midst among many others: for the high priest was no longer easy to be seen at a glance, there being many of them and diverse. So, it seems to me, in this also he spoke with a view to his plea against them: by way of showing that he does obey the law; therefore he (thus) exculpates himself.

(Recapitulation.) (b) But let us review what has been said. (a) “And when I was came again to Jerusalem,” etc. (v. 17.) How was it, that being a Jew, and there brought up and taught, he did not stay there? Nor did he abide there, unless he had a mind to furnish numberless occasions against him: everywhere just like an exile, fleeing about from place to place.(c) “While I prayed in the temple,” he says, “it came to pass that I was in a trance.” (To show) that it was not simply a phantom of the imagination, therefore “while he prayed” (the Lord) stood by him. And he shows that it was not from fear of their dangers that he fled, but because they would “not receive” his “testimony.” (v. 18.) But why said he “They know I imprisoned?” (v. 19.) Not to gainsay Christ, but because he wished to learn this which was so contrary to all reasonable expectation. Christ, however, did not teach him (this), but only bade him depart, and he obeys: so obedient is he. “And they lifted up their voices,” it says, “and said, Away with him: it is not fit that this fellow should live.” (v. 22.) Nay, ye are the persons not fit to live; not he, who in everything obeys God. O villains and murderers! “And shaking out their clothes,” it says, “they threw dust into the air” (v. 23), to make insurrection more fierce, because they wished to frighten the governor. And observe; they do not say what the charge was, as in fact they had nothing to allege, but only think to strike terror by their shouting. “The tribune commanded,” etc. and yet he ought to have learnt from the accusers, “wherefore they cried so against him. And as they bound him, etc. And the chief captain was afraid, after he learnt that he was a Roman.” Why then it was no falsehood. “On the morrow, because he would know the certainty wherefore he was accused

of the Jews, etc., he brought him down before the council.” (v. 24-30.) This he should have done at the outset. He brought him in, loosed. This above all the Jews would not know what to make of. “And Paul,” it says, “earnestly beholding them.” It shows his boldness, and how it awed them (τὸ ἐντροπεπτικόν). “Then the high priest Ananias.” etc. (ch. 23:1, 2.) Why, what has he said that was affronting? What is he beaten for? Why what hardihood, what shamelessness! Therefore (Paul) set him down (with a rebuke) “God shall smite thee thou whited wall.” (v. 3.) Accordingly (Ananias) himself is put to a stand, and dares not say a word: only those about him could not bear Paul’s boldness. They saw a man ready to die for if this was the case, (Paul) had but to hold his peace, and the tribune would have taken him, and gone his way; he would have sacrificed him to them. He both shows that he suffers willingly what he suffers, and thus excuses himself before them, not that he wished to excuse himself to them — since as for those, he even strongly condemns them — but for the sake of the people. “Violating the law, commandest thou me to be beaten?” Well may he say so: for (to kill a man who had done them) no injury, and that an innocent person, was a violating of the law. For neither was it abuse that was spoken by him, unless one would call Christ’s words abusive, when He says, “Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, for ye are like unto whited walls.” (Matthew 23:27.) True, you will say: but if he had said it before he had been beaten, it would have betokened not anger, but boldness. But I have mentioned the reason of this. And (at this rate) we often find Christ Himself “speaking abusively” to the Jews when abused by them; as when He says, “Do not think that I will accuse you.” (John 5:45.) But this is not abuse, God forbid. See, with what gentleness he addresses these men: “I wist not,” he says, “that he was God’s high priest” (v. 4, 5): and, (to show) that he was not dissembling (εἰρωνεύεται) he adds, “Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.” He even confesses him to be still ruler. Let us also learn the gentleness also, that in both the one and the other we may be perfect. For one must look narrowly into them, to learn what the one is and what the other: narrowly, because these virtues have their corresponding vices hard by them: mere forwardness passing itself off for boldness, mere cowardice for gentleness: and need being to scan them, lest any person possessing the vice should seem to have the virtue: which would be just as if a person should fancy that he was cohabiting with the mistress, and not know that

it was the servant-maid. What then is gentleness, and what mere cowardice? When others are wronged, and we do not take their part, but hold our peace, this is cowardice: when we are the persons ill-treated, and we bear it, this is gentleness. What is boldness? Again the same, when others are the persons for whom we contend. What forwardness? When it is in our own cause that we are willing to fight. So that magnanimity and boldness go together, as also (mere) forwardness and (mere) cowardice. For he that (does not) resent on his own behalf, will hardly but resent on behalf of others: and he that does not stand up for his own cause, will hardly fail to stand up for others. For when our habitual disposition is pure from passion, it admits virtue also. Just as a body when free from fever admits strength, so the soul, unless it be corrupted by the passions, admits strength. It betokens great strength, this gentleness; it needs a generous and a gallant soul, and one of exceeding loftiness, this gentleness. Or, think you, is it a small thing to suffer ill, and not be exasperated? Indeed one would not err if in speaking of the disposition to stand up for our neighbors, one should call it the spirit of manly courage. For he that has had the strength to be able to overcome so strong a passion (as this of selfishness), will have the strength to dare the attack on another. For instance, these are two passions, cowardice and anger: if thou have overcome anger, it is very plain that thou overcomest cowardice also: but thou gettest the mastery over anger, by being gentle: therefore (do so) with cowardice also, and thou wilt be manly. Again, if thou hast not got the better of anger, thou art become forward and pugnacious); but not having got the better of this, neither canst thou get the better of fear; consequently, thou wilt be a coward too: and the case is the same as with the body; if it be weak, it is quickly overcome both by cold and heat: for such is the ill temperament, but the good temperament is able to stand all (changes). Again, greatness of soul is a virtue, and hard by it stands prodigality: economy is a virtue, the being a good manager; hard by it stands parsimony and meanness. Come, let us again collate and compare the virtues (with their vices). Well, then, the prodigal person is not to be called great-minded. How should he? The man who is overcome by numberless passions, how should he be great of soul? For this is not despising money; it is only the being ordered about by other passions: for just as a man, if he were at the beck and bidding of robbers to obey their orders, could not be free (so it is here). His large spending does not come

of his contempt of money, but simply from his not knowing how to dispose of it properly: else, were it possible both to keep it and to lay it out on his pleasure, this is what he would like. But he that spends his money on fit objects, this is the man of high soul: for it is truly a high soul, that which is not in slavery to passion, which accounts money to be nothing. Again, economy is a good thing: for thus that will be the best manager, who spends in a proper manner, and not at random without management. But parsimony is not the same thing with this. For the former indeed, not even when an urgent necessity demands, touches the principal of his money: but the latter will be brother to the former. Wells then, we will put together the man of great soul, and the prudent economist, as also the prodigal and the mean man: for both of these are thus affected from littleness of soul, as those others are (from the opposite). Let us not then call him high-souled, who simply spends, but him who spends aright: nor let us call the economical manager mean and parsimonious, but him who is unseasonably sparing of his money. What a quantity of wealth that rich man spent, “who was clothed in purple and fine linen?” (Luke 16:19.) But he was not high-souled: for his soul was possessed by an unmerciful disposition and by numberless lusts: how then should it be great? Abraham had a great soul, spending as he did for the reception of his guests, killing the calf, and, where need was, not only not sparing his property, but not even his life. If then we see a person having his sumptuous table, having his harlots and his parasites, let us not call him a man of a great mind, but a man of an exceedingly little mind. For see how many passions he is enslaved and subject to — gluttony, inordinate pleasure, flattery: but him who is possessed by so many, and cannot even escape one of them, how can any one call magnanimous? Nay, then most of all let us call him little-minded, when he spends the most: for the more he spends, the more does he show the tyranny of those passions: for had they not excessively got the mastery over him, he would not have spent to excess. Again, if we see a person, giving nothing to such people as these, but feeding the poor, and succoring those in need, himself keeping a mean table — him let us call an exceedingly high-souled man: for it is truly a mark of a great soul, to despise one’s own comfort, but to care for that of others. For tell me, if you should see a person despising all tyrants, and holding their commands of no account, but rescuing from their tyranny those who are oppressed and evil entreated; would you not think this a

great man? So let us account of the man in this case also. The passions are the tyrant: if then we despise them, we shall be great: but if we rescue others also from them, we shall be far greater, as being sufficient not only for ourselves, but for others also. But if any one, at a tyrant's bidding, beat some other of his subjects, is this greatness of soul? No, indeed: but the extreme of slavery, in proportion as he is great. And now also there is set before us (**πρόκειται**) a soul that is a noble one and a free: but this the prodigal has ordered to be beaten by his passions: the man then that beats himself, shall we call high-souled? By no means. Well then, but let us see what is greatness of soul, and what prodigality; what is economy, and what meanness; what is gentleness, and (what) dullness and cowardice; what boldness, and what forwardness: that having distinguished these things from each other, we may be enabled to pass (this life) well-pleasing to the Lord, and to attain unto the good things promised, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

HOMILY 49

ACTS 23:6-8

“But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.”

AGAIN he discourses simply as man, and he does not on all occasions alike enjoy the benefit of supernatural aid. “I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee:” both in this, and in what comes after it, he wished to divide the multitude, which had an evil unanimity against him. And he does not speak a falsehood here either: for he was a Pharisee by descent from his ancestors. “Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.” For since they would not say for what reason they arraigned him, he is compelled therefore to declare it himself. “But the Pharisees,” it says, “confess both.” And yet there are three things: how then does he say both? “Spirit and Angel” is put as one. When he is on their side, then they plead for him. “And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees’ part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but” what) “if a spirit has spoken to him, or an angel?” (v. 9.) Why did they not plead for him before this? Do you observe, how, when the passions give way, the truth is discovered? Where is the crime, say they, if an angel has spoken to him, or a spirit? Paul gives them no handle against him. “And when there arose a great dissension, the tribune, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle.” (v. 10.) The tribune is afraid of his being pulled in pieces, now that he has said that he is a Roman: and the matter was not without danger. Do you observe that Paul had a right to profess himself a Roman? Else, neither would (the tribune) have been afraid now. So it remains that the soldiers must bear him off by force. But when the wretches saw all to be without avail, they take the whole matter into their own hands, as they would fain have done before, but were prevented: and their wickedness

stops nowhere, though it received so many checks: and yet how many things were providentially ordered, on purpose that they might settle down from their rage, and learn those things through which they might possibly recover themselves! But none the less do they set upon him. Sufficient for proof of his innocence was even this, that the man was saved when at the point to be pulled in pieces, and that with these so great dangers about him, he escaped them all. “And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome. And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.” (v. 11-13.) “They bound themselves under a curse,” it says. See how vehement and revengeful they are in their malice! What means, “bound under a curse?” Why then those men are accused forever, seeing they did not kill Paul. And forty together. For such is the nature of that nation: when there needs concerting together for a good object, not even two concur with each other: but when it is for an evil object, the entire people does it. And they admit the rulers also as accomplices. “And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul. Now therefore ye with the council signify to the tribune that he bring him down unto you tomorrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him. And when Paul’s sister’s son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul. Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the tribune: For he hath a certain thing to tell him. So he took him, and brought him to the tribune, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee. Then the tribune took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me? And he said, the Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul tomorrow into the council, as though they would enquire somewhat of him more perfectly. But do not thou yield unto them for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready,

looking for a promise from thee. So the tribune then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast showed these things to me.” (v. 14-22). Again he is saved by man’s forethought. And observe: Paul lets no man learn this, not even the centurion, that the matter might not become known. And the centurion having come, reported to the tribune. And it is well done of the tribune also, that he bids him keep it secret, that it might not become known: moreover he gives his orders to the centurions only, at the time when the thing was to be done: and so Paul is sent into Caesarea, that there too he might discourse in a greater theater and before a more splendid audience: that so the Jews may not be able to say, “If we had seen Paul, we would have believed — if we had heard him teaching.” Therefore this excuse too is cut off from them. “And the Lord,” it said, “stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer: for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.” (Yet) even after He has appeared to him, He again suffers him to be saved by man’s means. And one may well be astonished at Paul; he was not taken aback, neither said, “Why, what is this? Have I then been deceived by Christ?” but he believed: yet, because he believed, he did not therefore sleep: no; what was in his own power by means of human wisdom, he did not abandon. “Bound themselves by a curse:” it was a kind of necessity that those men fastened on themselves by the curse. “That they would neither eat nor drink.” Behold fasting the mother of murder! Just as Herod imposed on himself that necessity by his oath, so also do these. For such are the devil’s (ways): under the pretext forsooth of piety he sets his traps. “And they came to the chief priests,” etc. And yet they ought to have come (to the tribune), ought to have laid a charge, and assembled a court of justice: for these are not the doings for priests, but for captains of banditti, these are not the doings for rulers, but for ruffians. They endeavor also to corrupt the ruler: but it was providentially ordered, to the intent that he also should learn of their plot. For not (only) by their having nothing to say, but also by their secret attempt, they convicted themselves that they were naught. It is likely too that after (Paul was gone) the chief priests came to (the tribune) making their request, and were put to shame. For of course he would not have liked either to deny or to grant their request. How came he to believe (the young man’s tale)? He did so in consequence of what had already taken place; because it was likely they would do this also. And observe their wickedness: they as good as

laid a necessity on the chief priests also: for if they undertook so great a thing themselves, and engaged themselves in the whole risk, much more ought those to do thus much. Do you observe, how Paul is held innocent by those that are without, as was also Christ by Pilate? See their malice brought to naught: they delivered him up, to kill and condemn him: but the result is just the contrary; he is both saved, and held innocent. For had it not been so, he would have been pulled in pieces: had it not been so, he would have perished, he would have been condemned. And not only does the tribune) rescue him from the rush (made upon him), but also from much other (violence): see how he becomes a minister to him, insomuch that without risk he is carried off safe with so large a force. “And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night; and provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor. And he wrote a letter after this manner: Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting. This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council: whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Fare ye well.” (v. 23-30). See how the letter speaks for him as a defense — for it says, “I found nothing worthy of death,” but as accusation against them (rather) than against him. “About to have been killed of them:” so set upon his death were they. First, “I came with the army, and rescued him:” then also “I brought him down unto them:” and not even so did they find anything to lay to his charge: and when they ought to have been stricken with fear and shame for the former act, they again attempt to kill him, insomuch that again his cause became all the more clear. “And his accusers,” he says, “I have sent unto thee:” that at the tribunal where these things are more strictly examined, he may be proved guiltless.

(Recapitulation.) Let us look then to what has been said above. “I,” he says, “am a Pharisee:” then, that he may not seem to pay court, he adds, “Of the hope and resurrection of the dead it is, that I am called in question.” (v. 6.) From this charge and calumny he commends himself. “For the Sadducees indeed,” etc. The Sadducees have no knowledge of anything incorporeal, perhaps not even God; so gross (*παχείς*) are they: whence neither do they choose to believe that there is a Resurrection. “And the scribes,” etc. Look; the tribune also hears that the Pharisees have acquitted him of the charges, and have given sentence (Mss. and Edd. *ἔψηφίσατο*, “he gave sentence”) in his favor, and with greater confidence carries him off by force. Moreover all that was spoken (by Paul) was full of right-mindedness (*φιλοσοφίας*). “And the night following the Lord stood by him,” etc. See what strong consolation! First he praises him, “As thou hast testified to My cause in Jerusalem;” then He does not leave him to be afraid for the uncertain issue of his journey to Rome: for thither also, He saith, thou shalt not depart alone (*μόνος*), Cat. and Edd. *μόνον*), but thou shalt also have all this boldness of speech. Hereby it was made manifest, not (only) that he should be saved, but that (he should be so) in order to great crowns in the great city. But why did He not appear to him before he fell into the danger? Because it is evermore in the afflictions that God comforts us; for He appears more wished-for, while even in the dangers He exercises and trains us. Besides, he was then at ease, when free from bonds; but now great perils were awaiting him. “We have bound ourselves,” they say, “under a curse, that we will not eat nor drink.” (v. 14.) What is all this zeal? “That he may bring him down,” it says, “unto you, as though ye would enquire into his case more perfectly.” (v. 15.) Has he not twice made a speech unto you? has he not said that he is a Pharisee? What (would ye have) over and above this? So reckless were they and afraid of nothing, not tribunals, not laws: such their hardihood which shrunk from nothing. They both declare their purpose, and announce the way of carrying it into effect. “Paul’s sister’s son heard of it.” (v. 16.) This was of God’s providence, their not perceiving that it would be heard. What then did Paul? he was not alarmed, but perceived that this was God’s doing: and casting all upon Him, so he acquits himself (from further concern about it:) “having called one of the centurions,” etc. (v. 17.) He told of the plot, he was believed; he is saved. If he was acquitted of the charge, why did (the tribune) send the accusers? That the

enquiry might be more strict: that the man might be the more entirely cleared. Such are God's ways of ordering: the very things by which we are hurt, by these same are we benefited. Thus it was with Joseph: his mistress sought to ruin him: and she seemed indeed to be contriving his ruin, but by her contriving she placed him in a state of safety: for the house where that wild beast (of a woman) was kept was a den in comparison with which the prison was gentle. (Genesis 39:1-20.) For while he was there, although he was looked up to and courted, he was in constant fear, lest his mistress should set upon him, and worse than any prison was the fear that lay upon him: but after the accusation he was in security and peace, well rid of that beast, of her lewdness and her machinations for his destruction: for it was better for him to keep company with human creatures in miserable plight, than with a maddened mistress. Here he comforted himself, that for chastity's sake he had fallen into it: there he had been in dread, lest he should receive a death-blow to his soul: for nothing in the world is more annoying than a woman in love can be to a young man who will not (meet her advances): nothing more detestable (than a woman in such case), nothing more fell: all the bonds in the world are light to this. So that the fact was not that he got into prison, but that he got out of prison. She made his master his foe, but she made God his friend: brought him into closer relation to Him Who is indeed the true Master; she cast him out of his stewardship in the family, but made him a familiar friend to that Master. Again, his brethren sold him (Genesis 37:18); but they freed him from having enemies dwelling in the same house with him, from envy and much ill will, and from daily machinations for his ruin: they placed him far aloof from them that hated him. For what can be worse than this, to be compelled to dwell in the same house with brethren that envy one; to be an object of suspicion, to be a mark for evil designs? So that while they and she were severally seeking to compass their own ends, far other were the mighty consequences working out by the Providence of God for that just man. When he was in honor, then was he in danger; when he was in dishonor, then was he in safety. The eunuchs did not remember him, and right well it was that they did not, that the occasion of his deliverance might be more glorious: that the whole might be ascribed, not to man's favor, but to God's Providence (Genesis 40:23): that at the right moment, Pharaoh, reduced to need, might bring him out; that not as conferring but as receiving a benefit, the king might release him

from the prison. (ib. 41:40.) It behooved to be no servile gift, but that the king should be reduced to a necessity of doing this: it behooved that it should be made manifest what wisdom was in him. Therefore it is that the eunuch forgets him, that Egypt might not forget him, that the king might not be ignorant of him. Had he been delivered at that time, it is likely he would have desired to depart to his own country: therefore he is kept back by numberless constraints, first by subjection to a master, secondly by being in prison, thirdly by being over the kingdom, to the end that all this might be brought about by the Providence of God. Like a spirited steed that is eager to bound off to his fellows, did God keep him back there, for causes full of glory. For that he longed to see his father, and free him from his distress, is evident from his calling him thither. (Genesis 45:9.)

Shall we look at other instances of evil designing, how they turn out to our good, not only by having their reward, but also by their working at the very time precisely what is for our good? This (Joseph's) uncle (Esau) had ill designs against his father (Jacob), and drove him out of his native land: what then? (Genesis 27:41.) He too set him (thereby) aloof from the danger; for he too got (thereby) to be in safety. He made him a wiser and a better man (*φιλοσοφώτερον*); he was the means of his having that dream (Genesis 28:12.) But, you will say, he was a slave in a foreign land? Yes, but he arrives among his own kindred, and receives a bride, and appears worthy to his father-in-law. (ib. 29:23.) But he too cheated him? Yes, but this also turned out to his good, that he might be the father of many children. But it was in his mind to design evil against him? True, but even this was for his good, that he might thereupon return to his own country; for if he had been in good circumstances, he would not have so longed for home. But he defrauded him of his hire? Aye, but he got more by the means. (ib. 31:7.) Thus, in every point of these men's history, the more people designed their hurt, the more their affairs flourished. If (Jacob) had not received the elder daughter, he would not soon have been the father of so many children; he would have dragged out a long period in childlessness, he would have mourned as his wife did. For she indeed had reason to mourn, as not having become a mother (ib. 30:1, 2.); but he had his consolation: whence also he gives her a repulse. Again, had not (Laban) defrauded him of his hire, he would not have longed to see his own country; the higher points (*φιλοσοφία*) of the man's character would not

have come to light, (his wives) would not have become more closely attached to him. For see what they say: “With devouring hath he devoured us and our money.” (Genesis 31:15.) So that this became the means of riveting their love to him. After this he had in them not merely wives, but (devoted) slaves; he was beloved by them: a thing that no possession can equal: for nothing, nothing whatever, is more precious than to be thus loved by a wife and to love her. “And a wife,” Scripture says, “that agrees with her husband.” (Ecclus. 25:1. “A man and a wife that agree together.” E.V.) One thing this, as the Wise Man puts it, of the things for which a man is to be counted happy; for where this is, there all wealth, all prosperity abounds: as also, where it is not, there all besides profits nothing, but all goes wrong, all is mere unpleasantness and confusion. Then let us seek this before all things. He that seeks money, seeks not this. Let us seek those things which can remain fixed. Let us not seek a wife from among the rich, lest the excess of wealth on her side produce arrogance, lest that arrogance be the means of marring all. See you not what God did? how He put the woman in subjection? (Genesis 3:16.) Why art thou ungrateful, why without perception? The very benefit God has given thee by nature, do not thou mar the help it was meant to be. So that it is not for her wealth that we ought to seek a wife: it is that we may receive a partner of our life, for the appointed order of the procreation of children. It was not that she should bring money, that God gave the woman; it was that she might be an helpmate. But she that brings money, becomes, instead of a wife, a setter up of her own will (*ἐπίβουλος*), a mistress — it may be a wild beast instead of a wife — while she thinks she has a right to give herself airs upon her wealth. Nothing more shameful than a man who lays himself out to get riches in this way. If wealth itself is full of temptations, what shall we say to wealth so gotten? For you must not look to this, that one or another as a rare and unusual case, and contrary to the reason of the thing, has succeeded: as neither ought we in other matters to fix our regards upon the good which people may enjoy, or their chance successes, out of the common course: but let us look to the reason of the thing as it is in itself, and see whether this thing be not fraught with endless annoyance. Not only you bring yourself into a disreputable position; you also disgrace your children by leaving them poor, if it chance that you depart this life before the wife: and you give her incomparably more occasions for connecting herself with a second bridegroom. Or do

you not see that many women make this the excuse for a second marriage — that they may not be despised; that they want to have some man to take the management of their property? Then let us not bring about so great evils for the sake of money; but let us dismiss all (such aims), and seek a beautiful soul, that we may also succeed in obtaining love. This is the exceeding wealth, this the great treasure, this the endless good things: whereunto may we all attain by the grace and loving kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory, dominion, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 50

ACTS 23:31, 32, 33

“Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris. On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle: who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.”

LIKE some king whom his body-guards escort, so did these convey Paul; in such numbers too, and by night, for fear of the wrath of the people? Now then you will say that they have got him out of the city, they desist from their violence? No indeed. But (the tribune) would not have sent him off with such care for his safety, but that while he himself had found nothing amiss in him, he knew the murderous disposition of his adversaries. “And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia; I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come.” Already Lysias has spoken for his exculpation; (but the Jews seek to) gain the hearer beforehand. “And he ordered him to be kept in custody in Herod’s praetorium” (v. 34, 35): again Paul is put in bonds. “And after five days came down the high priest Ananias with the elders.” See how for all this they do not desist; hindered as they were by obstacles without number, nevertheless they come, only to be put to shame here also. “And with an orator, one Tertullus.” And what need was there of “an orator? Which (persons) also informed the governor against Paul.” (c. 24:1.) See how this man also from the very outset (b) with his praises seeks to gain the judge beforehand. “And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, we accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.” (v. 2, 3.) Then as having much to say, he passes by the rest: “Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words. For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world.” (a) As a revolutionary and seditious person he wishes to deliver him up. And yet, it might be answered, it is ye that have done this. (c) And see how he would put up

the judge to a desire of punishing, seeing he had here an opportunity to coerce the man that turned the world upside down! As if they had achieved a meritorious action, they make much of it: "Having found this fellow," etc., "a mover of sedition," say they, "among all the Jews throughout the world." (Had he been such), they would have proclaimed him as a benefactor and savior of the nation! "And a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes." (v. 4, 5.) They thought this likely to tell as a reproach — "of the Nazarenes:" and by this also they seek to damage him — for Nazareth was a mean place. And, "we have found him," say they: see how maliciously they calumniate him: (found him), as if he had been always giving them the slip, and with difficulty they had succeeded in getting him: though he had been seven days in the Temple! "Who also hath gone about to profane the temple; whom we took, [and would have judged according to our law.]" (v. 6.) See how they insult even the Law; it was so like the Law, forsooth, to beat, to kill, to lie in wait! And then the accusation against Lysias: though he had no right, say they, to interfere, in the excess of his confidence he snatched him from us: ["But the tribune Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, commanding his accusers to come unto thee]: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, where of we accuse him. And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so." (v. 7-9). What then says Paul? "Then Paul; after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a just judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself." (v. 10.) This is not the language of flattery, his testifying to the judge's justice: no, the adulation was rather in that speech of the orator, "By thee we enjoy great quietness." If so, then why are ye seditious? What Paul sought was justice. "Knowing thee to be a just judge, I cheerfully," says he, "answer for myself." Then also he enforces this by the length of time: that (he had been judge) "of many years. Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship." (v. 11.) And what is this? (It means), "that I could not immediately have raised a commotion." Because the accuser had nothing to show (as done) in Jerusalem, observe what he said: "among all the Jews throughout the world." Therefore it is that Paul here forcibly attracts him — "to worship," he says, "I came up," so far am I from raising sedition — and lays a stress upon this point of justices being

the strong point. "And they neither found me in the Temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city" (v. 12); which in fact was the truth. And the accusers indeed use the term "ringleader," as if it were a case of fighting and insurrection; but see how mildly Paul here answers. "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets: and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." (v. 14, 15.) The accusers were separating him (as an alien), but he identifies himself with the Law, as one of themselves. "And in this," says he, "do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men. Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. In which they found me purified in the temple, not with multitude, neither with tumult." (v. 16, 17, 18.) Why then camest thou up? What brought thee hither? To worship, says he; to do alms. This was not the act of a factious person. Then also he casts out their person: "but," says he, (they that found me, were) "certain Jews from Asia, who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me. Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me while I stood before the council, except it be for this one voice, that I cried, standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day." (v. 19, 20, 21.) For this is justification in superabundance, not to flee from his accusers, but to be ready to give account to all. "Of the resurrection of the dead," says he, "am I this day called in question." And not a word said he of what he had to say, how they had conspired against him, had violently kept him, had laid wait for him — for these matters are course spoken of by the tribune — but by Paul, though there was danger, not so: no, he is silent, and only defends himself, though he had very much to say. (b) "In which" (alms), says he, "they found me in course of purifying in the Temple." Then how did he profane it? For it was not the part of the same man both to purify himself and worship and come for this purpose, and then to profane it. This has with it a surmise of the justice of his cause, that he does not fall into a long discourse. And he gratifies the judge, I suppose, by that also (namely, by), making his defense compendious: (d) seeing that Tertullus before him did make a long harangue. (f) And this too is a proof of mildness, that when

one has much to say, in order not to be troublesome one says but few words. (c) But let us look again at what has been said.

(Recapitulation.) “Then the soldiers,” etc. (v. 31-33.) (a) This also made Paul famous in Caesarea, his coming with so large a force. — “But,” says Tertullus, “that I be not further tedious,” (e) showing that (Felix) does find him tedious (**εγκόπτεται**): “I beseech thee,” he does not say, Hear the matter, but, “hear us of thy clemency.” (ch. 24:4.) Probably it is to pay court, that he thus lays out his speech. (g) “For having found this man, a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world” (v. 5): how then, it might be said, if he did this elsewhere (and not here)? No, says he; among us also he has profaned the Temple; “attempted,” says he, “to profane it:” but the how, he leaves untold. “Whom also we took.” etc. “But the tribune,” etc. And while he thus exaggerates what relates to the tribune, see how he extenuates the part of the accusers themselves. “We took him,” he says, “and would have judged him according to our Law.” (v. 6.) He shows that it is a hardship to them that they have to come to foreign tribunals, and that they would not have troubled him had not the tribune compelled them, and that he, having no concern in the matter, had seized the man by force: for in fact the wrongs done were against us, and with us the tribunal ought to have been. For that this is the meaning, see what follows: “with great violence” (v. 7), he says. For this conduct is violence. “From whom thou mayest know.” He neither dares to accuse him (the tribune) — for the man Was indulgent (forsooth) — nor does he wholly pass it by. Then again, lest he should seem to be lying, he adduces Paul himself as his own accuser. “From whom, by examining him, thou mayest take knowledge of all these things.” (v. 8.) Next, as witnesses also of the things spoken, the accusers, the same persons themselves both witnesses and accusers: “And the Jews also assented,” etc. (v. 9.) But Paul, “Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a just judge.” (v. 10.) Why then, he is no stranger or alien or revolutionary person, seeing he had known the judge for many years. And he does well to add the epithet “just,” that he (Felix) might not look to the chief priest, nor to the people, nor the accuser. See, how he did not let himself be carried away into abuse, although there was strong provocation. “Believing,” he says, “that there will be a resurrection:” now a man who believed a resurrection, would never have done such things — “which”

(resurrection) “they themselves also allow. (v. 15.) He does not say it of them, that they believe “all things written in the Prophets:” it was he that believed them all, not they: but how “all,” it would require a long discourse to show. And he nowhere makes mention of Christ. Here by saying, “Believing,” he does (virtually) introduce what relates to Christ; for the present he dwells on the subject of the resurrection, which doctrine was common to them also, and removed the suspicion of any sedition. And for the cause of his going up, “I came,” he says, “to bring alms to my nation and offerings.” (v. 17.) How then should I have troubled those, for the bringing offerings to whom I had come so long a journey? “Neither with multitude, nor with tumult.” (v. 18.) Everywhere he does away the charge of sedition. And he also does well to challenge his accusers who were from Asia, “Who ought to accuse before thee,” etc., but he does well also not to reject this either; “or else,” says he, “let these same here say. Touching the resurrection of the dead,” etc. (v. 19, 20, 21): for in fact it was on this account they were sore troubled from the first, because he preached the Resurrection. This being proved, the things relating to Christ also were easily introduced, that He was risen. “What evil doing,” he says, “they found in me. In the council (ch. 4:2) he says: the examination not having taken place in private. That these things which I say are true, those witness who bring this charge against me. “Having,” he says, “a conscience void of offense both toward God, and toward men.” (v. 16.) This is the perfection of virtue, when even to men we give no handle against us, and are careful to be void of offense with God. “That I cried,” he says, “in the council.” He also shows their violence. They have it not to say, Thou didst these things under the pretext of alms: for (it was) “not with multitude, nor with tumult:” especially as upon enquiry made concerning this thing, nothing further was found. Do you observe his moderation, though there were dangers? do you observe how he keeps his tongue from evil-speaking, how he seeks only one thing, to free himself from the charges against himself, not that he may criminate them, except so far as he might be obliged to do so while defending himself? Just as Christ also said: “I have not a devil, but I honor My Father: but ye do dishonor Me.” (John 8:49.)

Let us imitate him, since he also was an imitator of Christ. If he, with enemies, who went even to the length of murder and slaughter, said

nothing offensive to them, what pardon shall we deserve, who in reviling and abuse become infuriated, calling our enemies villains, detestable wretches? what pardon shall we deserve, for having enemies at all? Hear you not, that to honor (another) is to honor one's self? So it is: but we disgrace ourselves. You accuse (some one) that he has abused you: then why do you bring yourself under the same accusation? Why inflict a blow on yourself? Keep free from passion, keep unwounded: do not, by wishing to smite another, bring the hurt upon yourself. What, is the other tumult of our soul not enough for us, the tumult that is stirred up, though there be none to stir it up — for example, its outrageous lusts, its griefs and sorrows, and such like — but we must needs heap up a pile of others also? And how, you will say, is it possible, when one is insulted and abused, to bear this? And how is it nor possible, I ask? Is a wound got from words; or do words inflict bruises on our bodies? Then where is the hurt to us? So that, if we will, we can bear it. Let us lay down for ourselves a law not to grieve, and we shall bear it: let us say to ourselves, "It is not from enmity; it is from infirmity" — for it is indeed owing to an infirmity, since, for proof that it comes not from enmity nor from malignity of disposition, but from infirmity, the other also would fain have restrained (his anger), although he had suffered numberless wrongs. If we only have this thought in our minds, that it is from infirmity, we shall bear it, and while we forgive the offending person, we shall try not to fall into it ourselves. For I ask all you who are present: would ye have wished to be able to exercise such a philosophic temper, as to bear with those who insult you? I think so. Well, then, he insulted unwillingly; he would rather not have done so, but he did it, forced by his passion: refrain thyself. Do you not see (how it is with) the demoniacs (in their fits)? Just then as it is with them, so with him: it is not so much from enmity, as from infirmity (that he behaves as he does): endure it. And as for us — it is not so much from the insults as they are in themselves that we are moved, as from our own selves: else how is it that when madmen offer us the same insults, we bear it? Again, if those who insult us be our friends, in that case too we bear it: or also our superiors, in that case also we bear it: how then is it not absurd, that in the case of these three, friends, madmen, and superiors, we bear it, but where they are of the same rank or our inferiors, we do not bear it? I have oftentimes said: It is but an impulse of the moment, something that hurries us away on the sudden: let us endure it for a little,

and we shall bear the whole thing. The greater the insults, the more weak the offender. Do you know when it behooves us to grieve? When we have insulted another, and he keeps silence: for then he is strong, and we weak: but if the contrary be the case, you must even rejoice: you are crowned, you are proclaimed conqueror, without having even entered into the contest, without having born the annoyance of sun, and heat, and dust, without having grappled with an antagonist and let him close with you; nothing but a mere wish on your part, sitting or standing, and you have got a mighty crown: a crown far greater than those (combatants earn): for to throw an enemy standing to the encounter, is nothing like so great as to overcome the darts of anger. You have conquered, without having even let him close with you, you have thrown down the passion that was in you, have slain the beast that was roused, have quelled the anger that was raging, like some excellent herdsman. The fight was like to have been an intestine one, the war a civil war. For, as those who sit down to besiege from without (endeavor to), embroil (the besieged) in civil discords, and then overcome them; so he that insults, unless he rouse the passion within us, will not be able to overcome us: unless we kindle the flame in ourselves, he has no power. Let the spark of anger be within us, so as to be ready for lighting at the right moment, not against ourselves, nor so as to involve us in numberless evils. See ye not how the fire in houses is kept apart, and not thrown about at random everywhere, neither among straw, nor among the linen, nor just where it may chance, that so there may not be danger, if a wind blow on it, of its kindling a flame: but whether a maid-servant have a lamp, or the cook light a fire, there is many an injunction given, not to do this in the draught of the wind, nor near a wooden panel, nor in the night-time: but when the night has come on, we extinguish the fire, fearing lest perchance while we are asleep and there is none to help, it set fire, and burn us all. Let this also be done with regard to anger; let it not be scattered everywhere up and down in our thoughts, but let it be in some deep recess of the mind, that the wind arising from the words of him who is opposing us may not easily reach to it, but that it receive the wind (which is to rouse it) from ourselves, who know how to rouse it in due measure and with safety. If it receive the wind from without, it knows no moderation; it will set everything on fire: oftentimes when we are asleep this wind will come upon it, and will burn up all. Let it therefore be with us (in safe keeping) in such sort as only to kindle a light: for anger does

kindle a light when it is managed as it ought to be: and let us have torches against those who wrong others, against the devil. Let not the spark lie anywhere as it may chance, nor be thrown about; let us keep it safe under ashes: in lowly thoughts let us keep it slumbering. We do not want it at all times, but when there is need to subdue and to make tender, to mollify obduracy, and convict the soul. What evils have angry and wrathful passions wrought! And what makes it grievous indeed is, that when we have parted asunder, we have no longer the power to come together again, but we wait for others (to do this): each is ashamed, and blushes to come back himself and reconcile the other. See, he is not ashamed to part asunder and to be separated; no, he takes the lead as author of the evil: but to come forward and patch that which is rent, this he is ashamed to do: and the case is just the same, as if a man should not shrink from cutting off a limb, but should be ashamed to join it together again. What sayest thou, O man? Hast thou committed great injuries, and thyself been the cause of the quarrel? Why, then, thou wouldest justly be the first to go and be reconciled, as having thyself furnished the cause. But he did the wrong, he is the cause of the enmity? Why then, for this reason also thou must do it, that men may the more admire thee, that in addition to the former, thou mayest get the first prize in the latter also: as thou wast not the cause of the enmity, so neither of its being extended further. Perhaps also the other, as conscious within himself of numberless evils, is ashamed and blushes. But he is haughty? On this account above all, do not thou hesitate to run and meet him: for if the ailment in him be twofold, both haughtiness and anger, in this thou hast mentioned the very reason why thou oughtest to be the first to go to him, thou that art the one in sound health, the one who is able to see: as for him, he is in darkness: for such is anger and false pride. But do thou, who art free from these and in sound health, go to him — thou the physician, go to the sick. Does any of the physicians say, Because such an one is sick, I do not go to him? No, this is the very reason above all why they do go, when they see that he is not able to come to them. For of those who are able (to come) they think less, as of persons not extremely ill, but not so of those who lie at home sick. Or are not pride and anger, think you, worse than any illness? is not the one like a sharp fever, the other like a body swollen with inflammation? Think what a thing it is to have a fever and inflammation: go to him, extinguish the fire, for by the grace of God thou canst: go, assuage the heat as it were with water.

“But,” you will say, “how if he is only the more set up by my doing this very thing?” This is nothing to thee: thou hast done thy part, let him take account for himself: let not our conscience condemn us, that this thing happens in consequence of any omission of what ought to have been done on our part. “In so doing,” says the Scripture, “thou shall heap coals of fire on his head.” (Romans 12:20, cf. *Hom. in l. 22: 3.*) And yet, for all that this is the consequence, it bids us go and be reconciled and do good offices — not that we may heap coals of fire, but that (our enemy) knowing that future consequence, may be assuaged by the present kindness, that he may tremble, that he may fear our good offices rather than our hostilities, and our friendships rather than our ill designs. For one does not so hurt his hater by showing his resentment as an enemy, as by doing him good and showing kindness. For by his resentment, he has hurt both himself and perhaps the other also in some little degree: but by doing good offices, he has heaped coals of fire on his head. “Why then,” you will say, “for fear of thus heaping coals one ought not to do this (b) but to carry on the enmity to greater lengths.” By no means: it is not you that cause this, but he with his brutish disposition. For if, when you are doing him good, and honoring him, and offering to be reconciled, he persists in keeping up the enmity, it is he has kindled the fire for himself, he has set his own head on fire; you are guiltless. Do not want to be more merciful than God (b), or rather, if you wish it, you will not be able, not even in the least degree. How should you? “As far as the heaven is from the earth,” Scripture says, “so far are My counsels from your counsels” (Isaiah 45:8): and again, “If ye,” He says, “being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more your heavenly Father” (Matthew 7:11)? But in fact this talk is mere pretext and subterfuge. Let us not prevaricate with God’s commandments. “And how do we prevaricate,” you will say? He has said, “In so doing, thou wilt heap coals of fire on his head:” and you say, I do not like to do this. (a) But are you willing to heap coals after another fashion, that is upon your own head? For in fact this is what resentment does: (c) since you shall suffer evils without number. (e) You say, “I am afraid for my enemy, be, cause he has done me great injuries:” in reality is it this you say? But how came you to have an enemy? But how came you to hate your enemy? You fear for him that has injured you, but do you not fear yourself? Would that you had a care for yourself! Do not act (the kindness) with such an aim as this: or rather do it, though it be but with

such an aim. But you do it not at all. I say not to you, “thou wilt heap coals of fire:” no, I say another and a greater thing: only do it. For Paul says this only by way of summoning thee (if only), in hope of the vengeance, to put an end to the enmity. Because we are savage as wild beasts in disposition, and would not otherwise endure to love our enemy, unless we expected some revenge, he offers this as a cake, so to say, to a wild beast. For to the Apostles (the Lord) says not this, but what says He? “That ye may be like to your Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:45.) And besides, it is not possible that the benefactor and the benefited should remain in enmity. This is why Paul has put it in this way. ‘Why, affecting a high and generous principle in thy words, why in thy deeds dost thou not even observe (common) moderation? (It sounds)well; thou dost not feed him, for fear of thereby heaping upon him coals of fire: well then, thou sparest him? well then, thou lovest him, thou actest with this object in view? God knows, whether thou hast this object in so speaking, and are not palming this talk upon us as a mere pretense and subterfuge. Thou hast a care for thine enemy, thou fearest lest he be punished, then wouldest thou not have extinguished thine anger? For he that loves to that degree that he overlooks his own interest for the sake of the other’s advantage, that man has no enemy. (Then indeed) thou mightest say this. How long shall we trifle in matters that are not to be trifled with, and that admit of no excuse? Wherefore I beseech you, let us cut off these prettexts; let us not despise God’s laws: that we may be enabled with well-pleasing to the Lord to pass this life present, and attain unto the good things promised, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory, might, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 51

ACTS 24:22, 23

“And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them and said, When Lysias the tribun shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter. And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.”

SEE how much close investigation is made by the many in a long course of time, that it should not be said that the trial was hurried over. For, as the orator had made mention of Lysias, that he took “him away with violence, Felix,” he says, “deferred them. Having knowledge of that way:” that is, he put them off on purpose: not because he wanted to learn, but as wishing to get rid of the Jews. On their account, he did not like to let him go: to punish him was not possible; that would have been (too) barefaced. “And to let him have liberty, and to forbid none of his acquaintance to minister to him.” So entirely did he too acquit him of the charges. Howbeit, to gratify them, he detained him, and besides, expecting to receive money, he called for Paul. “And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance (i.e. self-control or chastity), and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him; wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix’s room: and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.” (v. 24-27.) See how close to the truth are the things written. But he sent for him-frequently, not that he admired him, nor that he praised the things spoken, nor that he wished to believe, but why? “Expecting,” it says, “that money should have been given him.” Observe how he does not hide here the mind of the judge. “Wherefore he sent for him,” etc. And yet if he had condemned him, he would not have done this, nor have wished to hear a man, condemned and of evil character. And observe Paul, how, though reasoning with a ruler, he says nothing of the sort that was likely to amuse

and entertain, but (“he reasoned,” it says,) “of righteousness, and of the coming judgment,” and of the resurrection. And such was the force of his words, that they even terrified the governor. This man is succeeded in his office by another, and he leaves Paul a prisoner: and yet he ought not to have done this; he ought to have put an end to the business: but he leaves him, by way of gratifying them. They however were so urgent, that they again besought the judge. Yet against none of the Apostles had they set themselves thus pertinaciously; there, when they had attacked, anon they desisted. So providentially is he removed from Jerusalem, having to do with such wild beasts. And they nevertheless request that he might be brought again there to be tried. “Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem. Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him, and desired favor against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.” (ch. 25:1-3.) Here now God’s providence interposed, not permitting the governor to do this: for it was natural that he having just come to the government would wish to gratify them: but God suffered him not. “But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly thither. Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him. And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought.” (v. 4-6.) But after they came down, they forthwith made their accusations shamelessly and with more vehemence: and not having been able to convict him on grounds relating to the Law, they again according to their custom stirred the question about Caesar, being just what they did in Christ’s case. For that they had recourse to this is manifest by the fact, that Paul defends himself on the score of offenses against Caesar. “And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove. While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended anything at all. But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?” (v. 7-9.) Wherefore he too gratifies the Jews, the whole people, and the city. Such being the case, Paul terrifies him also,

using a human weapon for his defense. “Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar’s judgment seat, where I ought to be judged; to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest. For if I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.” (v. 10-11.) Some one might say, How is it, that having been told, “Thou must also bear witness of Me in Rome,” (ch. 23:11), he, as if unbelieving, did this? God forbid: nay, he did it, because he so strongly believed. For it would have been a tempting of God to be bold on account of that declaration, and to cast himself into numberless dangers, and to say: “Let us see if God is able even thus to deliver me.” But not so does Paul; no, he does his part, all that in him lies, committing the whole to God. Quietly also he reproves the governor: for, “If, says he, I am an offender, thou doest well: but if not, why dost thou give me up?” “No man,” he says, “may sacrifice me.” He put him in fear, so that even if he wished, he could not sacrifice him to them; while also as an excuse to them he had Paul’s appeal to allege. “Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go. And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus.” (v. 12, 13.) Observe, he communicates the matter to Agrippa, so that there should be other hearers once more, both the king, and the army, and Bernice. Thereupon a speech in his exculpation. “And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul’s, cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix: about whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him. To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him. Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth. Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed: but had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters. But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of

Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar. Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. Tomorrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.” (v. 14-22.) And observe a crimination of the Jews, not from Paul, but also from the governor. “Desiring,” he says, “to have judgment against him.” To whom I said, to their shame, that “it is not the manner of the Romans,” before giving an opportunity to speak for himself, “to sacrifice a man.” But I did give him (such opportunity), and I found no fault in him. “Because I doubted,” says he, of “such manner of questions: he casts a veil also over his own wrong. Then the other desires to see him. (b) But let us look again at what has been said. (Recapitulation.) “And when Felix,” etc. (v. 22.) Observe on all occasions how the governors try to keep off from themselves the annoyance of the Jews, and are often compelled to act contrary to justice, and seek pretexts for deferring: for of course it was not from ignorance that he deferred the cause, but knowing it. And his wife also hears, together with the governor. (v. 24.) This seems to me to show great honor. For he would not have brought his wife to be present with him at the hearing, but that he thought great things of him. It seems to me that she also longed for this. And observe how Paul immediately discourses not only about faith, nor about remission of sins, but also about practical points of duty. “Go thy way,” he says, “for this time: when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.” (v. 25.) Observe his hardness of heart: hearing such things, “he hoped that he should receive money from him!” (v. 26.) And not only so, but even after conversing with him — for it was towards the end of his government — he left him bound, “willing to show the Jews a pleasure” (v. 27): so that he not only coveted money, but also glory. How, O wretch, canst thou look for money from a man who preaches the contrary? But that he did not get it, is evident from his leaving him bound; he would have loosed him, had he received it. “Of temperance,” it says, he reasoned; but the other was hankering to receive money from him who discoursed these things! And to ask indeed he did not dare: for such is wickedness: but he hoped it. “And when two years were completed,” etc., so that it was but natural that he showed them a pleasure, as he had been so long governor there. “Now when Festus was come into the province,” etc. (ch. 25:1, 2.) At the very beginning, the priests came to him, who would not have hesitated to go even to Caesarea, unless he had been seen immediately coming up, since immediately on his arrival they come to him. And he

spends ten days? in order, I suppose, to be open to those who wished to corrupt him with bribes. But Paul was in the prison. "They besought him," it says, "that he would send for him:" why did they desire it as a favor, if he was deserving of death? But thus their plotting became evident even to him, so that discoursing of it (to Agrippa), he says, "desiring to have judgment against him." They wanted to induce him to pass sentence now immediately, being afraid of Paul's tongue. What are ye afraid of? What are ye in such a hurry? In fact, that expression, "that he should be kept" (v. 4), shows this. Does he want to escape? "Let them therefore," he says, "which among you are able, accuse him." (v. 5.) Again accusers, again at Caesarea, again Paul is brought forth. And having come, immediately "he sat on the judgment-seat" (v. 6); with all his haste: they so drove, so hurried him. While as yet he had not got acquainted with the Jews, nor experienced the honor paid to him by them, he answered rightly: but now that he had been in Jerusalem ten days, he too wants to please them (by sacrificing Paul to them): then, also to deceive Paul, "Wilt thou," says he, "be judged there of these things by me?" (v. 9.) I am not giving thee up to them — but this was the fact — and he leaves the point to his own choice, that by this mark of respect he might get him to yield: since his was the sentence, and it would have been too barefaced, when he had been convicted of nothing here, to take him back thither. "But Paul said, At Caesar's tribunal am I standing," etc. (v. 10): he did not say, I will not, lest he should make the judge more vehement, but (here) again is his great boldness: They cast me out once for all, themselves, and by this they think to condemn me, by their showing that I have offended against Caesar: at his bar I choose to be judged, at the bar of the injured person himself. "To the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou also very well knowest." Here now he reproved him, that he too wished to sacrifice him to the Jews: then, on the other hand, he relaxes (the sternness of) his speech: "if then I be an offender, or have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die." I utter sentence against myself. For along with boldness of speech there must be also justness of cause, so as to abash (the hearer). "But if there be nothing in the things whereof these accuse me, no man" — however he may wish it — "no man may sacrifice me to please them." He said, not, I am not worthy of death, nor, I am worthy to be acquitted, but, I am ready to take my trial before Caesar. At the same time too, remembering the dream, he was the more confident to appeal.

(ch. 23:11.) And he said not, Thou (mayest not), but, neither any other man may sacrifice me, that it might be no affront to him. “Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council “ — do you observe how he seeks to gratify them? for this is favor — “ having conferred,” it says, “with the council, he said, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shall thou go.” (v. 12.) See how his trial is again lengthened out, and how the plot against him becomes an occasion for the preaching: so that with ease and in safe custody he should be taken away to Rome, with none to plot evil against him: for it was not the same thing his simply coming there, and his coming on such a cause. For, in fact this was what made the Jews come together there. (ch. 28:17.) Then again, some time passes while he tarries at Jerusalem, that you may learn, that, though some time passed, the evil design against him prevails nothing, God not permitting it. But this king Agrippa, who was also a Herod, was a different Agrippa, after him of James’ time, so that this is the fourth (Herod). See how his enemies cooperate with him against their will. To make the audience large, Agrippa falls into a desire of hearing: and he does not simply hear, but with much parade. And see what a vindication (*ἀπολογία*)! So writes Festus, and the ruthlessness of the Jews is openly made a show of: for when it is the governor that says these things, he is a witness above all suspicion: so that the Jews are condemned by him also. For, when all had pronounced sentence against them, then, and not sooner, God brings upon them the punishment. But observe: Lysias gave it against them, Felix against them, Festus against them — although he wished to gratify them — Agrippa against them. What further? The Pharisees — even they gave it against themselves. No evil, says Festus, “of such things as I supposed: no accusation did they bring against him.” (v. 18.) And yet they did bring it: true, but they did not prove it: for their evil design and daring plot against him gave cause to surmise this, but the examination brought out nothing of the kind. “And of one Jesus,” he says, “which was dead.” (v. 19.) He says naturally enough, “of one” (Jesus), as being a man in office, and not caring for these things. “And not knowing, for my part, what to make of the enquiry concerning these things” (v. 20) — of course, it went beyond a judge’s hearing, the examining into these matters. If thou art at a loss, why dost thou drag him to Jerusalem? But the other would not deign this: no, “To Caesar” (says he); as in fact it was touching Caesar that they accused him Do you hear the appeal? hear the plotting of the Jews? hear their

factions spirit? All these things provoked him to a desire (of hearing him): and he gives them the gratification and Paul becomes more renowned. For such as I said, are the ill designs (of enemies). Had not these things been so, none of these rulers would have deigned to hear him, none would have heard with such quietness and silence. And he seems indeed to be teaching, he seems to be making a defense; but he rather makes a public harangue with much orderliness. Then let us not think that ill designs against us are a grievous thing. So long as we do not make ill designs against ourselves, no one will be able to have ill designs against us: or rather, people may do this, but they do us no hurt; nay, even benefit us in the highest degree: for it rests with ourselves, whether we shall suffer evil, or not suffer evil. Lo! I testify, and proclaim with a loud voice, more piercing even than the sound of a trumpet — and were it possible to ascend on high and cry aloud, I would not shrink from doing it — him that is a Christian, none of all the human beings that inhabit the earth will have power to hurt. And why do I say, human beings? Not even the Evil Spirit himself, the tyrant, the Devil, can do this, unless the man injure himself; be what it may that any one works, in vain he works it. For even as no human being could hurt an angel, if he were on earth, so neither can one human being hurt another human being. But neither again will he himself be able to hurt another, so long as he is good. What then can be equal to this, when neither to be hurt is possible, nor to hurt another? For this thing is not less than the former, the not wishing to hurt another. Why, that man is a kind of angel, yea, like God. For such is God; only, He indeed (is such) by nature, but this man, by moral choice: neither to be hurt is possible (for either), nor to hurt another. But this thing, this “not possible,” think not that it is for any want of power — for the contrary to this is want of power — no, I speak of the morally incompatible (τὸ ἀνευδεκτόν). For the (Divine) Nature is neither Itself susceptible of hurt, nor capable of hurting another: since this very thing in itself is a hurt. For in no other way do we hurt ourselves, than by hurting another, and our greatest sins become such from our doing injury to ourselves. So I that for this reason also the Christian cannot be hurt, namely, because neither can he hurt. But how in hurting others we hurt ourselves, come, let us take this saying in hand for examination in detail. Let a man wrong another, insult, overreach; whom then has he hurt? is it not himself first? This is plain to every one. For to the one, the damage is in money, to himself, it is in the soul; to destruction, and to

punishment. Again, let another be envious: is it not himself he has injured? For such is the nature of injustice: to its own author first it does incalculable hurt. “Yes, but to another also?” True, but nothing worth considering: or rather, not even a little — nay, it even benefits him. For let there be, — as the whole matter lies most in these examples, — let there be some poor man, having but little property and (barely) provided with necessary food, and another rich and wealthy, and having much power, and then let him take the poor man’s property, and strip him naked, and give him up to starvation, while he shall luxuriate in what he has unjustly taken from the other: not only has he not hurt that man at all — he has even benefited him, while himself he has not only not benefited, but even hurt. For how should it be otherwise? In the first place, harassed by an evil conscience, and day by day condemning himself and being condemned by all men: and then, secondly, in the judgment to come. But the other, how is he benefited? Because to suffer ill and bear it nobly, is great gain: for it is a doing away of sins, this suffering of ill, it is a training to philosophy, it is a discipline of virtue. Let us see which of the two is in evil case, this man or that. For the one, if he be a man of well-ordered mind, will bear it nobly: the other will be every day in a constant tremor and misgiving: which then is hurt, this man or that? “You talk idly,” say you: “for when a man has nothing to eat, and is forced to bewail himself and to feel himself very wretched, or comes and begs, and gets nothing. is not that a ruining of both soul and body?” No, it is you that talk idly: for I show facts in proof. For say, does none of the rich feel himself wretched? What then? Is poverty the cause of his wretchedness? “But he does not starve.” And what of that? The greater is the punishment, when having riches he does this. For neither does wealth make a man strong-minded, nor poverty make him weak otherwise none of those living in wealth would pass a wretched life, nor would any of those in poverty (not) curse his fate. But that yours is indeed the idle talk, I will make manifest to you from hence. Was Paul in poverty or in wealth? did he suffer hunger, or did he not? You may hear himself saying, “In hunger and thirst.” (2 Corinthians 11:27.) Did the prophets suffer hunger, or did they not? They too had a hard time of it. “Again, you fetch up Paul to me, again the prophets, some ten or twenty men.” But whence shall I bring examples? “Show me from the many some who bear ills nobly.” But the rare is ever such: however, if you will, let us examine the matter as it is in itself. Let us

see whose is the greater and sharper care, whose the more easy to be born. The one is solicitous about his necessary food, the other about numberless matters, freed from that care. The rich man is not afraid on the score of hunger, but he is afraid about other things: oftentimes for his very life. The poor man is not free from anxiety about food, but he is free from other anxieties, he has safety, has quietness, has security.

If to injure another is not an evil, but a good, wherefore are we ashamed? wherefore do we cover our faces? Wherefore, being reproached, are we vexed and disconcerted? If the being injured is not a good thing, wherefore do we pride ourselves, and glory in the thing, and justify ourselves on its account? Would you learn how this is better than that? Observe those who are in the one condition, and those who are in the other. Wherefore are laws? Wherefore are courts of justice? Wherefore punishments? Is it not, on account of those men, as being diseased and unsound? But the pleasure lies great, you will say. Let us not speak of the future: let us look into the present. What is worse than a man who is under such a suspicion as this? what more precarious? what more unsound? is he not always in a state of shipwreck? Even if he do any just thing, he, is not credited, condemned as he is by all on account of his power (of injuring): for in all who dwell with him he has accusers: he cannot enjoy friendship: for none would readily choose to become the friend of a man who has such a character, for fear of becoming implicated with him in the opinion held of him. As if he were a wild beast, all men turn away from him; as from a pest, a foe, a man-slayer, and an enemy of nature, so they shrink from the unjust man. If he who has wronged another happen to be brought into a court of justice, he does not even need an accuser, his character condemns him in place of any accuser. Not so he who is injured; he has all men to take his part, to condole with him, to stretch out the hand of help: he stands on safe ground. If to injure another be a good and a safe thing, let any one confess that he is unjust: but if he dares not do this, why then does he pursue it as a good thing? But let us see in our own persons, if his same be done there, what evils come of it: (I mean,) if any of the parts or functions within us having overstepped its proper bounds, grasp at the office of some other. For let the spleen, if it will, have left its proper place, and seize on the part belonging to some other organ along with its own, is not this disease? The moisture within us, let it fill every place, is it not dropsy and gout? is

not this to ruin itself, along with the other? Again, let the bile seek for a wide room, and let the blood be diffused throughout every part. But how is it in the soul with anger, lust, and all the rest. if the food exceed its proper measure? Again in the body, if the eye wish to take in more, or to see more than is allotted to it, or admit a greater light than is proper. But if, when the light is good, yet the eye is ruined, if it choose to see more than is right: consider what it must be in the case of an evil thing. If the ear take in a (too) loud voice, the sense is stunned: the mind, if it reason about things above itself, it is overpowered: and whatever is in excess, mars all. For this is **πλεονεξία**, the wanting to have more than what is marked off and allotted. So too in respect of money; when we will needs put upon (us) more burdens (than is meet), although we do not perceive it, to our sore hurt we are nourishing within ourselves a wild beast; much having, yet much wanting, numberless the cares we entangle ourselves withal, many the handles we furnish the devil against ourselves. In the case of the rich, however, the devil has not even need of labor, so surely do their very concerns of business of themselves ruin them. Wherefore I beseech you to abstain from the lust of these things, that we may be enabled to escape the snares of the evil one, and having taken hold of virtue, to attain unto the good things eternal, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory forever. Amen.

HOMILY 52

ACTS 25:23

“And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus’ commandment Paul was brought forth.”

SEE what an audience is gathered together for Paul. Having collected all his guards, the governor is come, and the king, and the tribunes, “with the principal men,” it says, “of the city.” Then Paul being brought forth, see how he is proclaimed as conqueror. Festus himself acquits him from the charges, for what says Festus? “And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him. Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my Lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and especially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write. For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him.” (v. 24-27.) Mark how he accuses them, while he acquits him. O what an abundance of justifications! After all these repeated examinations, the governor finds not how he may condemn him. They said he was worthy of death. On this account he said also: “When I found,” says he “that he had committed nothing worthy of death. — Of whom I have no certain thing to write to my Lord.” This too is a proof of Paul’s spotlessness, that the judge found nothing to say concerning him. “Therefore I have brought him forth,” he says, “before you. For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crime laid against him.” Such were the great straits into which the Jews brought themselves and their rulers! What then? “Agrippa said to Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself.” (ch. 26:1.) From his great desire to hear, the king permits him to speak. But Paul speaks out forthwith with boldness, not flattering, but for this reason saying that he is happy, namely, because (Agrippa) knew all. “Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself. I think

myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews. Especially because I know thee to be expert in all questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.” (v. 2, 3.) And yet, had he been conscious of guilt, he should have feared at being tried in the presence of one who knew all the facts: but this is a mark of a clear conscience, not to shrink from a judge who has an accurate knowledge of the circumstances, but even to rejoice, and to call himself happy. “I beseech thee,” he says, “to hear me patiently.” Since he is about to lengthen out his speech, and to say something about himself, on this account, he premises an entreaty, and (then) says: “My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews: which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.” (v. 4, 5.) Then how should I have become a seditious person, who when young was (thus) testified of by all? Then too from his sect: “after the most straitest sect” says he, “of our religion I lived.” “What then, if though the sect indeed be worthy of admiration, thou art evil?” Touching this also I call all to witness — touching my life and conversation. “And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope’s sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?” (v. 6-8.) Two arguments he lays down for the Resurrection: one, the argument from the prophets: and he does not bring forward any prophet (in particular,) but the doctrine itself as held by the Jews: the other and stronger one, the argument from the facts — (especially from this,) that Christ Himself held discourse with him. And he lays the ground for this by (other) arguments, relating accurately his former madness. Then too, with high commendation of the Jews, he says, “Night and day,” says he, “serving (God) look to attain unto.” So that even if I had not been of unblemished life, it is not for this (doctrine) that I ought to be brought to trial: — “for which hope, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.” And then another argument “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?” Since, if such an opinion had not existed, if they had not been brought up in these dogmas, but they were

now for the first time brought in, perhaps some one might not have received the saying. Then he tells, how he persecuted: this also helps the proof: and he brings forward the chief priests as witnesses, and the “strange cities,” and that he heard Him saying to him, “It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks,” and shows the mercifulness of God, that, though being persecuted He appeared (to men), and did that benefit not to me only, but also sent me as teacher to others: and shows also the prophecy, now come to pass, which he then heard, “Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee.” Showing all this, he says: “I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art Thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; but rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee: delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins (v. 9-18): — observe how mildly he discourses — God, he says, said (this) to me, “that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are — sanctified by faith that is in Me.” By these things, says he, I was persuaded, by this vision He drew me to Himself, and so persuaded me, that I made no delay. “Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for

repentance.” (v. 19, 20.) I therefore, who instructed others also concerning the most excellent way of living, how should I myself have become the author of sedition and contention? “For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.” (v. 21, 22.) See how free from flattery his speech is, and how he ascribes the whole to God. Then his boldness — but neither do I now desist: and the sure grounds — for it is from the prophets that I urge the question, “Whether the Christ was to suffer:” then the Resurrection and the promise, “Whether He, as the first to rise from the dead, should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles.” (v. 23.) Festus saw the boldness, and what says he? For Paul was all along addressing himself to the king — he was in a manner annoyed, and says to him, “Thou art beside thyself, Paul:” for, “while he thus discoursed, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad.” (v. 24.) What then says Paul? With gentleness, “I am not mad,” says he, “most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.” (v. 25.) Then too he gives him to understand why, turning from him, he addressed his speech to the king: “For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him: for this thing was not done in a corner.” (v. 26.) He shows, that (the king) knows all perfectly; at the same time, all but saying to the Jews, And ye indeed ought to have known these things — for this is the meaning of that which he adds, “For this thing was not done in a corner. And Agrippa, said to Paul, *Ἐν ὀλίγῳ* thou persuadest me to be a Christian.” What is *ἐν ὀλίγῳ*? “Within a little, *παρὰ μικρόν*. “And Paul said, I could pray to God,” *καὶ ἐν ὀλίγῳ καὶ ἐν πολλῷ*, (that is) “I could pray to God,” for my part, not “in little” (but “in much “): he does not simply pray, he prays (not briefly, but) with largeness — “that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were such as I am.” Then he adds, “except these bonds;” and yet it was matter of glory; true, but looking to their notion of it, therefore says he, “except these bonds.” (v. 27-29.)

(Recapitulation.) “And on the morrow,” etc. (v. 23.) The Jews desisted ever since Paul exercised his right of appeal. Then also for him the theater

becomes a splendid one: “with great pomp” they were present. “And Festus said,” etc. “The whole multitude of the Jews — “not some of them only, and others not so — “both at Jerusalem, and also here,” they said “that he ought not to live any longer.” (v. 24.) “And I having found,” etc. It shows that he did right in appealing to Caesar. For if though they had no great matter to allege against him, yet those (at Jerusalem) were mad against him, with good reason may he go to Caesar. “That after examination had by you,” he says, “I may get somewhat to write.” Observe how the matter is repeatedly put to the test. The Jews therefore may thank themselves for this vindication (of Paul), which would come to the ears of those also who were at Rome. See how they become the unwilling heralds both of their own wickedness and of Paulus virtue, even to the emperor himself: so that Paul was carried away (to Rome) with more renown than if he had gone thither without bonds: for not as an impostor and a deceiver, after so many judges had acquitted him, was he now carried thither. Quit therefore of all charges, among those with whom he was bred and born, and not only so, (but) thus free from all suspicion, he makes his appearance at Rome. “Then Paul,” etc. (ch. 26:1-3.) And he said not, Why is this? once for all I have appealed to Caesar: I have been tried many times: when will there be an end of this? but what did he? Again he is ready to render an account, and that, before the man who was the best informed on the subject; and with much boldness, seeing they were not his judges to condemn him: but still, though they were not his judges, since that declaration was in force, “Unto Caesar shall thou go, he renders an account and gives full answers, “touching all the things,” and not merely on one and another here and there. They accuse me of sedition, accuse me of heresy, accuse me that I have profaned the temple: “touching all these things I answer for myself:” now that these are not things in accordance with my ways, my accusers themselves are witnesses: “my manner of life from my youth,” etc. (v. 4.) which is what he says on a former occasion “Being a zealot.” (ch. 22:3.) And when the whole people was present, then he challenges their testimony: not before the tribunal, but before Lysias, and again here, when more were present: whereas in that hearing there needed not much vindication of himself, since Lysias’ letter exculpated him. “Know all the Jews,” he says, “which knew me from the beginning.” And he does not say what kind of life his was, but leaves it to their own conscience, and lays the whole stress on his sect, as he would

not have chosen that sect, if he had been a man of evil disposition and bad character (πονηρὸς καὶ μοχθηρὸς). “But, for this hope” (Mss. and Edd. αἰρέσεως) he says, “I stand and am judged.” (v. 6, 7.) This hope is honored among themselves also, because of this they pray, because of this they worship, that unto this they may attain: this same do I show forth. Why then, it is acting like madmen, to be doing all things for the sake of attaining to this, and yet to persecute him who believes in the same. “I indeed thought with myself,” that is, I determined, “to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.” (v. 9.) I was not one of Christ’s disciples: among those who fought against Him, was I. Whence also he is a witness who has a right to be believed, because he, a man who was doing numberless things, makes war on the believers, persuading them to blaspheme, stirring up all against them, cities, rulers, and by himself doing all this of his own accord, was thus suddenly changed. Then again the witnesses, those who were with him: next he shows what just cause he had to be persuaded, both from the light, and from the prophets, and from the results, and from the things which have now taken place. See accordingly, how both from the prophets, and from these particulars, he confirms the proof to them. For that he may not seem to be broaching some novelty, although he had great things to say, yet he again takes refuge with the prophets, and puts this as a question for discussion. Now this had a stronger claim upon belief, as having actually come to pass: but since he alone saw (Christ), he again fetches proof of it from the prophets. And see how he does not discourse alike in the court of justice, and in the assembly (of his own people); there indeed he says, “ye slew Him:” but here no such thing, that he might not kindle their anger more: but he shows the same thing, by saying, “Whether the Christ was to suffer.” He so frees them from accusations: for the prophets, he says, say this. Therefore receive ye also the rest. Since he has mentioned the vision, he then without fear goes on to speak also of the good wrought by it. “To turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. For to this end have I appeared unto thee” (v. 16-18), not to punish, but to make thee an Apostle. He shows the evils which possess unbelievers, “Satan, darkness;” the good things belonging to believers, light, God, “the inheritance of the saints. Whereupon, O king Agrippa,” etc. (v. 19, 20.) He not only exhorts them to repent, but also to show forth a life worthy of admiration. And see how everywhere the Gentiles are admitted into

connection with the people (Israel): for those who were present were of the Gentiles. “Testifying,” he says, “both to great and small,” (v. 22) that is, both to distinguished and undistinguished. This is also for the soldiers. Observe: having left the post of defendant, he took up that of teacher — and therefore also it is that Festus says to him, “Thou art beside thyself” — but then, that he may not seem to be himself the teacher, he brings in the prophets, and Moses: “Whether the Christ was to suffer, whether He as the first to rise from the dead should show light both to the people, and to the Gentiles.” (v. 53.) “And Festus said with a loud voice” — in such anger and displeasure (did he speak) — “Paul, thou art beside thyself.” What then said Paul? “I am not mad,” etc. “For this thing,” he says, “was not done in a corner.” (v. 25, 26.) Here he speaks of the Cross, of the Resurrection: that the doctrine was come to every part of the world. “King Agrippa,” he says, “believest thou” — he does not say, the Resurrection, but — “the prophets?” (v. 57.) Then he forestalls him, and says: “I know that thou believest.” **Ἐν ὀλίγῳ** (i.e. within a little,) “almost thou persuadeth the to be a Christian.” (v. 28.) Paul did not understand what the phrase **ἐν ὀλίγῳ** meant: he thought it meant **ἐξ ὀλίγου** (i.e. with little cost or trouble), wherefore also he answers (as) to this: so unlearned was he. And he said not, I do not wish (that), but, “I pray that not only thou, but also all that hear.” Mark how free from flattery his speech is. — “I pray that this day they may be all such as I am, except these bonds.” (v. 29.) He, the man that glories in his bonds, that puts them forth as a golden chain, deprecates them for these men: for they were as yet too weak in their minds, and it was rather in condescension that he so spake. For what could be better than those bonds which always in his Epistles he prefers (to all things else), saying, “Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ:” (Ephesians 3:1) and again, “On this account I am bound with this chain” (Acts 28:20), “but the word of God is not bound;” and, “Even unto bonds, as an evil-doer.” (2 Timothy 2:9.) The punishment was twofold. For if indeed he had been so bound, as with a view to his good, the thing would have carried with it some consolation: but now (he is bound) both “as an evil-doer,” and as with a view to very ill consequences; yet for none of these things cared he.

Such is a soul winged with heavenly love. For if those who cherish the foul (earthly passion which men call) love, think nothing either glorious of

precious, but those things alone which tend to gratify their lust, they think both glorious and honorable, and their mistress is everything to them; much more do those, who have been taken captive by this heavenly love, think nothing of the cost (τὰ ἐπιτίμια). But if we do not understand what I am saying, it is no marvel, while we are unskilled in this Divine Wisdom. For if any one be caught with the fire of Christ's love, he becomes such as a man would become who dwelt alone upon the earth, so utterly careless is he for glory or disgrace: but just as if he dwelt alone, he would care for nothing, no more does he in this case. As for trials, he so despises them, both scourges and imprisonments, as though the body in which he suffers these things were another's and not his own, or as though he had got a body made of adamant: while as for the sweet things of this life, he so laughs them to scorn, is so insensible to them, as we are insensible of dead bodies, being ourselves dead. He is as far from being taken captive by any passion, as the gold refined in the fire and purified is free from alloy. For even as flies would not dart into the midst of a flame, but fly from it, so the passions dare not even to come near this man. Would that I could bring forward examples of all this from among ourselves: but since we are at a loss for such, we must needs betake ourselves to this same Paul. Observe him then, how he felt towards the whole world. "The world is crucified unto me," he says, "and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14): I am dead to the world, and the world is dead to me. And again: "It is no longer. I that live, but Christ liveth in me." (ib. 2:20.) And, to show you that he was as it were in solitude, and so looked upon the things present, hear himself saying, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." (2 Corinthians 4:18.) What sayest thou? Answer me. And yet what thou sayest is the contrary; thou seest the things invisible, and the visible thou seest not. Such eyes as thou hadst gotten, such are the eyes which are given by Christ: for as these bodily eyes see indeed the things that are seen, but things unseen they see not: so those (heavenly eyes) do the contrary: none that beholds the invisible things, beholds the visible: no one beholding the things seen, beholds the invisible. Or is not this the case with us also? For when having turned our mind inwards we think of any of the unseen things, our views become raised above the things on earth. Let us despise glory: let us be willing to be laughed at rather than to be praised. For he indeed who is laughed at is nothing hurt: but he who is praised is much

hurt. Let us not think much of those things which terrify men, but as we do in the case of children, this let us do here: namely, if we see any one terrifying children, we do not hold that man in admiration: since in fact whoever does frighten, only frightens children; for were it a man, he could not frighten him. Just as those who frighten (children in sport), do this either by drawing up their eyelids, or by otherwise distorting their face, but with the eye looking naturally and mild they would not be able to do this: so these others do this, by distorting their mental vision (τὸ διορατικὸν τῆς διανοίας). So that of a mild man and beautiful in soul nobody would be afraid; on the contrary, we all respect him, honor and venerate him. See ye not, how the man who causes terror is also an object of hatred and abhorrence to us all? For of those things which are only able to terrify what do we not turn away from? Is it not so with wild beasts, with sounds, with sights, with places, with the air, such as darkness? Let us not therefore think it a great thing, if men fear us. For, in the first place, no man indeed is frightened at us: and, secondly, it is no great thing (if they were). Virtue is a great good: and see how great. However wretched we may deem the things by means of which it consists, yet we admire virtue itself, and count them blessed (that have it). For who would not count the patient sufferer blessed, although poverty and such like things seem to be wretched? When therefore it shines forth through those things which seem to be wretched, see how surpassingly great this is! Thinkest thou much, O man, because thou art in power? And what sort of power? say, was it conferred by appointment? (If so,) of men thou hast received power: appoint thyself to it from within. For the ruler is not he who is so called, but he who is really so. For as a king could not make a physician or an orator, so neither can he make a ruler: since it is not the (imperial) letters nor the name that makes a ruler. For, if you will, let any man build a medicine-shop, let him also have pupils, let him have instruments too and drugs, and let him visit those who are sick: are these things sufficient to make a physician? By no means: but there is need of art, and without that, not only do these things profit nothing, but they even hurt: since it were better that he who is not a physician should not even possess medicines. He that possesses them not, neither saves nor destroys: but he that possesses them, destroys, if he knows not how to use them: since the healing power is not only in the nature of the medicines, but also in the art of the person applying them: where this is not, all is marred. Such also is

the ruler: he has for instruments, his voice, anger, executioners, banishments, honors, gifts, and praises; he has also for medicines., the law; has also for his patients, men; for a place to practice in, the court of justice; for pupils, he has the soldiers: if then he know not the science of healing, all these profit him nothing. The judge is a physician of souls, not of bodies: but if this art of healing the bodies needs so much care, much more that of healing the soul, since the soul is of more importance than the body. Then not the mere having the name of ruler is to be a ruler: since others also are called by great names: as Paul, Peter, James, and John: but the names do not make them that which they are called, as neither does my name make me (to be that which John was); I bear indeed the same name with that blessed man, but I am not the same thing (ὁμώνυμος, οὐ μὴν συνώνυμος), I am not John, but am called so. In the same way they are not rulers, but are called so. But those others are rulers even without these adjuncts, just as also a physician, though he may not actually practice his science, yet if he have it in his soul, he is a physician. Those are rulers, who bear rule over themselves. For there are these four things, soul, family; city, world: and the things form a regular progression (ὁδῶ προβάινει). He therefore that is to superintend a family, and order it well, must first bring his own soul into order; for it is his family: but if he cannot order his own family, where there is but one soul, where he himself is master, where he is always along with himself, how shall he order others? He that is able to regulate his own soul, and makes the one part to rule, the other to be subject, this man will be able to regulate a family also: but he that can do this by a family, can do it by a city also: and if by a city, then also by the world. But if he cannot do this for his own soul, how then shall he be able to do it for the world? These things have been spoken by me, that we may not be excited about offices of rule; that we may know what ruling is: for this (which is so called) is not ruling, but a there object of derision, mere slavery, and many other names one might call it by. Tell me, what is proper to a ruler? is it not to help one's subjects, and to do them good? What then, if this be not the case? how shall he help others, who has not helped himself? he who has numberless tyrannies of the passions in his own soul, how shall he root out those of others? Again, with respect to "luxury" or delightful living: the true luxury or delight is not this (which is so called), but quite another thing. For as we have shown that the ruler is not he who is so called, but another (who has

something more than the name), so the person who lives indeed in delight is another sort of person (than he whom we so describe). For “luxury” or delightful living seems indeed to be, the enjoying pleasure and the gratifying the belly: yet it is not this thing, but the contrary: it is, to have a soul worthy of admiration, and to be in a state of pleasure. For let there be a man eating, drinking, and wantoning; then let him suffer cares and loss of spirits: can this man be said to be in a state of delight? Therefore, it is not eating and drinking, it is the being in pleasure, that makes true luxury or delightful living. Let there be a man who gets only dry bread, and let him be filled with gladness: is not this pleasure? Well then, it is the true luxury. Let us see then, to whom this befalls — whether to the rich, or to those who are not rich? Neither to the one part altogether, nor to the other, but to those who so order their own souls, that they may not have many grounds for sorrows. And where is such a life as this to be found? for I see you all eager and Wishing to hear what this life is which has no sorrows. Well then, let this be acknowledged first by you, that this is pleasure, this the true luxury, to have no sorrow to cause annoyance; and ask not of me meats, and wine, and sauces, and silken robes, and a sumptuous table. But if I shall show that apart from all these such a life as that is present (within our reach), then welcome thou this pleasure, and this life: for the most part of painful things happen to us from our not calculating things as we ought. Who then will have the most sorrows — he that cares for none of these things, or he that cares for them? He that fears changes, or he that does not fear? He that is in dread of jealousy, of envy, of false accusations, of plottings, of destruction, or he that stands aloof from these fears? He that wants many things, or he that wants nothing? He that is a slave to masters without number, or he that is a slave to none? He that has need of many things, or he that is free? He that has one Lord to fear, or he that fears despots innumerable? Well then, greater is the pleasure here. This then let us pursue, and not be excited about the things present: but let us laugh to scorn all the pomp of life, and everywhere practice moderation, that we may be enabled so to pass through this life, that it may be without pain, and to attain unto the good things promised, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory, might, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 53

ACTS 26:30-32

“And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: and when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.”

SEE how again also they pass sentence in his favor, and after having said, “Thou art beside thyself,” (v. 24) they acquit him, as undeserving not only of death, but also of bonds, and indeed would have released him entirely, if he had not appealed to Caesar. But this was done providentially, that he should also depart with bonds. “Unto bonds,” he says, “as an evil doer.” (1 Timothy 2:9.) For if his Lord “was reckoned among the transgressors” (Mark 15:28), much more he: but as the Lord did not share with them in their character, so neither did Paul. For in this is seen the marvelous thing, the being mixed up with such, and yet receiving no harm from them. “And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus’ band. And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us. And the next day we touched at Sidon.” (ch. 27:1-3.) See how far Aristarchus also accompanies Paul. To good and useful purpose is Aristarchus present, as he would take back the report of all to Macedonia. “And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself. Julius gave Paul liberty,” it says, acting “courteously, that he might refresh himself;” as it was but natural that he should be much the worse from his bonds and the fear, and the being dragged hither and thither. See how the writer does not hide this either, that Paul wished” to refresh himself. And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.” (v. 4.) Again trials, again contrary winds. See how the life of the saints is thus interwoven throughout: escaped from the court of justice, they fall in with shipwreck and storm. “And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. And there the

centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.” (v. 5, 6.) “A ship of Alexandria,” it says. It is likely that both those (in the former ship) would bear to Asia the report of what had befallen Paul, and that these would do the same in Lycia. See how God does not innovate or change the order of nature, but suffers them to sail into the unfavorable winds. But even so the miracle is wrought. That they may sail safely, He did not let them go out in the (open) sea, but they always sailed near the land. “And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone; and, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called the fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea. Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them.” (v. 7-9.) By “the fast” here, I suppose he means that of the Jews. For they departed thence a long time after the Pentecost, so that it was much about midwinter that they arrived at the coasts of Crete. And this too was no slight miracle, that they also should be saved on his account. “Paul admonished them, and said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives. Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul. And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the southwest and northwest. And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close to Crete. But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon. And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive” (R.V. “were driven.”) (v. 10-15.) Paul therefore advised them to remain, and he foretells what would come of it, but they, being in a hurry, and being prevented by the place, wished to winter at Phenice. Mark then the providential ordering of the events: first indeed, “when the south wind blew softly, supposing they had obtained their purpose,” they loosed the vessel, and came forth; then when the wind bore down upon them, they gave way to it driving them, and were with difficulty saved. “And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat: which when they

had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven. And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship; and the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship. And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away. But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.” (v. 16-21.) Then after so great a storm he does not speak as insultingly over them, but as wishing that at any rate he might be believed for the future. Wherefore also he alleges what had taken place for a testimony of the truth of what was about to be said by him. “And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss or any man’s life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer, for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.” (v. 22-26.) And he foretells two things; both that they must be cast upon an island, and that though the ship would be lost, those who were in it should be saved — which thing he spoke not of conjecture, but of prophecy — and that he “must be brought before Caesar.” But this that he says, “God hath given thee all,” is not spoken boastfully, but in the wish to win those who were sailing in the ship: for (he spoke thus), not that they might feel themselves bound to him, but that they might believe what he was saying. “God hath given thee; “as much (as to say), They are worthy indeed of death, since they would not listen to thee, however, this is done out of favor to thee. “But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country; and sounded, and found it twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms. Then fearing lest they should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day. And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under color as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be

saved. Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.” (v. 27-32.) The sailors however, were about to escape, having no faith in what was said: but the centurion does believe Paul, For he says, If these flee, “ye cannot be saved:” so saying, not on this account, but that he might restrain them, and the prophecy might not fall to the ground. See how as in a church they are instructed by the calmness of Paul’s behavior, how’ he saved them out of the very midst of the dangers. And it is of providential ordering that Paul is disbelieved, that after proof of the facts, he might be believed: which accordingly was the case. And he exhorts them again to take some meat, and they do as he bids them, and he takes some first, to persuade them not by word, but also by act, that the storm did them no harm, but rather was a benefit to their souls. “And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting having taken nothing.” (v. 33.) (b) And how, say you, did they go without food, having taken nothing? how did they bear it? Their fear possessed them, and did not let them fall into a desire of food, being, as they were, at the point of extreme jeopardy; (f) but they had no care for food. “Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat,” (v. 34-36) seeing that there was no question about their lives being saved. (d) “And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea. And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship. And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.” (v. 37-41.) “They made towards shore,” having given the rudder-handles to the wind: for oftentimes they do it not in this way. They were born along, having loosed the rigging, i.e. the sails. “And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmovable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves;” for when there is a strong wind, this is the consequence, the stern

bearing the brunt (of the storm). (a) “And the soldiers’ counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.” (v. 42.) Again the devil tries to hinder the prophecy, and they had a mind to kill some, but the centurion suffered them not, that he might save Paul, so much was the centurion attached to him. “But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land: and the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.” (v. 43, 44.) “And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.” (ch. 28:1.) Do you mark what good came of the storm? Why then it was no mark of their being forsaken, that the storm came upon them. (c) Now this that happened was in consequence of the season of the year; but the wonder is greater, that at such a season they were saved from the midst of the dangers, both he, and for his sake the rest, (e) and this too in the Hadriatic. There were two hundred and seventy-six souls in all: no small matter this also, if indeed they believed. The voyage was at an unseasonable time. (g) It is natural to suppose they would ask the reason why they were sailing, and would learn all. Nor was it for nothing that the voyage was so protracted; it afforded Paul an opportunity for teaching.

(Recapitulation.) And Paul says, “I perceive that (this voyage will be) with hurt and loss.” (v. 10.) And observe how unassuming the expression is. That he may not seem to prophesy, but to speak as of conjecture, “I perceive,” says he. For they would not have received it, had he said this at the outset. In fact he does prophesy on this former occasion, as he does afterward, and says (there), “The God whom I serve,” leading them on. Then how comes it that it was not “with loss” (of any) “of their lives?” It would have been so, but that God brought them safe through it. For as far as depended on the nature of the thing, they had perished, but God prevented it. Then, to show that it was not from conjecture that he so spake, the master of the ship said the contrary (v. 11), and he a man of experience in the matter: so far was it from being the case that Paul’s advice was given from conjecture. More over, the place suggested this same (which the master said), “being not commodious;” and it was evident that from conjecture “the more part advised” (v. 12) as they did, rather than Paul. Then, severe the storm (that ensued), deep the darkness: and

that they may not forget, the vessel also goes to pieces, and the corn is flung out and all beside, that they may not have it in their power after this to be shameless. For this is why the vessel goes to pieces, and their souls are tightly braced. Moreover, both the storm and the darkness contributed not a little to his obtaining the hearing he did. Accordingly observe how the centurion does as he bids him, insomuch that he even let the boat go, and destroyed it. And if the sailors did not as yet comply with his bidding, yet afterwards they do so: for in fact this is a reckless sort of people. (v. 13-20.) “Sirs, ye should have hearkened to me,” etc. (v. 21.) One is not likely to have a good reception, when he chides in the midst of calamity; but when he tells them what more there is (to come) of the calamity, and then predicts the good, then he is acceptable. Therefore he attacks them then first, when “all hope that they should be saved was taken away:” that none may say, Nothing has come of it. And their fear also bears witness. Moreover, the place is a trying one, for it was in the Adriatic, and then their long abstinence. They were in the midst of death. It was now the fourteenth day that they were going without food, having taken nothing. “Wherefore,” said he, “I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health” (v. 34), that ye should eat, lest ye perish of hunger. Observe, his giving thanks after all that had happened strengthened them. For this showed an assured mind that they would be saved. (b) “Then were they all of good cheer; and they also took some meat.” (v. 36.) And not only so, but henceforth they so cast all their care upon Paul, that they even cast out the corn (v. 37), being so many. (a) Two hundred and seventy-six souls (v. 38): whence had they victuals? (c) See how they do their part as men, and how Paul does not forbid them. “And when it was day,” etc., “they loosed the rudder-bands.” (v. 39, 40.) And the vessel goes to pieces in the daytime, that they may not be clean dissolved with the terror: that you may see the prophecy brought out as fact. “And the soldiers’ counsel,” etc. (v. 42.) Do you mark that in this respect also they were given to Paul? since for his sake the centurion suffered them not to be slain. So confessedly wicked do those men seem to me to have been: insomuch that they would have chosen even to slay them: but some swam on shore, others were born on boards, and they all were thus saved, and the prophecy received accomplishment; (a prophecy,) although not solemn from length of time, since he did not deliver it a number of years before, but keeping close to the nature of the things themselves: (still a

prophecy it was,) for all was beyond the reach of hope. And (so) it was through themselves being saved that they learnt who Paul was. But some one may say: why did he not save the ship? That they might perceive how great a danger they had escaped: and that the whole matter depended, not on the help of man, but on God's hand saving them independently of a ship. So that righteous men, though they may be in a tempest, or on the sea, or in the deep, suffer nothing dreadful, but even save others together with themselves. If (here was) a ship in danger and suffering wreck, and prisoners were saved for Paul's sake, consider what a thing it is to have a holy man in a house: for many are the tempests which assail us also, tempests far more grievous than these (natural ones), but He can also give us to be delivered, if only we obey holy men as those (in the ship) did, if we do what they enjoin. For they are not simply saved, but themselves also contributed to other men's believing (πίστιν εἰσήνεγκαν). Though the holy man be in bonds, he does greater works than those who are free. And look how this was the case here. The free centurion stood in need of his bound prisoner: the skillful pilot was in want of him who was no pilot — nay rather, of him who was the true pilot. For he steered as pilot not a vessel of this (earthly) kind, but the Church of the whole world, having learnt of Him Who is Lord also of the sea; (steered it,) not by the art of man, but by the wisdom of the Spirit. In this vessel are many shipwrecks, many waves, spirits of wickedness, “from within are fightings, from without are fears” (2 Corinthians 7:5): so that he was the true pilot. Look at our whole life: it is just such (as was this voyage). For at one time we meet with kindness, at another with a tempest; sometimes from our own want of counsel, sometimes from our idleness, we fall into numberless evils; from our not hearkening to Paul, when we are eager to go somewhither, where he bids us not. For Paul is sailing even now with us, only not bound as he was then: he admonishes us even now, and says to those who are (sailing) on this sea, “take heed unto yourselves: for after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you” (Acts 20:29): and again, “In the last times perilous times shall come: and men shall be lovers of their own selves, lovers of money, boasters.” (2 Timothy 3:2.) This is more grievous than all storms. Let us therefore abide where he bids us — in faith, in the safe haven: let us hearken unto him rather than to the pilot that is within us, that is, our own reason. Let us not straightway do just what this may suggest; not what the owner of the ship: no, but what Paul

suggests: he has passed through many such tempests. Let us not learn (to our cost) by experience, but before the experience let us “avoid both harm and loss.” Hear what he says: “They that will be rich fall into temptation.” (1 Timothy 6:9.) Let us therefore obey him; else, see what they suffered, because they did not take his counsel. And again he tells in another place what causes shipwrecks: “Who,” he says, “have made shipwreck concerning the faith. But do thou continue in the things which thou hast learned and wast assured of.” (1 Timothy 1:19.) Let us obey Paul: though we be in the midst of a tempest, we shall surely be freed from the dangers: though we remain without food fourteen days, though hope of safety may have left us, though we be in darkness and mist, by doing his bidding, we shall be freed from the dangers. Let us think that the whole world is a ship, and in this the evildoers and those who have numberless vices, some rulers, others guards, others just men, as Paul was, others prisoners, those bound by their sins: if then we do as Paul bids us, we perish not in our bonds, but are released from them: God will give us also to him. Or think you not that sins and passions are grievous bonds? for it is not the hands only that are bound, but the whole man. For tell me, when any one possessed of much money uses it not, nor spends it, but keeps it close, is he not bound more grievously than any prisoner by his miserliness, a bond that cannot be broken? What again, when a man gives himself up to (the belief in) Fate, is not he too bound with other fetters? What, when he gives himself up to observations (of times)? What, when to omens? are not these more grievous than all bonds? What again, when he gives himself up to an unreasonable lust and to love? Who shall break in pieces these bonds for you? There is need of God’s help that they may be loosed. But when there are both bonds and tempest, think how great is the amount of dangers. For which of them is not enough to destroy? The hunger, the tempest, the wickedness of those on board, the unfitness of the season? But against all these, Paul’s glory stood its ground. So is it now: let us keep the saints near us, and there will be no tempest: or rather, though there be a tempest, there will be great calm and tranquillity, and freedom from dangers: since that widow had the saint for her friend, and the death of her child was loosed, and she received back her son alive again. (1 Kings 17:17.) Where the feet of saints step, there will be nothing painful; and if such should happen, it is for proving us and for the greater glory of God. Accustom the floor of thy house to be trodden by such feet, and an evil

spirit will not tread there. For as where a sweet odor is, there a bad odor will not find place: so where the holy unguent is, there the evil spirit is choked, and it gladdens those who are near it, it delights, it refreshes the soul. Where thorns are, there are wild beasts: where hospitality is, there are no thorns: for almsgiving having entered in, more keenly than any sickle it destroys the thorns, more violently than any fire. Be not thou afraid: (the wicked one) fears the tracks of saints, as foxes do lions. For “the righteous,” it says, “is as bold as a lion.” (Proverbs 28:1.) Let us bring these lions into our house, and all the wild beasts are put to flight, the lions not needing to roar, but simply to utter their voice. For not so much does the roaring of a lion put the wild beasts to flight, as the prayer of a righteous man puts to flight evil spirits: let him but speak, they cower. And where are such men now to be found, you will say? Everywhere, if we believe, if we seek, if we take pains. Where hast thou sought, tell me? When didst thou take this work in hand? When didst thou make this thy business? But if thou seekest not, marvel not that thou dost not find. For “he that seeketh findeth” (Matthew 7:7), not he that seeketh not. Listen to those who live in deserts: away with thy gold and silver: (such holy men) are to be found in every part of the world. Though thou receive not such an one in thy house, yet go thou to him, live with the man, be at his dwelling-place, that thou mayest be able to obtain and enjoy his blessing. For a great thing it is to receive a blessing from the saints: which let us be careful to obtain, that being helped by their prayers we may enjoy mercy from God, through the grace and loving-kindness of His only-begotten Son, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory, might, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 54

ACTS 20:1

“And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold. And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.”

“SHOWED,” he says, “no little kindness to us — barbarians” (as they were) — “having kindled a fire:” else it were of no use that their lives be saved, if the wintry weather must destroy them. Then Paul having taken brushwood, laid it on the fire. See how active he is; observe how we nowhere find him doing miracles for the sake of doing them, but only upon emergency. Both during the storm when there was a cause he prophesied, not for the sake of prophesying, and here again in the first instance he lays on brushwood:—nothing for vain display, but (with a simple view) to their being preserved, and enjoying some warmth. Then a viper “fastened on his hand. And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.” (v. 4.) Well also was this permitted, that they should both see the thing and utter the thought, in order that, when the result ensued, there might be no disbelieving the miracle. Observe their good feeling (towards the distressed), in saying this (not aloud, but) among themselves — observe (also) the natural judgment clearly expressed even among barbarians, and how they do not condemn without assigning a reason. And these also behold, that they may wonder the more. “And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a God.” (v. 5, 6.) They expected him, it says, to fall down dead: and again, having seen that nothing of the kind happened to him, they said, He is a God. Again (viz. as in ch. 14:11), another excess on the part of these men. “In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously. And it came to pass, that the father of Publius

lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.” (v. 7, 8.) Behold again another hospitable man, Publius, who was both rich and of great possessions: he had seen nothing, but purely out of compassion for their misfortune, he received them, and took care of them. So that he was worthy to receive kindness: wherefore Paul as a requital for his receiving them, “healed him. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed: who also honored us with many honors; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary” (v. 9, 10), both us and the rest. See how when they were quit of the storm, they did not become more negligent, but what a liberal entertainment was given to them for Paul’s sake: and three months were they there, all of them provided with sustenance. See how all this is done for the sake of Paul, to the end that the prisoners should believe, and the soldiers, and the centurion. For if they were very stone, yet from the counsel they heard him giving, and from the prediction they had heard him making, and from the miracles they knew him to have wrought, and from the sustenance they by his means enjoyed, they must have got a very high notion of him. See, when the judgment is right, and not preoccupied by some passion, how immediately it gets right judgments, and gives sound verdicts. “And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux. And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli: where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome. And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and the Three Taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.” (v. 11-15.) Already the preaching has reached to Sicily: see how it has run through (even to those lands): at Puteoli also they found some: others also came to meet them. Such was the eagerness of the brethren, it nothing disconcerted them, that Paul was in bonds. But observe also how Paul himself also was affected after the manner of men. For it says, “he took courage, when he saw the brethren.” Although he had worked so many miracles, nevertheless even from sight he received an accession (of confidence). From this we learn, that he was both comforted after the manner of men, and the contrary. “And when we

came to Rome, Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.” (v. 16.) Leave was given him to dwell by himself. No slight proof this also of his being held in much admiration: it is clear they did not number him among the rest. “And it came to pass, that after three days he called together them that were the chief of the Jews.” After three days he called the chief of the Jews, that their ears might not be preoccupied. And what had he in common with them? for they would not (else) have been like to accuse him. Nevertheless, it was not for this that he cared; it was for the teaching that he was concerned, and that what he had to say might not offend them.

(Recapitulation.) “And the barbarians,” etc. (v. 2.) The Jews then, beholding all the many miracles they did, persecuted and harassed (Paul); but the barbarians, who had seen none, merely on the ground of his misfortune, were kind to him. — “No doubt,” say they, “this man is a murderer:” (v. 4). They do not simply pronounce their judgment, but say, “No doubt,” (i.e.) as any one may see “and vengeance,” say they, “suffereth him not to live.” Why then, they held also the doctrine of a Providence, and these barbarians were far more philosophic than the philosophers, who allow not the benefit of a Providence to extend to things “below the moon:” whereas (these barbarians) suppose God to be present everywhere, and that although a (guilty) man may escape many (a danger), he will not escape in the end. And they do not assail him forthwith, but for a time respect him on account of his misfortune: nor do they openly proclaim their surmise, but speak it “among themselves: a murderer;” for the bonds led them to suspect this. “They showed no small kindness,” and yet (some of them) were prisoners. Let those be ashamed that say, Do not do good to those in prison: let these barbarians shame us; for they knew not who these men were, but simply because they were in misfortune (they were kind): thus much they perceived, that they were human beings, and therefore they considered them to have a claim upon their humanity. “And for a great while,” it says, “they expected that he would die.” (v. 6.) But when he shook his hand, and flung off the beast, then they saw and were astonished. And the miracle did not take place suddenly, but the men went by the length of time, “after they had looked a great while,” so plainly was there no deceit, no haste here (συναπραγή). “Publius,” it says, “lodged them courteously” (v. 7): two hundred and

seventy-six persons. Consider how great the gain of his hospitality: not as of necessity, not as unwilling, but as reckoning it a gain he lodged them for three days: thereafter having met with his requital, he naturally honored Paul much more, when the others also received healing. “Who also,” it says, “honored us with many honors” (v. 10): not that he received wages, God forbid; but as it is written, “The workman is worthy of his meat. And when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.” (Matthew 10:10.) It is plain that having thus received them, they also received the word of the preaching: for it is not to be supposed, that during an entire three months they would have had all this kindness shown them, had these persons not believed strongly, and herein exhibited the fruits (of their conversion): so that from this we may see a strong proof of the great number there was of those that believed. Even this was enough to establish (Paul’s) credit with those (his fellow voyagers). Observe how in all this voyage they nowhere touched at a city, but (were cast) on an island, and passed the entire winter (there, or) sailing — those being herein under training for faith, his fellow-voyagers, I mean. (a) “And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.” (v. 11.) Probably this was painted on it: so addicted were they to their idols. (d) “And when the south wind blew, we came the next day to Puteoli: where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.” (v. 13, 14.) (b) Observe them tarrying a while, and again hasting onwards. (e) “And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and the Three Taverns” (v. 15): not fearing the danger. (c) Paul therefore was now so much respected, that he was even permitted to be by himself: for if even before this they used him kindly, much more would they now. (g) “He was suffered,” it says, “to dwell by himself, with a soldier that kept him.” (v. 16.) That it might not be possible for any plot to be laid against him there either — for there could be no raising of sedition now. So that in fact they were not keeping Paul in custody, but guarding him, so that nothing unpleasant should happen: for it was not possible now, in so great a city, and with the Emperor there, and with Paul’s appeal, for anything to be done contrary to order. So surely is it the case, that always through the things which seem to be against us, all things turn out for us. “With the soldier” — for he was Paul’s guard. “And having called together the chief of the

Jews” (v. 17), he discourses to them, who both depart gainsaying, and are taunted by him, yet they dare not say anything: for it was not permitted them to deal with his matter at their own will. For this is a marvelous thing, that not by the things which seem to be for our security, but by their very opposites, all comes to be for us. And that you may learn this — Pharaoh commanded the infants to be cast into the river. (Exodus 1:22.) Unless the infants had been cast forth, Moses would not have been saved, he would not have been brought up in the palace. When he was safe, he was not in honor; when he was exposed, then he was in honor. But God did this, to show His riches of resource and contrivance. The Jew threatened him, saying, “Wouldest thou kill me?” (ib. 2:14) and this too was of profit to him. It was of God’s providence, in order that he should see that vision in the desert, in order that the proper time should be completed, that he should learn philosophy in the desert, and there live in security. And in all the plottings of the Jews against him the same thing happens: then he becomes more illustrious. As also in the case of Aaron; they rose up against him, and thereby made him more illustrious (Numbers 16:17.): that so his ordination should be unquestionable, that he might be held in admiration for the future also from the plates of brass ([τῶν πετάλων τοῦ χαλκοῦ](#)). Of course you know the history: wherefore I pass over the narration. And if ye will, let us go over the same examples from the beginning. Cain slew his brother, but in this he rather benefited him: for hear what Scripture says, “The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto Me” (Genesis 4:10): and again in another place, “To the blood that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” (Hebrews 12:24.) He freed him from the uncertainty of the future, he increased his reward: we have all learnt hereby what love God had for him. For what was he injured? Not a whit, in that he received his end sooner. For say, what do they gain, who die more slowly? Nothing: for the having good days does not depend on the living many years or few years, but in the using life properly. The Three Children were thrown into the furnace, and through this they became more illustrious: Daniel was cast into the pit, and thence was he made more renowned. (Daniel 3 and 6.) You see that trials in every case bring forth great good even in this life, much more in the life to come: but as to malice, the case is the same, as if a man having a reed should set himself to fight with the fire: it seems indeed to beat the fire, but it makes it brighter, and only consumes itself. For the malice of the wicked becomes

food and an occasion of splendor to virtue: for by God's turning the unrighteousness to good account, our character shines forth all the more. Again, when the devil works anything of this kind, he makes those more illustrious that endure. How then, you will say, was this not the case with Adam, but, on the contrary, he became more disgraced? Nay, in this case of all others God turned (the malice of) that (wicked one) to good account: but if (Adam) was the worse for it, it was he that injured himself: for it is the wrongs that are done to us by others that become the means of great good to us, not so the wrongs which are done by ourselves. As indeed, because the fact is that when hurt by others, we grieve, but not so when hurt by ourselves, therefore it is that God shows, that he who suffers unjustly at the hands of another, gets renown, but he who injures himself, receives hurt: that so we may bear the former courageously, but not the latter. And besides, the whole thing there was Adam's own doing. Wherefore didst thou the woman's bidding? (Genesis 3:6.) Wherefore when she counseled thee contrary to God, didst thou not repel her? Thou wast assuredly thyself the cause. Else, if the devil was the cause, at this rate all that are tempted ought to perish: but if all do not perish, the cause (of our destruction) rests with ourselves. "But," you will say, "all that are tempted ought (at that rate) to succeed." No: for the cause is in ourselves. "At that rate it ought to follow that (some) perish without the devil's having anything to do with it." Yes: and in fact many do perish without the devil's being concerned in it: for surely the devil does not bring about all (our evil doings); no, much comes also from our own sluggishness by itself alone: and if he too is anywhere concerned as a cause, it is from our offering the occasion. For say, why did the devil prevail in Judas' case? When "Satan entered into him" (John 13:27), you will say. Yes, but hear the cause: it was because "he was a thief, and bare what was put in the bag." (ib. 12:6.) It was he that himself gave the devil a wide room for entering into him: so that it is not the devil who puts into us the beginning, it is we that receive and invite him. "But," you will say, "if there were no devil, the evils would not have become great." True, but then our punishment would admit of no plea for mitigation: but as it is, beloved, our punishment is more mild, whereas if we had wrought the evils of ourselves, the chastisements would be intolerable. For say, if Adam, without any counsel, had committed the sin he did, who would have snatched him out of the dangers? "But he would not have sinned," you

will say? What right hast thou to say this? For he who had so little solidity, that was so inert and so ready for folly as to receive such advice as this, much more would he without any counsel have become this (that he did become). What devil incited the brethren of Joseph to envy? If then we be watchful brethren, the devil becomes to us the cause even of renown. Thus, what was Job the worse for his falling into such helplessness of distress? "Speak not of this instance," you will say: "(Job was not the worse,) but the weak person is the worse." Yes, and the weak person is the worse, even if there be no devil. "But in a greater degree," you will say, "when there is the devil's power working along with him." True, but he is the less punished, when he has sinned through the devil's working with him; for the punishments are not the same for all sins. Let us not deceive ourselves: the devil is not the cause of our taking harm, if we be watchful: rather what he does, is to awake us out of our sleep; what he does, is to keep us on the alert. Let us for a while examine these things: suppose there were no wild beasts, no irregular states of the atmosphere; no sicknesses, no pains, no sorrows, nor anything else of the kind: what would not man have become? A hog rather than a man, reveling in gluttony and drunkenness, and troubled by none of those things. But as it is, cares and anxieties are an exercise and discipline of philosophy, a method for the best of training. For say, let a man be brought up in a palace, having no pain, nor care, nor anxiety, and having neither cause for anger nor failure, but whatever he sets his mind upon, that let him do, in that let him succeed, and have all men obeying him: (see whether) such a man would not become more irrational than any wild beast. But as it is, our reverses and our afflictions are as it were a whetstone to sharpen us. For this reason the poor are for the most part wiser than the rich, as being driven about and tost by many waves. Thus a body also, being idle and without motion, is sickly and unsightly: but that which is exercised, and suffers labor and hardships, is more comely and healthy: and this we should find to hold also in the case of the soul. Iron also, lying unused, is spoilt, but if worked it shines brightly; and in like manner a soul which is kept in motion. Now these reverses are precisely what keeps the soul in motion. Arts again perish, when the soul is not active: but it is active when it has not everything plain before it: it is made active by adverse things. If there were no adverse things, there would be nothing to stir it: thus, if everything existed ready-made in beautiful sort, art would not have found

wherein to exercise itself. So, if all things were level to our understanding, the soul would not find wherein to exert itself: if it had to be carried about everywhere, it would be an unsightly object. See you not, that we exhort nurses not to make a practice of carrying children always, that they may not bring them into a habit (of wanting to be carried) and so make them helpless? This is why those children which are brought up under the eyes of their parents are weak, in consequence of the indulgence, which by sparing them too much injures their health. It is a good thing, even pain in moderation; a good thing, care; a good thing, want; for they make us strong: good also are their opposites: but each of these when in excess destroys us; and the one relaxes, but the other (by overmuch tension) breaks us. Seest thou not, that Christ also thus trains His own disciples? If they needed these things, much more do we. But if we need them, let us not grieve, but even rejoice in our afflictions. For these are remedies, answering to our wounds, some of them bitter, others mild; but either of them by itself would be useless. Let us therefore return thanks to God for all these things: for He does not suffer them to happen at random, but for the benefit of our souls. Therefore, showing forth our gratitude, let us return Him thanks, let us glorify Him, let us bear up courageously, considering that it is but for a time, and stretching forward our minds to the things future, that we may both lightly bear the things present, and be counted worthy to attain unto the good things to come, through the grace and mercy of His only begotten Son, with Whom to the Father and the Holy Ghost together be glory, might, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

HOMILY 55

ACTS 28:17-20

“And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, thought I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had aught to accuse my nation of. For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.”

He wished to exculpate both himself and others; himself, that they might not accuse him, and by so doing hurt themselves; and those (others), that it might not seem that the whole thing was of their doing. For it was likely that a report was prevalent, that he had been delivered up by the Jews; and this was enough to alarm them. He therefore addresses himself to this, and defends himself as to his own conduct. “How then is it reasonable,” it might be said, “that they should deliver thee up without a cause?” The Roman governors, he says, bear me witness, who wished to let me go. “How was it then that they did not let (thee) go?” “When the Jews spake against it,” he says. Observe how he extenuates (in speaking of) their charges against him. Since if he had wished to aggravate matters, he might have used them so as to bear harder upon them. Wherefore, he says, “I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar:” so that his whole speech is of a forgiving nature. What then? didst thou this, that thou mightest accuse them? No, he says: “Not that I had aught to accuse my nation of:” but that I might escape the danger. For it is for your sakes “that I am bound with this chain.” So far am I, he says, from any hostile feeling towards you. Then they also were so subdued by his speech, that they too apologized for those of their own nation: “And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came showed or spake any harm of thee.” (v. 21.) Neither through letters, nor through men, have they made known any harm of thee. Nevertheless, we wish to hear from thyself: “But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest” (v. 22): and then forestalled him by showing their

own sentiments. “For as concerning this sect, it is known to us, that everywhere it is spoken against. And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses and out of the Prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.” (v. 23, 24.) They said not, we speak against it, but “it is spoken against.” Then he did not immediately answer, but gave them a day, and they came to him, and he discoursed, it says, “both out of the Law of Moses, and out of the Prophets. And some believed, and some believed not. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.” (v. 25-27.) But when they departed, as they were opposed to each other, then he reproaches them, not because he wished to reproach those (that believed not), but to confirm these (that believed). “Well said Esaias,” says he to them. So that to the Gentiles it is given to know this mystery. No wonder then, if they did gainsay: this was foretold from the first. Then again he moves their jealousy (on the score) of them of the Gentiles. “Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves. And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him. Amen.” (v. 28-31.) It shows the freedom he had now: without hindrance in Rome, he who had been hindered in Judea; and he remained teaching there for two years. What of the (years) after these?

(Recapitulation.) (d) “Who having examined me,” says he, “found nothing in me” (v. 18). When those ought to have rescued, they “delivered (him) into the hands of the Romans.” And such the superabundance, because

those had not power to condemn but delivered him prisoner. “Not as having ought to accuse my nation of,” (v. 19) am I come. See what friendliness of expression “my nation:” he does not hold them as aliens. He does not say, I do not accuse, but, “I have not (whereof) to accuse:” although he had suffered so many evils at their hands. But nothing of all this does he say, nor make his speech offensive: neither does he seem to be sparing them as matter of favor. For this was the main point, to show that they delivered him prisoner to the Romans, when those ought to have condemned him. (a) “For this cause,” he says, “I wished to see you” (v. 20): that it might not be in any man’s power to accuse me, and to say what (naturally) might suggest itself (τὰ παριστάμενα), that having escaped their hands I have come for this: not to bring evils upon others, but myself fleeing from evils. “I was compelled to appeal unto Caesar.” Observe them also speaking more mildly to him. “We beg,” say they: and wish to speak in exculpation of those (at Jerusalem). (e) Whereas they ought to accuse them, they plead for them: by the very fact of their exonerating them, they do in fact accuse them. (b) For this very thing was a proof that they knew themselves exceedingly in the wrong. Had they been confident, they would at any rate have done this, so that he should not have it in his power to make out his story in his own way, and besides they shrank from coming. And by their many times attempting they showed (f) “As for this sect, it is known to us,” say they, “that it is everywhere spoken against.” (v. 21, 21.) True, but (people) are also everywhere persuaded (as, in fact, here), “some were persuaded, and some believed not. And when they had appointed him a day,” etc. (v. 23-25.) See again how not by miracles but by Law and Prophets he puts them to silence, and how we always find him doing this. And yet he might also have wrought signs; but then it would no longer have been matter of faith. In fact, this (itself) was a great sign, his discoursing from the Law and the Prophets. Then that you may not deem it strange (that they believed not), he introduces the prophecy which saith “Hearing ye shall hear and not understand,” more now than then: “and ye shall see and not perceive” (v. 26) more now than then. This is not spoken for the former sort, but for the unbelievers. How then? Was it contrary to the prophecy, that those believed? (“Go,”) it says, “unto this people” (that is), to the unbelieving people. He did not say this to insult them, but to remove the offense. “Be it known then,” he says, “unto you, that unto the Gentiles is sent the

salvation of God. They,” says he, “will hear it too.” (v. 28.) Then why dost thou discourse to us? Didst thou not know this? Yes, but that ye might be persuaded, and that I might exculpate myself, and give none a handle (against me). (c) The unbelieving were they that withdrew. But see how they do not now form plots against him. For in Judea they had a sort of tyranny. Then wherefore did the Providence of God order that he should go thither, and yet the Lord had said, “Get thee out quickly from Jerusalem?” (ch. 22:18.) That both their wickedness might be shown and Christ’s prophecy made good, that they would not endure to hear him: and so that all might learn that he was ready to suffer all things, and that the event might be for the consolation of those in Judea: for there also (the brethren) were suffering many grievous evils. But if while preaching the Jewish doctrines, he suffered thus, had he preached the doctrines of the glory of Christ, how would they have endured him? While “purifying himself” (ch. 21:26) he was intolerable, and how should he have been tolerable while preaching? What lay ye to his charge? What have ye heard? He spoke nothing of the kind. He was simply seen, and he exasperated all against him. Well might hethen be set apart for the Gentiles: well might he be sent afar off: there also destined to discourse to the Gentiles. First he calls the Jews, then having shown them the facts he comes to the Gentiles. (ch. 24:18.) “Well spake the Holy Ghost,” etc. But this saying, “The Spirit said,” is nothing wonderful: for an angel also is said to say what the Lord saith: but He (the Spirit) not so. When one is speaking of the things said by the angel, one does not say, Well said the angel, but, Well said the Lord. “Well said the Spirit:” as much as to say, It is not me that ye disbelieve. But God foreknew this from the first. “He discoursed,” it says, “with boldness, unhindered” (v. 31): for it is possible to speak with boldness, yet hindered. His boldness nothing checked: but in fact he also spoke unhindered. (c) “Discoursed,” it says, “the things concerning the kingdom of God:” mark, nothing of the things of sense, nothing of the things present. (f) But of his affairs after the two years, what say we? (b) (The writer) leaves the hearer athirst for more: the heathen authors do the same (in their writings), for to know everything makes the reader dull and jaded. Or else he does this, (e) not having it in his power to exhibit it from his own personal knowledge. (a) Mark the order of God’s Providence, “I have been much hindered from coming unto you... having a great desire these many years to come unto you.” (Romans 15:22, 23.) (d) But he fed

them with hopes. (g) I am in haste to go to Spain, and “I hope,” says he, “to see you in my journey, and to be brought thitherward on my journey by you, if first I be filled with your company in some measure.” (ib. 24.) Of this he says, I will come and rest together with you “in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel” (ib. 29): and again “I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints” (ib. 25): this is the same that he has said here, “To do alms to my nation I came.” (Acts 24:17.) (h) Do you mark how he did not foresee everything — that sacred and divine head, the man higher than the heavens, that had a soul able to grasp all at once, the holder of the first place — Paul? The man whose very name, to them that know him, suffices for rousing of the soul, for vigilance, for shaking off all sleep! Rome received him bound coming up from the sea, saved from a shipwreck — and was saved from the shipwreck of error. Like an emperor that has fought a naval battle and overcome, he entered into that most imperial city. (k) He was nearer now to his crown. Rome received him bound, and saw him crowned and proclaimed conqueror. There he had said, I will rest together with you: but this was the beginning of a course once more, and he added trophies to trophies, a man not to be overcome. Corinth kept him two years, and Asia three, and this city two for this time; a second time he again entered it, when also he was consummated. Thus he escaped then, and having filled the whole world, he so brought his life to a close. Why didst thou wish to learn what happened after these two years? Those too are such as these: bonds, tortures, fightings, imprisonments, lyings in wait, false accusations, deaths, day by day. Thou hast seen but a small part of it? How much soever thou hast seen, such is he for all the rest. As in the case of the sky, if thou see one part of it, go where thou wilt thou shalt see it such as this: as it is with the sun, though thou see its rays but in part, thou mayest conjecture the rest: so is it with Paul. His Acts thou hast seen in part; such are they all throughout, teeming with dangers. He was a heaven having in it the Sun of Righteousness, not such a sun (as we see): so that that man was better than the very heaven. Think you that this is a small thing — when you say “The Apostle,” immediately every one thinks of him (as), when you say “The Baptist,” immediately they think of John? To what shall one compare his words? To the sea, or even to the ocean? But nothing is equal to them. More copious than this (sea) are (his) streams; purer and deeper; so that one would not err in calling Paul’s heart both a sea and a heaven, the one for purity, the other for depth. He is a

sea, having for its voyagers not those who sail from city to city, but those from earth to heaven: if any man sail in this sea, he will have a prosperous voyage. On this sea, not winds, but instead of winds the Holy and Divine Spirit wafts the souls which sail thereon: no waves are here, no rock, no monsters: all is calm. It is a sea which is more calm and secure than a haven, having no bitter brine, but a pure fountain both sweeter than , and brighter and more transparent than the sun: a sea it is, not having precious stones, nor purple dye as ours, but treasures far better than those. He who wishes to descend into this sea, needs not divers, needs not oil, but much loving-kindness (φιλανθρωπίας): he will find in it all the good things that are in the kingdom of Heaven. He will even be able to become a king, and to take the whole world into his possession, and to be in the greatest honor; he who sails on this sea will never undergo shipwreck, but will know all things well. But as those who are inexpert in this (our visible sea) are suffocated (in attempting to dive therein), so is it in that other sea: which is just the case with the heretics, when they attempt things above their strength. It behooves therefore to know the depth, or else not to venture. If we are to sail on this sea, let us come well-girded. “I could not,” he says, “speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal.” (1 Corinthians 3:1.) Let no one who is without endurance sail on this sea. Let us provide for ourselves ships, that is, zeal, earnestness, prayers, that we, may pass over the sea in quiet. For indeed this is the living water. Like as if one should get a mouth of fire, such a mouth does that man get who knows Paul well: like as if one should have a sharp sword, so again does such an one become invincible. And for the understanding of Paul’s words there is needed also a pure life. For therefore also he said: “Ye are become such as have need of milk, seeing ye are dull of hearing.” (Hebrews 5:11, 12.) For there is, there is an infirmity of hearing. For as a stomach which is infirm could not take in wholesome food (which it finds) hard of digestion, so a soul which is become tumid and heated, unstrung and relaxed, could not receive the word of the Spirit. Hear the disciples saying, “This is a hard saying: who can hear it” (John 6:60)? But if the soul be strong and healthy, all is most easy, all is light: it becomes more lofty and buoyant: it is more able to soar and lift itself on high. Knowing then these things, let us bring our soul into a healthy state: let us emulate Paul, and imitate that noble, that adamantine soul: that, advancing in the steps of his life, we may be enabled to sail through the sea of this present life, and to come

unto the haven wherein are no waves, and attain unto the good things promised to them that love Him, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father and Holy Ghost together be glory, might, honor, now and ever, world without end. Amen.