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Two Homilies On Eutropius: II. After Eutropius having been found outside the Church had been taken captive

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ST. CHRYSOSTOM:

TWO HOMILIES ON EUTROPIUS

I. WHEN HE HAD TAKEN REFUGE IN THE CHURCH. II. WHEN HE HAD QUITTED THE ASYLUM OF THE CHURCH, AND HAD BEEN TAKEN CAPTIVE.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE TWO HOMILIES ON EUTROPIUS.

The interest of the two following discourses depends not only on their intrinsic value as specimens of Chrysostom's eloquence, but also on the singular and dramatic character of the incidents which gave occasion to them.

Arcadius the Emperor of the East like his brother Honorius the Emperor of the West was a man of feeble intellect. The history of the Empire under his reign is a melancholy record of imbecility on the part of the nominal rulers: of faithlessness and unscrupulous ambition on the part of their ministers. The chief administrator of affairs in the beginning of the reign of Arcadius was Rufinus, an Aquitanian Gaul; the very model of an accomplished adventurer. His intrigues, his arrogance, his rapacious avarice excited the indignation of the people, and he was at last assassinated by the troops to whom he was making an oration in the presence of the Emperor. His place in the favour

and confidence of Arcadius was soon occupied by the eunuch Eutropius. The career of this person was a strange one. Born a slave, in the region of Mesopotamia, he had passed in boyhood and youth through the hands of many owners, performing the most menial offices incident to his position. At length Arnithus, an old military officer who had become his master, presented him to his daughter on her marriage; and in the words of the poet Claudian, “the future consul of the East was made over as part of a marriage dowry.”⁷⁹⁸ But the young lady after a time grew tired of the slave who was becoming elderly and wrinkled, and without trying to sell him turned him out of her household. He picked up a precarious living in Constantinople and was often in great want until an officer of the court took pity on him, and procured him a situation in the lower ranks of the imperial chamberlains. This was the beginning of his rise. By the diligence with which he discharged his humble duties, by occasional witty sayings, and the semblance of a fervent piety he attracted the notice of the great Emperor Theodosius (the father of Arcadius), and gradually won his confidence so as to be employed on difficult and delicate missions. On the death of Theodosius he became in the capacity of grand chamberlain the intimate adviser and constant attendant of Arcadius and the most subtle and determined rival of Rufinus. It was by his contrivance that the scheme of Rufinus for marrying his own daughter to the Emperor was defeated: and that Eudoxia the daughter of a Frankish general was substituted for her. After the murder of Rufinus the government was practically in his hands; but he exercised his power more craftily than the vain and boastful Gaul. He contrived at first to discharge all the duties which fell to his lot as chamberlain with humble assiduity, and sought no other title than he already possessed. Slowly but surely however he climbed to the summit of power by the simple process of putting out of the way on various pretexts all dangerous competitors. He deprived his victims of their last hope of escape by abolishing the right of the Church to afford shelter to fugitives. He sold the chief offices of the State, and the command of the provinces to the highest bidders. By surrounding the Emperor with a crowd of frivolous companions, by dissipating his mind with a perpetual round of amusements, by taking him every spring to Ancyra in Phrygia where he was subjected to the enervating influence of a soft climate and luxurious style of living he made the naturally feeble intellect of Arcadius more feeble still and withdrew it from the power of every superior mind but his own. From the pettiest detail of domestic life to the most important affairs of state, the wily minister at length ruled supreme. Arcadius was little more than a magnificently dressed puppet, and the eunuch slave was the real master of half the Roman world. It was by his advice that on the death of Nectarius in 397 that Chrysostom had been appointed, very much against his own will, to the vacant See of Constantinople. If Eutropius expected to find a complaisant courtier in the new Archbishop he certainly sustained a severe disappointment. Some little pretences which he made of assisting the work of the Church by patronising Chrysostom’s missionary projects could not blind the Archbishop to the gross venality of his administration, or exempt him from the censure and warning of one who was too honest and bold to be any respecter of persons. In fact when the Archbishop declaimed against the cupidity and oppressions of the rich



⁷⁹⁸ In Eutrop. i. 104, 105.

it was obvious to all that Eutropius was the most signal example of these vices. At last the minister, not content to remain as he was—enjoying the reality of power without the name—prepared the way for his own ruin by inducing the Emperor to bestow on him the titles of Patrician and Consul. The acquisition of these venerable names by the eunuch slave caused a profound sensation of shame and indignation throughout the Empire, but especially in the Western capital, where they were bound up with all the noblest and most glorious memories in the history of the Roman people. The name of Eutropius was omitted from the Fasti or catalogue of consuls inscribed in the Capitol at Rome. Amidst the general decadence and degeneracy of public spirit in the Empire the West did not descend, could not have descended, to those depths of servile adulation to which the Byzantines stooped at the inauguration of Eutropius as Consul. The senate, and all the great officials military and civil poured into the palace of the Cæsars to offer their homage, and emulated each other in the honor of kissing the hand and even the wrinkled visage of the eunuch. They saluted him as the bulwark of the laws, and the second father of the Emperor. Statues of bronze or marble were placed in various parts of the city representing him in the costume of warrior or judge, and the inscriptions on them styled him third founder of the city, after Byzas, and Constantine. No wonder that Claudian declaimed with bitter sarcasm against “a Byzantine nobility and Greek divinities” and invokes Neptune by a stroke of his trident to unseat and submerge the degenerate city which had inflicted such a deep disgrace on the Empire.⁷⁹⁹ A blow indeed was about to fall upon the eastern capital, directed not by the hand of a mythic deity, but of a stout barbarian soldier. The consequences of it were averted from the city only by the sacrifice of the new consul upon whom it fell with crushing effect. He sank never to rise again. Tribigild, a distinguished gothic soldier who had been raised to the rank of Tribune in the Roman army, had demanded higher promotion for himself and higher pay for a body of military colonists in Phrygia of which he had the command. His petition had been coldly dismissed by Eutropius; Tribigild resent the affront and with the troops which he commanded broke into revolt. Eutropius entrusted the conduct of an expedition against him to one of his favorites, who suffered a most ignominious defeat in which he perished, and the greater part of his army was cut to pieces. Constantinople was convulsed with terror and indignation. Gåinas another Goth in command of the city troops declared that he could do nothing to check the progress of the revolt unless Eutropius was banished, the principal author of all the evils of the State. His demand was backed by the Empress Eudoxia, who had experienced much insolence from the minister. Eutropius was deprived of his official dignity, his property was declared confiscated, and he was commanded to quit the palace instantly under pain of death. Whither could the poor wretch fly who was thus in a moment hurled from the pinnacle of power into the lowest depths of degradation and destitution. There was but one place to which he could naturally turn in his distress—the sanctuary of the Church; but by the cruel irony of his fate, a law of his own devising here barred his entrance. Yet he knew that the law prohibiting asylum had been resented and resisted by the Church and it might be that the Archbishop would connive at the violation of the obnoxious measure by the very person

⁷⁹⁹ In Eutrop. ii. 39, 136.

who had passed it. He resolved to make the experiment. In the humblest guise of a suppliant, tears streaming down his puckered cheeks, his scant grey hairs smeared with dust, he crept into the Cathedral, drew aside the curtain in front of the altar and clung to one of the columns which supported it. Here he was found by Chrysostom in a state of pitiable and abject terror, for soldiers in search of him had entered the Church, and the clattering of their arms could be heard on the other side of the thin partition which concealed the fugitive. With quivering lips he craved the asylum of the church, and he was not repulsed as the destroyer of the refuge which he now sought.⁸⁰⁰ Chrysostom rejoiced in the opportunity afforded to the church of taking a noble revenge on her adversary.⁸⁰¹ He concealed Eutropius in the sacristy, confronted his pursuers, and refused to surrender him. "None shall violate the sanctuary save over my body: the church is the bride of Christ who has entrusted her honor to me and I will never betray it." He desired to be conducted to the Emperor and taken like a prisoner between two rows of spearmen from the Cathedral to the palace⁸⁰² where he boldly vindicated the church's right of asylum in the presence of the Emperor. Arcadius promised to respect the retreat of the fallen minister, and with difficulty persuaded the angry troops to accept his decision. The next day was Sunday, and the Cathedral was thronged with a vast multitude eager to hear what the golden mouth of the Archbishop would utter who had dared in defence of the Church's right to defy the law, and confront the tide of popular feeling. But few probably were prepared to witness such a dramatic scene as was actually presented. The Archbishop had just taken his seat in the "Ambon" or high reading desk a little westward of the chancel from which he was wont to preach on the account of his diminutive stature, and a sea of faces was upturned to him waiting for the stream of golden eloquence when the curtain of the sanctuary was drawn aside and disclosed the cowering form of the miserable Eutropius clinging to one of the columns of the Holy Table. Many a time had the Archbishop preached to unheeding ears on the vain and fleeting character of worldly honor, prosperity, luxury, and wealth: now he would force attention, and drive home his lesson to the hearts of his vast congregation by pointing to a visible example of fallen grandeur in the poor wretch who lay grovelling behind him.

Eutropius remained for some days within the precincts of the Church and then suddenly departed. Whether he mistrusted the security of his shelter and hoped to make his escape in disguise, or whether he surrendered himself on the understanding that exile would be substituted for capital punishment cannot be certainly known. Chrysostom declared that if he had not abandoned the Church, the Church would never have given him up.⁸⁰³ Anyhow he was captured and conveyed to Cyprus, but soon afterwards he was tried at Constantinople on various charges of high crimes and misdemeanors against the State, and condemned to suffer capital punishment. He was taken to

800 Hom. i. 2.

801 Hom. i. 3.

802 Hom. ii. 1.

803 Hom. ii. i.

Chalcedon and there beheaded.⁸⁰⁴ The second of the two following discourses was delivered a few days after Eutropius had quitted the sanctuary of the Church.



EUTROPIUS, PATRICIAN AND CONSUL.

Homily I.

On Eutropius, the eunuch, Patrician and Consul.

1. “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity”—it is always seasonable to utter this but more especially at the present time. Where are now the brilliant surroundings of thy consulship? where are the gleaming torches? Where is the dancing, and the noise of dancers’ feet, and the banquets and the festivals? where are the garlands and the curtains of the theatre? where is the applause which greeted thee in the city, where the acclamation in the hippodrome and the flatteries of spectators? They are gone—all gone: a wind has blown upon the tree shattering down all its leaves, and showing it to us quite bare, and shaken from its very root; for so great has been the violence of the blast, that it has given a shock to all these fibres of the tree and threatens to tear it up from the roots. Where now are your feigned friends? where are your drinking parties, and your suppers? where is the swarm of parasites, and the wine which used to be poured forth all day long, and the manifold dainties invented by your cooks? where are they who courted your power and did and said everything to win your favour? They were all mere visions of the night, and dreams which have vanished with the dawn of day: they were spring flowers, and when the spring was over they all withered: they were a shadow which has passed away—they were a smoke which has dispersed, bubbles which have burst, cobwebs which have been rent in pieces. Therefore we chant continually this spiritual song—“Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” For this saying ought to be continually written on our walls, and garments, in the market place, and in the house, on the streets, and on the doors and entrances, and above all on the conscience of each one, and to be a perpetual theme for meditation. And inasmuch as deceitful things, and maskings and pretence seem to many to be realities it behoves each one every day both at supper and at breakfast, and in social assemblies to say to his neighbour and to hear his neighbour say in return “vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” Was I not continually telling thee that wealth was a runaway? But you would not heed me. Did I not tell thee that it was an unthankful servant? But you would not be persuaded. Behold actual experience has now proved

⁸⁰⁴ For a fuller account of all these events, see *Life of St. John Chrysostom* by W. R. W. Stephens (pp. 298–356, 3d edition).

Church, thus also our merciful Emperor, as I have already said, will commend us, and all the people will applaud us, and the ends of the earth will admire the humanity and gentleness of our city, and all who hear of these deeds throughout the world will extol us. That we then may enjoy these good things, let us fall down in prayer and supplication, let us rescue the captive, the fugitive, the suppliant from danger that we ourselves may obtain the future blessings by the favour and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and power, now and for ever, world without end. Amen.

Homily II.

After Eutropius having been found outside the Church had been taken captive.

1. Delectable indeed are the meadow, and the garden, but far more delectable the study of the divine writings. For there indeed are flowers which fade, but here are thoughts which abide in full bloom; there is the breeze of the zephyr, but here the breath of the Spirit: there is the hedge of thorns, but here is the guarding providence of God; there is the song of cicadæ, but here the melody of the prophets: there is the pleasure which comes from sight, but here the profit which comes from study. The garden is confined to one place, but the Scriptures are in all parts of the world; the garden is subject to the necessities of the seasons, but the Scriptures are rich in foliage, and laden with fruit alike in winter and in summer. Let us then give diligent heed to the study of the Scriptures: for if thou doest this the Scripture will expel thy despondency, and engender pleasure, extirpate vice, and make virtue take root, and in the tumult of life it will save thee from suffering like those who are tossed by troubled waves. The sea rages but thou sailest on with calm weather; for thou hast the study of the Scriptures for thy pilot; for this is the cable which the trials of life do not break asunder. Now that I lie not events themselves bear witness. A few days ago the Church was besieged: an army came, and fire issued from their eyes, yet it did not scorch the olive tree; swords were unsheathed, yet no one received a wound; the imperial gates were in distress, but the Church was in security. And yet the tide of war flowed hither; for here the refugee was sought, and we withstood them, not fearing their rage. And wherefore prithe? because we held as a sure pledge the saying "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."⁸¹⁵ And when I say the Church I mean not only a place but also a plan of life:⁸¹⁶ I mean not the walls of the Church but the laws of the Church. When thou takest refuge in a Church, do not seek shelter merely in the place but in the spirit of the place. For the Church is not wall and roof but faith and life.

815 Matt. xvi. 18.

816 μ † .

Do not tell me that the man having been surrendered was surrendered by the Church; if he had not abandoned the Church he would not have been surrendered. Do not say that he fled here for refuge and then was given up: the Church did not abandon him but he abandoned the Church. He was not surrendered from within the Church but outside its walls. Wherefore did he forsake the Church? Didst thou desire to save thyself? Thou shouldst have held fast to the altar. There were no walls here, but there was the guarding providence of God. Wast thou a sinner? God does not reject thee: for “He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”⁸¹⁷ The harlot was saved when she clung to His feet. Have ye heard the passage read to-day? Now I say these things that thou mayest not hesitate to take refuge in the Church. Abide with the Church, and the Church does not hand thee over to the enemy: but if thou fliest from the Church, the Church is not the cause of thy capture. For if thou art inside the fold the wolf does not enter: but if thou goest outside, thou art liable to be the wild beast’s prey: yet this is not the fault of the fold, but of thy own pusillanimity. The Church hath no feet. Talk not to me of walls and arms: for walls wax old with time, but the Church has no old age. Walls are shattered by barbarians, but over the Church even demons do not prevail. And that my words are no mere vaunt there is the evidence of facts. How many have assailed the Church, and yet the assailants have perished while the Church herself has soared beyond the sky? Such might hath the Church: when she is assailed she conquers: when snares are laid for her she prevails: when she is insulted her prosperity increases: she is wounded yet sinks not under her wounds; tossed by waves yet not submerged; vexed by storms yet suffers no shipwreck; she wrestles and is not worsted, fights but is not vanquished. Wherefore then did she suffer this war to be? That she might make more manifest the splendour of her triumph. Ye were present on that day, and ye saw what weapons were set in motion against her, and how the rage of the soldiers burned more fiercely than fire, and I was hurried away to the imperial palace.⁸¹⁸ But what of that? By the grace of God none of those things dismayed me.

2. Now I say these things in order that ye too may follow my example. But wherefore was I not dismayed? Because I do not fear any present terrors. For what is terrible? Death? nay this is not terrible: for we speedily reach the unruffled haven. Or spoliation of goods? “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I depart;”⁸¹⁹ or exile? “The earth is the Lord’s and the fulness thereof;”⁸²⁰ or false accusation? “Rejoice and be exceeding glad, when men shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for great is your reward in Heaven.”⁸²¹ I saw the swords and I meditated on Heaven; I expected death, and I bethought me of the resurrection; I beheld the sufferings of this lower world, and I took account of the heavenly prizes; I observed the devices of the enemy, and I meditated on the heavenly crown: for the occasion of the contest was sufficient for encouragement

817 Matt. ix. 13.

818 See Introduction.

819 Job i. 21.

820 Ps. xxiv. 1.

821 Matt. v. 12.

and consolation. True! I was being forcibly dragged away, but I suffered no insult from the act; for there is only one real insult, namely sin: and should the whole world insult thee, yet if thou dost not insult thyself thou art not insulted. The only real betrayal is the betrayal of the conscience: betray not thy own conscience, and no one can betray thee. I was being dragged away and I saw the events—or rather I saw my words turned into events, I saw my discourse which I had uttered in words being preached in the market-place through the medium of actual events. What kind of discourse? the same which I was always repeating. The wind has blown and the leaves have fallen. “The grass has withered and the flower has faded.”⁸²² The night has departed and the day has dawned; the shadow has been proved vain and the truth has appeared. They mounted up to the sky, and they came down to the level of earth: for the waves which were swelling high have been laid low by means of merely human events. How? The things which were taking place were a lesson. And I said to myself will posterity learn self-control? or before two days have passed by will these events have been abandoned to oblivion? The warnings were sounding in their ears. Again let me utter, yet again I will speak. What profit will there be? Certainly there will be profit. For if all do not hearken, the half will hearken; and if not the half, the third part: and if not the third the fourth: and if not the fourth, perhaps ten: and if not ten, perhaps five: and if not five perhaps one: and if not one, I myself have the reward prepared for me. “The grass withereth and the flower fadeth; but the word of God abideth for ever.”⁸²³


 254

3. Have ye seen the insignificance of human affairs? have ye seen the frailty of power? Have ye seen the wealth which I always called a runaway and not a runaway only, but also a murderer. For it not only deserts those who possess it, but also slaughters them; for when any one pays court to it then most of all does it betray him. Why dost thou pay court to wealth which to-day is for thee, and to-morrow for another? Why dost thou court wealth which can never be held fast? Dost thou desire to court it? dost thou desire to hold it fast? Do not bury it but give it into the hands of the poor. For wealth is a wild beast: if it be tightly held it runs away: if it be let loose it remains where it is; “For,” it is said, “he hath dispersed abroad and given to the poor; his righteousness remaineth forever.”⁸²⁴ Disperse it then that it may remain with thee; bury it not lest it run away. Where is wealth? I would gladly enquire of those who have departed. Now I say these things not by way of reproach, God forbid, nor by way of irritating old sores, but as endeavouring to secure a haven for you out of the shipwreck of others. When soldiers and swords were threatening, when the city was in a blaze of fury, when the imperial majesty was powerless, and the purple was insulted, when all places were full of frenzy, where was wealth then? where was your silver plate? where were your silver couches? where your household slaves? they had all betaken themselves to flight; where were the eunuchs? they all ran away; where were your friends? they changed their masks. Where were your houses? they were shut up. Where was your money? the owner of it fled: and the money

822 Is. xl. 8.

823 Is. xl. 8.

824 Ps. cxii. 9.

itself, where was that? it was buried. Where was it all hidden? Am I oppressive and irksome to you in constantly declaring that wealth betrays those who use it badly? The occasion has now come which proves the truth of my words. Why dost thou hold it so tightly, when in the time of trial it profiteth thee nothing? If it has power when thou fallest into a strait, let it come to thy aid, but if it then runs away what need hast thou of it? events themselves bear witness. What profit was there in it? The sword was whetted, death was impending, an army raging: there was apprehension of imminent peril; and yet wealth was nowhere to be seen. Where did the runaway flee? It was itself the cause which brought about all these evils, and yet in the hours of necessity it runs away. Nevertheless many reproach me saying continually thou fastenest upon the rich: while they on the other hand fasten upon the poor. Well I do fasten upon the rich: or rather not the rich, but those who make a bad use of their riches. For I am continually saying that I do not attack the character of the rich man, but of the rapacious. A rich man is one thing, a rapacious man is another: an affluent man is one thing, a covetous man is another. Make clear distinctions, and do not confuse things which are diverse. Art thou a rich man? I forbid thee not. Art thou a rapacious man? I denounce thee. Hast thou property of thy own? enjoy it. Dost thou take the property of others? I will not hold my peace. Wouldest thou stone me for this? I am ready to shed my blood: only I forbid thy sin. I heed not hatred, I heed not war: one thing only do I heed, the advancement of my hearers. The rich are my children, and the poor also are my children: the same womb has travailed with both, both are the offspring of the same travail-pangs. If then thou fastenest reproaches on the poor man, I denounce thee: for the poor man does not suffer so much loss as the rich. For no great wrong is inflicted on the poor man, seeing that in his case the injury is confined to money; but in thy case the injury touches the soul. Let him who wills cast me off, let him who wills stone me, let him who wills hate me: for the plots of enemies are the pledges to me of crowns of victory, and the number of my rewards will be as the number of my wounds.

4. So then I fear not an enemy's plots: one thing only do I fear, which is sin. If no one convicts me of sin, then let the whole world make war upon me. For this kind of war only renders me more prosperous. Thus also do I wish to teach you a lesson. Fear not the devices of a potentate, but fear the power of sin. No man will do thee harm, if thou dost not deal a blow to thyself. If thou hast not sin, ten thousand swords may threaten thee, but God will snatch thee away out of their reach: but if thou hast sin, even shouldst thou be in paradise thou wilt be cast out. Adam was in paradise yet he fell; Job was on a dung hill, yet he was crowned victorious. What profit was paradise to the one? or what injury was the dung hill to the other? No man laid snares for the one, yet was he overthrown: the devil laid snares for the other, and yet he was crowned. Did not the devil take his property? Yes, but he did not rob him of his godliness. Did he not lay violent hands upon his sons? yes: but he did not shake his faith. Did he not tear his body to pieces? yes: but he did not find his treasure. Did he not arm his wife against him? yes: but he did not overthrow the soldier. Did he not hurl arrows and darts at him? yes: but he received no wounds. He advanced his engines but could not shake the tower; he conducted his billows against him, but did not sink the ship. Observe this law I beseech you, yea I clasp your knees, if not with the bodily hand, yet in spirit, and pour forth tears

of supplication. Observe this law I pray you, and no one can do you harm. Never call the rich man happy; never call any man miserable save him who is living in sin: and call him happy who lives in righteousness. For it is not the nature of their circumstances, but the disposition of the men which makes both the one and the other. Never be afraid of the sword if thy conscience does not accuse thee: never be afraid in war if thy conscience is clear. Where are they who have departed? tell me. Did not all men once bow down to them? did not those who were in authority tremble greatly before them? did they not pay court to them? But sin has come, and all things are manifested in their true lights; they who were attendants have become judges, the flatterers are turned into executioners; they who once kissed his hands, dragged him themselves from the church, and he who yesterday kissed his hand is to-day his enemy. Wherefore? Because neither did he yesterday love him with sincerity. For the opportunity came and the actors were unmasked. Didst thou not yesterday kiss his hands, and call him saviour, and guardian, and benefactor? Didst thou not compose panegyrics without end? wherefore to-day dost thou accuse him? Why yesterday a praiser, and to-day an accuser? why yesterday utter panegyrics, and to-day reproaches? What means this change? what means this revolution?

5. But I am not like this: I was the subject of his plots, yet I became his protector. I suffered countless troubles at his hands, yet I did not retaliate. For I copy the example of my Master, who said on the cross, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do." Now I say these things that you may not be perverted by the suspicion of wicked men. Now many changes have taken place, since I had the oversight of the city, and yet no one learns self-control? But when I say no one, I do not condemn all, God forbid. For it is impossible that this rich soil when it has received seed, should not produce one ear of corn: but I am insatiable, I do not wish many to be saved but all. And if but one be left in a perishing condition, I perish also, and deem that the Shepherd should be imitated who had ninety-nine sheep, and yet hastened after the one which had gone astray.⁸²⁵ How long will money last? how long this silver and gold? how long these draughts of wine? how long the flatteries of slaves? how long these goblets wreathed with garlands? how long these satanic drinking feasts, full of diabolical activity?

Dost thou not know that the present life is a sojourn in a far country? for art thou a citizen? Nay thou art a wayfarer. Understandest thou what I say? Thou art not a citizen, but thou art a wayfarer, and a traveller. Say not: I have this city and that. No one has a city. The city is above. Present life is but a journey. We are journeying on every day, while nature is running its course. Some there are who store up goods on the way: some who bury jewellery on the road. Now when you enter an inn do you beautify the inn? not so, but you eat and drink and hasten to depart. The present life is an inn: we have entered it, and we bring present life to a close: let us be eager to depart with a good hope, let us leave nothing here, that we may not lose it there. When you enter the inn, what do you say to the servant? Take care where you put away our things, that you do not leave anything behind here, that nothing may be lost, not even what is small and trifling, in order that we may carry

⁸²⁵ Luke xv. 4.

everything back to our home. Thou art a wayfarer and traveller, and indeed more insignificant than the wayfarer. How so? I will tell you. The wayfarer knows when he is going into the inn, and when he is going out; for the egress as well as the regress is in his own power: but when I enter the inn, that is to say this present life, I know not when I shall go out: and it may be that I am providing myself with sustenance for a long time when the Master suddenly summons me saying “Thou fool, for whom shall those things be which thou hast prepared? for on this very night thy soul is being taken from thee.”⁸²⁶ The time of thy departure is uncertain, the tenure of thy possessions insecure, there are innumerable precipices, and billows on every side of thee. Why dost thou rave about shadows? why desert the reality and run after shadows?

6. I say these things, and shall not cease saying them, causing continual pain, and dressing the wounds; and this not for the sake of the fallen, but of those who are still standing. For they have departed, and their career is ended, but those who are yet standing have gained a more secure position through their calamities. “What then,” you say, “shall we do?” Do one thing only, hate riches, and love thy life—cast away thy goods; I do not say all of them, but cut off the superfluities. Be not covetous of other men’s goods, strip not the widow, plunder not the orphan, seize not his house: I do not address myself to persons but to facts. But if any one’s conscience attacks him, he himself is responsible for it, not my words. Why art thou grasping where thou bringest ill-will upon thyself? Grasp where there is a crown to be gained. Strive to lay hold not of earth but of heaven. “The kingdom of Heaven belongs to violent men and men of violence take it by force.”⁸²⁷ Why dost thou lay hold of the poor man who reproaches thee? Lay hold of Christ who praises thee for it. Dost thou see thy senselessness and madness? Dost thou lay hold of the poor man who has little? Christ says “lay hold of me; I thank thee for it, lay hold of my kingdom and take it by violence.” If thou art minded to lay hold of an earthly kingdom, or rather if thou art minded to have designs upon it thou art punished; but in the case of the heavenly kingdom thou art punished if thou dost not lay hold of it. Where worldly things are concerned there is ill-will, but where spiritual there is love. Meditate daily on these things, and if two days hence thou seest another riding in a chariot, arrayed in raiment of silk, and elated with pride, be not again dismayed and troubled. Praise not a rich man, but only him who lives in righteousness. Revile not a poor man, but learn to have an upright and accurate judgment in all things.

Do not hold aloof from the Church; for nothing is stronger than the Church. The Church is thy hope, thy salvation, thy refuge. It is higher than the heaven, it is wider than the earth. It never waxes old, but is always in full vigour. Wherefore as significant of its solidity and stability Holy Scripture calls it a mountain: or of its purity a virgin, or of its magnificence a queen; or of its relationship to God a daughter; and to express its productiveness it calls her barren who has borne seven: in fact



⁸²⁶ Luke xii. 20, a free quotation. Chrysostom transposes the clauses and substitutes $\mu \epsilon$ “they are taking,” for \ddagger \ddagger , “they are demanding from thee.”

⁸²⁷ Matt. xi. 12, slightly altered by Chrysostom from the original TM ϵ , the kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence.

it employs countless names to represent its nobleness. For as the master of the Church has many names: being called the Father, and the way,⁸²⁸ and the life,⁸²⁹ and the light,⁸³⁰ and the arm,⁸³¹ and the propitiation,⁸³² and the foundation,⁸³³ and the door,⁸³⁴ and the sinless one,⁸³⁵ and the treasure,⁸³⁶ and Lord, and God, and Son, and the only begotten, and the form of God,⁸³⁷ and the image⁸³⁸ of God so is it with the Church itself: does one name suffice to present the whole truth? by no means. But for this reason there are countless names, that we may learn something concerning God, though it be but a small part. Even so the Church also is called by many names. She is called a virgin, albeit formerly she was an harlot: for this is the miracle wrought by the Bridegroom, that He took her who was an harlot and hath made her a virgin. Oh! what a new and strange event! With us marriage destroys virginity, but with God marriage hath restored it. With us she who is a virgin, when married, is a virgin no longer: with Christ she who is an harlot, when married, becomes a virgin.

7. Let the heretic who inquires curiously into the nature of heavenly generation saying “how did the Father beget the Son?” interpret this single fact, ask him how did the Church, being an harlot, become a virgin? and how did she having brought forth children remain a virgin? “For I am jealous over you,” saith Paul, “with a godly jealousy, for I espoused you to one husband that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ.”⁸³⁹ What wisdom and understanding! “I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy.” What means this? “I am jealous,” he says: art thou jealous seeing thou art a spiritual man? I am jealous he says as God is. And hath God jealousy? yea the jealousy not of passion, but of love, and earnest zeal. I am jealous over you with the jealousy of God. Shall I tell thee how He manifests His jealousy? He saw the world corrupted by devils, and He delivered His own Son to save it. For words spoken in reference to God have not the same force as when spoken in reference to ourselves: for instance we say God is jealous, God is wroth, God repents, God hates. These words are human, but they have a meaning which becomes the nature of God. How is God jealous? “I am jealous over you with the jealousy of God.”⁸⁴⁰ Is God wroth? “O Lord reproach me

828 John xiv. 6.

829 Ibid.

830 John i. 8, 9; viii. 12.

831 Perhaps Ps. xcvi. 1; Is. xxxiii. 2; li. 9, and other passages of the same kind.

832 1 John ii. 2.

833 1 Cor. iii. 11.

834 John x. 7.

835 1 John iii. 5; 1 Peter ii. 22.

836 Perhaps Matt. vi. 21; viii. 44.

837 Phil. ii. 6.

838 Col. i. 15.

839 2 Cor. xi. 2.

840 2 Cor. xi. 2.

not in thine indignation.”⁸⁴¹ Doth God slumber? “Awake, wherefore sleepest thou, O Lord?”⁸⁴² Doth God repent? “I repent that I have made man.”⁸⁴³ Doth God hate? “My soul hateth your feasts and your new moons.”⁸⁴⁴ Well do not consider the poverty of the expressions: but grasp their divine meaning. God is jealous, for He loves, God is wroth, not as yielding to passion, but for the purpose of chastising, and punishing. God sleeps, not as really slumbering, but as being long-suffering. Choose out the expression. Thus when thou hearest that God begets the Son, think not of division but of the unity of substance. For God has taken many of these words from us as we also have borrowed others from Him, that we may receive honour thereby.



8. Dost thou understand what I have said? Attend carefully my beloved. There are divine names, and there are human names. God has received from me, and He Himself hath given to me. Give me thine, and take mine He says. Thou hast need of mine: I have no need of thine, but thou hast of mine inasmuch as my nature is unmixed, but thou art a human being encompassed with a body, seeking also corporeal terms in order that, by borrowing expressions which are familiar to thee, thou who art thus encompassed with a body, mayest be able to think on thoughts which transcend thy understanding. What kind of names hath He received from me, and what kind hath He given to me? He Himself is God, and He hath called me God; with Him is the essential nature as an actual fact, with me only the honour of the name: “I have said ye are gods, and ye are all children of the most highest.”⁸⁴⁵ Here are words, but in the other case there is the actual reality. He hath called me god, for by that name I have received honour. He Himself was called man, he was called Son of man, he was called the Way, the Door, the Rock. These words He borrowed from me; the others He gave from Himself to me. Wherefore was He called the Way? That thou mightest understand that by Him we have access to the Father. Wherefore was He called the Rock? that thou mightest understand the secure and unshaken character of the faith. Wherefore was He called the Foundation? That thou mightest understand that He upholdeth all things. Wherefore was He called the Root? That thou mightest understand that in Him we have our power of growth. Wherefore was He called the Shepherd? Because He feeds us. Wherefore was He called a sheep? Because He was sacrificed for us and became a propitiatory offering. Wherefore was He called the Life? Because He raised us up when we were dead. Wherefore was He called the Light? Because He delivered us from darkness. Why was He called an Arm? Because He is of one substance with the Father. Why was He called the Word? Because He was begotten of the Father. For as my word is the offspring of my spirit, even so was the Son begotten of the Father. Wherefore is He called our raiment? Because I was clothed with Him when I was baptized. Why is He called a table? Because I feed upon Him when I partake of the mysteries. Why is He called a house? Because I dwell in Him. Why is He

841 Ps. vi. 2.

842 Ps. xlv. 23.

843 Gen. vi. 7.

844 Is. i. 14.

845 Ps. lxxxii. 6; comp. John x. 34.

called an inmate of the house? Because we become His Temple. Wherefore is He called the Head? Because I have been made a member of His. Why is He called a Bridegroom? Because He hath taken me as His bride. Wherefore is He called undefiled? Because He took me as a virgin. Wherefore is He called Master? Because I am His bondmaid.

9. For observe the Church, how, as I was saying, she is sometimes a bride, sometimes a daughter, sometimes a virgin, sometimes a bondmaid, sometimes a queen, sometimes a barren woman, sometimes a mountain, sometimes a garden, sometimes fruitful in children, sometimes a lily, sometimes a fountain: She is all things. Therefore having heard these things, think not I pray you that they are corporeal; but stretch thy thought further: for such things cannot be corporeal. For example: the mountain is not the maid: the maid is not the bride: the queen is not the bond-maid: yet the Church is all these things. Wherefore? because the element in which they exist is not corporeal but spiritual. For in a corporeal sphere these things are confined within narrow limits: but in a spiritual sphere they have a wide field of operation. "The queen stood on thy right hand."⁸⁴⁶ The queen? How did she who was down-trodden and poor become a queen? and where did she ascend? the queen herself stood on high by the side of the king. How? because the king became a servant; He was not that by nature, but He became so. Understand therefore the things which belong to the Godhead, and discern those which belong to the Dispensation. Understand what He *was*, and what He *became* for thy sake, and do not confuse things which are distinct, nor make the argument of his lovingkindness an occasion for blasphemy. He was lofty, and she was lowly: lofty not by position but by nature. His essence was pure, and imperishable: His nature was incorruptible, unintelligible, invisible, incomprehensible, eternal, unchangeable, transcending the nature of angels, higher than the powers above, overpowering reason, surpassing thought, apprehended not by sight but by faith alone. Angels beheld Him and trembled, the Cherubim veiled themselves with their wings, in awe. He looked upon the earth, and caused it to tremble: He threatened the sea and dried it up:⁸⁴⁷ he brought rivers out of the desert: He weighed the mountains in scales, and the valleys in a balance.⁸⁴⁸ How shall I express myself? how shall I present the truth? His greatness hath no bounds, His wisdom is beyond reckoning, His judgments are untraceable, His ways unsearchable.⁸⁴⁹ Such is His greatness and His power, if indeed it is safe even to use such expressions. But what am I to do? I am a human being and I speak in human language: my tongue is of earth and I crave forgiveness from my Lord. For I do not use these expressions in a spirit of presumption, but on account of the poverty of my resources arising from my feebleness and the nature of our human tongue. Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I utter these words not in presumption but because I have no others: nevertheless I do not rest content with the meanness of my speech, but soar upwards on the wings of my understanding. Such is His greatness and power. I say this, that without dwelling on the words, or on the poverty

⁸⁴⁶ Ps. xlv. 10.

⁸⁴⁷ Is. li. 10.

⁸⁴⁸ Is. xl. 12. Septuagint.

⁸⁴⁹ Rom. xi. 33. Chrysostom has transposed the order of the adjectives.

of the expressions, thou mayest also thyself learn to act in the same way. Why dost thou marvel if I do this, inasmuch as He also does the same, when He wishes to present something to our minds which transcends human powers? Since He addresses human beings He uses also human illustration, which are indeed insufficient to represent the thing spoken of, and cannot exhibit the full proportions of the matter, yet suffice for the infirmity of the hearers.

10. Make an effort, and do not grow weary of my prolonged discourse. For as when He manifests Himself, He is not manifested as He really is, nor is His bare essence manifested (for no man hath seen God in His real nature; for when He is but partially revealed the Cherubim tremble—the mountains smoke, the sea is dried up, the heaven is shaken, and if the revelation were not partial who could endure it?) as then, I say, He does not manifest Himself as He really is, but only as the beholder is able to see Him, therefore doth He appear sometimes in the form of old age, sometimes of youth, sometimes in fire, sometimes in air, sometimes in water, sometimes in armour, not altering his essential nature, but fashioning His appearance to suit the various condition of those who are affected by it. In like manner also when any one wishes to say anything concerning Him he employs human illustrations. For instance I say: “He went up into the mountain and He was transfigured before them, and His countenance shone as the sun, and His raiment became white as snow.”⁸⁵⁰ He disclosed, it is said, a little of the Godhead, He manifested to them the God dwelling amongst them “and He was transfigured before them.” Attend carefully to the statement. The writer says and He was transfigured before them, and His raiment shone as the light, and His countenance was as the sun. When I said “such is His greatness and power” and added “be merciful to me O Lord,” (for I do not rest satisfied with the expression but am perplexed, having no other framed for the purpose) I wish you to understand, that I learned this lesson from Holy Scripture. The evangelist then wished to describe His splendour and he says “He shone.” How did He shine? tell me. Exceedingly. And how do you express this? He shone “as the sun.” As the sun sayest thou? Yea. Wherefore? Because I know not any other luminary more brilliant. And He was white sayest thou as snow? wherefore as snow? Because I know not any other substance which is whiter. For that He did not really shine thus is proved by what follows: the disciples fell to the ground. If he had shone as the sun the disciples would not have fallen; for they saw the sun every day, and did not fall: but inasmuch as he shone more brilliantly than the sun or snow, they, being unable to bear the splendour, fell to the earth.

11. Tell me then, O evangelist, did He shine more brightly than the sun, and yet dost thou say, “as the sun?” Yea: wishing to make that light known to thee, I know not any other greater luminary, I have no other comparison which holds a royal place amongst luminaries. I have said these things that thou mayest not rest contentedly in the poverty of the language used: I have pointed out to thee the fall of the disciples: they fell to the earth, and were stupified and overwhelmed with slumber. “Arise” He said, and lifted them up, and yet they were oppressed. For they could not endure the

⁸⁵⁰ Matt. xvii. 2: Mark ix. 2. Chrysostom mixes up the accounts of the two Evangelists, and does not quote the exact words of either.

excessive brightness of that shining, but heavy sleep took possession of their eyes: so far did the light which was manifested exceed the light of the sun. Yet the evangelist said “as the sun,” because that luminary is familiar to us and surpasses all the rest.

But as I was saying, He who was thus great and powerful desired an harlot. I speak of our human nature under that name. If a man indeed desire an harlot he is condemned, and doth God desire one? Yea verily. Again a man desireth an harlot that he may become a fornicator: but God that He may convert the harlot into a virgin: so that the desire of the man is the destruction of her who is desired: but the desire of God is salvation to her who is desired. And why did He who is so great and powerful desire an harlot? that He might become the husband thereof. How doth He act? He doth not send to her any of His servants, He sendeth not angel, archangel, Cherubim, or Seraphim; but He himself draws nigh Who loves her. Again when thou hearest of love, deem it not sensuous. Cull out the thoughts which are contained in the words, even as an excellent bee settles on the flowers, and takes the honey comb, but leaves the herbs God desired an harlot, and how doth He act? He does not conduct her on high; for He would not bring an harlot into Heaven, but He Himself comes down. Since she could not ascend on high, He descends to earth. He cometh to the harlot, and is not ashamed: He cometh to her secret dwelling place. He beholds her in her drunkenness. And how doth He come? not in the bare essence of His original nature, but He becomes that which the harlot was, not in intention but in reality does He become this, in order that she may not be scared when she sees Him, that she may not rush away, and escape. He cometh to the harlot, and becomes man. And how does He become this? He is conceived in the womb, he increases little by little and follows like me the course of human growth. Who is it who does this? the Deity as manifested, not the Godhead; the form of the servant not that of the Master; the flesh which belongs to me, not the essential nature which belongs to Him: He increases little by little, and has intercourse with mankind. Although He finds the harlot, human nature, full of sores, brutalised, and oppressed by devils, how does He act? He draws nigh to her. She sees Him and flees away. He calleth the wise men saying Why are ye afraid? I am not a judge, but a physician. “I came not to judge the world but to save the world.”⁸⁵¹ Straightway He calleth the wise men. Oh! new and strange event. The immediate first-fruits of His coming are wise men. He who upholds the world lieth in a manger, and He who careth for all things is a nursling in swaddling bands. The temple is founded and the God dwelleth therein. And wise men come and straightway worship Him: the publican comes and is turned into an evangelist: the harlot comes and is turned into a maiden: the Canaanitish woman comes and partakes of his lovingkindness. This is the mark of one who loves, to forbear demanding an account of sins, and to forgive transgressions and offences. And how does He act? He takes the sinner and espouses her to himself. And what doth He give her? a signet ring. Of what nature? the Holy Spirit. Paul saith “now He who establisheth us with you is God who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit.”⁸⁵² The Spirit then He giveth her. Next He saith “Did not I plant thee



259

851 John xii. 47.

852 2 Cor. i. 21, 22.

in a garden?” She saith “yea.” And how didst thou fall from thence? “The devil came and cast me out of the garden.” Thou wast planted in the garden and he cast thee out: behold I plant thee in myself, I uphold thee. How? The devil dares not approach me. Neither do I take thee up into Heaven; but something greater than Heaven is here: I carry thee in myself who am the Lord of Heaven. The shepherd carries thee and the wolf no longer comes: or rather I permit him to approach. And so the Lord carrieth our nature: and the devil approaches and is worsted. “I have planted thee in myself:” therefore He saith “I am the root, ye are the branches:”⁸⁵³ so He planted her in Himself. “But,” she saith, “I am a sinner and unclean.” “Let not this trouble thee, I am a physician. I know my vessel, I know how it was perverted. It was formerly a vessel of clay, and it was perverted. I remodel it by means of the laver of regeneration and I submit it to the action of fire.” For observe: He took dust from the earth and made the man; He formed him. The devil came, and perverted him. Then the Lord came, took him again, and remoulded, and recast him in baptism, and He suffered not his body to be of clay, but made it of a harder ware. He subjected the soft clay to the fire of the Holy Spirit. “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:”⁸⁵⁴ He was baptized with water that he might be remodelled, with fire that he might be hardened. Therefore the Prophet speaking beforehand under divine guidance declared “Thou shalt dash them in pieces like vessels of the potter.”⁸⁵⁵ He did not say like vessels of earthenware which every one possesses: for by a potter’s vessels are meant those which the potter is fashioning on the wheel: now the potter’s vessels are of clay, but ours are of harder ware. Speaking beforehand therefore of the remoulding which is wrought by means of baptism he saith, “thou shalt dash them in pieces like vessels of a potter” — He means that He remodels and recasts them. I descend into the water of baptism, and the fashion of my nature is remoulded, and the fire of the Spirit recasts it, and it is turned into a harder ware. And that my words are no empty vaunt hear what Job says, “He hath made us as clay,”⁸⁵⁶ and Paul, “but we have this treasure in earthen vessels.”⁸⁵⁷ But consider the strength of the earthen vessel: for it has been hardened not by fire, but by the Spirit. How was it proved to be an earthen vessel? “Five times received I forty stripes save one, thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned,”⁸⁵⁸ and yet the earthen vessel was not shattered. “A day and a night have I been in the deep.” He hath been in the deep, and the earthen vessel was not dissolved: he suffered shipwreck and the treasure was not lost; the ship was submerged and yet the freight floated. “But we have this treasure” he says. What kind of treasure? a supply of the Spirit, righteousness, sanctification, redemption. Of what nature,



853 John xv. 5. In the original, “I am the *vine*,” etc.

854 Matt. iii. 11.

855 Ps. ii. 9.

856 Job x. 9.

857 2 Cor. iv. 7.

858 2 Cor. xi. 24, etc.

tell me? “in the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk.”⁸⁵⁹ “Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole,”⁸⁶⁰ I say unto thee thou evil spirit, go out of him.⁸⁶¹

12. Hast thou seen a treasure more brilliant than royal treasures? For what can the pearl of a king do like that which the words of an Apostle effected? Set crowns innumerable upon dead men, and they will not be raised: but one word went forth from an Apostle, and it brought back revoked nature, and restored it to its ancient condition. “But we have this treasure.” O treasure which not only is preserved, but also preserves the house where it is stored up. Dost thou understand what I have said? The kings of the earth, and rulers when they have treasures, prepare large houses, having strong walls, bars, doors, guards, and bolts in order that the treasure may be preserved: but Christ did the contrary: He placed the treasure not in a stone vessel but in an earthen one. If the treasure is great wherefore is the vessel weak? But the reason why the vessel is weak is not because the treasure is great; for this is not preserved by the vessel, but itself preserves the vessel. I deposit the treasure: who is able henceforth to steal it? The devil has come, the world has come, multitudes have come, and yet they have not stolen the treasure: the vessel has been scourged, yet the treasure was not betrayed; it has been drowned in the sea, yet the treasure was not shipwrecked: it has died yet the treasure survives. He gave therefore the earnest of the Spirit. Where are they who blaspheme the Spirit’s majesty? Give ye heed. “He that establisheth us with you in Christ is God who also hath given the earnest of the Spirit.”⁸⁶² You all know that the earnest is a small part of the whole; let me tell you how. Some one goes to buy a house at a great price; and he says “give me an earnest that I may have confidence: or one goes to take a wife for himself, he arranges about dowry and property, and he says “give me an earnest.” Observe: in the purchase of a slave and in all covenants there is an earnest. Since then Christ made a covenant with us (for He was about to take me as a bride) he also assigned a dowry to me not of money, but of blood. But this dowry which He assigns is the bestowal of good things “such as eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man.”⁸⁶³ He assigned them for the dowry:—immortality, praise with the angels, release from death, freedom from sin, the inheritance of a kingdom (so great are his riches), righteousness, sanctification, deliverance from present evils, discovery of future blessings. Great was my dowry. Now attend carefully: mark what He does. He came to take the harlot, for so I call her, unclean as she was, that thou mightest understand the love of the bridegroom. He came; He took me: He assigns me a dowry: He saith “I give thee my wealth.” How? “Hast thou lost,” He saith, “paradise?” take it back. Hast thou lost thy beauty? take it back; take all these things. But yet the dowry was not given to me here.

859 Acts iii. 6.

860 Acts ix. 34.

861 Acts xvi. 18.

862 2 Cor. i. 21, 22.

863 1 Cor. ii. 9.

13. Observe, this is the reason why He speaks beforehand with reference to this dowry; He warranted to me in the dowry the resurrection of the body,—immortality. For immortality does not always follow resurrection, but the two are distinct. For many have risen, and been again laid low, like Lazarus and the bodies of the saints.⁸⁶⁴ But in this case it is not so, but the promise is of resurrection, immortality, a place in the joyful company of angels, the meeting of the Son of Man in the clouds, and the fulfilment of the saying “so shall we ever be with the Lord,”⁸⁶⁵ the release from death, the freedom from sin, the complete overthrow of destruction. Of what kind is that? “Eye hath not seen nor ear heard neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” Dost thou give me good things which I know not? He saith “yea; only be espoused to me here, love me in this world.” “Wherefore dost thou not give me the dowry here?” “It will be given when thou hast come to my Father, when thou hast entered the royal palace. Didst thou come to me! nay I came to thee. I came not that thou shouldst abide here but that I might take thee and return. Seek not the dowry here: all depends on hope, and faith. “And dost thou give me nothing in this world?” He answers. “Receive an earnest that thou mayest trust me concerning that which is to come: receive pledges and betrothal gifts.” Therefore Paul saith “I have espoused you.”⁸⁶⁶ As gifts of betrothal God has given us present blessings: they are an earnest of the future; but the full dowry abides in the other world. How so? I will tell you. Here I grow old, there I grow not old; here I die, there I die not, here I sorrow, there I sorrow not; here is poverty, and disease, and intrigue, there nothing of that kind exists: here is darkness and light, there is light alone: here is intrigue, there is liberty; here is disease, there is health; here is life which has an end, there is life which hath no end; here is sin, there is righteousness, and sin is banished; here is envy, there nothing of the kind exists. “Give me these things” one says; “Nay! wait in order that thy fellow-servants also may be saved; wait I say. He who establisheth us and hath given us the earnest”—what kind of earnest? the Holy Spirit, the supply of the Spirit. Let me speak concerning the Spirit. He gave the signet ring to the Apostles, saying “take this and give it to all.” Is the ring then portioned out, and yet not divided? It is so. Let me teach you the meaning of the supply of the Spirit: Peter received, and Paul also received the Holy Spirit. He went about the world, he released sinners from their sins, he restored the lame, he clothed the naked, he raised the dead, he cleansed the lepers, he bridled the devil, he strangled the demons, he held converse with God, he planted a Church, levelled temples to the earth, overturned altars, destroyed vice, established virtue, made angels of men.

14. All these things we were. But “the earnest” filled the whole world. And when I say the whole I mean all which the sun shines upon, sea, islands, mountains, valleys, and hills. Paul went hither and thither, like some winged creature, with one mouth only contending against the enemy, he the tentmaker, who handled the workman’s knife and sewed skins together: and yet this his craft

864 John xi.; Matt. xxvii. 52.

865 1 Thess. iv. 17.

866 2 Cor. xi. 2.

was no hindrance to his virtue, but the tentmaker was stronger than demons, the uneloquent man was wiser than the wise. Whence was this? He received the earnest, he bore the signet ring and carried it about. All men saw that the King had espoused our nature: the demon saw it and retreated, he saw the earnest, and trembled and withdrew: he saw but the Apostle's garments⁸⁶⁷ and fled. O the power of the Holy Spirit. He bestowed authority not on the soul, nor on the body, but even on raiment; nor on raiment only but even on a shadow. Peter went about and his shadow put diseases to flight,⁸⁶⁸ and expelled demons, and raised the dead to life. Paul went about the world, cutting away the thorns of ungodliness, sowing broadcast the seeds of godliness, like an excellent ploughman handling the ploughshare of doctrine. And to whom did he go? To Thracians, to Scythians, to Indians, to Maurians, to Sardinians, to Goths, to wild savages, and he changed them all. By what means? By means of "the earnest." How was he sufficient for these things? By the grace of the Spirit. Unskilled, ill-clothed, ill-shod he was upheld by Him "who also hath given the earnest of the Spirit." Therefore he saith "and who is sufficient for these things?"⁸⁶⁹ But our sufficiency is of God, who hath made us sufficient as ministers of the new Testament, not of the letter but of the Spirit."⁸⁷⁰ Behold what the Spirit hath wrought: He found the earth filled with demons and He has made it heaven. For meditate not on present things but review the past in your thought. Formerly there was lamentation, there were altars everywhere, everywhere the smoke and fumes of sacrifice, everywhere unclean rites and mysteries, and sacrifices, everywhere demons holding their orgies, everywhere a citadel of the devil, everywhere fornication decked with wreaths of honour; and Paul stood alone. How did he escape being overwhelmed, or torn in pieces? How could he open his mouth? He entered the Thebaid,⁸⁷¹ and made captives of men, He entered the royal palace, and made a disciple of the king.⁸⁷² He entered the hall of judgment, and the judge saith to him "almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian,"⁸⁷³ and the judge became a disciple. He entered the prison, and took the jailor captive.⁸⁷⁴ He visited an island of barbarians, and made a viper the instrument of his teaching.⁸⁷⁵ He visited the Romans, and attracted the senate to his doctrine. He visited rivers, and desert places in all parts of the world. There is no land or sea which has not

⁸⁶⁷ Acts xix. 11.

⁸⁶⁸ Acts v. 15.

⁸⁶⁹ 2 Cor. ii. 16.

⁸⁷⁰ 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6.

⁸⁷¹ Strictly speaking, the name of the Egyptian desert in the neighborhood of Thebes; but here it must be used in a general sense, to denote any wild country. The whole passage is highly rhetorical.

⁸⁷² He probably means Sergius Paulus. Acts xiii. 12.

⁸⁷³ Acts xxvi. 28. It is doubtful, however, whether this is the right interpretation of the words. See the revised translation.

⁸⁷⁴ Acts xvi. 30, etc.

⁸⁷⁵ Acts xxviii. 3, etc.



shared in the benefits of his labours; for God has given human nature the earnest of His signet, and when He gives it He saith: some things I give thee now, and others I promise. Therefore the prophet saith concerning her “The queen did stand upon thy right hand in a vesture woven with gold.” He does not mean a real vesture, but virtue. Therefore the Scripture elsewhere saith “How camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?” so that here he does not mean a garment, but fornication, and foul and unclean living. As then foul raiment signifies sin, so does golden raiment signify virtue. But this raiment belonged to the king. He Himself bestowed the raiment upon her: for she was naked, naked and disfigured. “The queen stood on thy right hand in a vesture woven with gold.”⁸⁷⁶ He is speaking not of raiment but of virtue. Observe: the expression itself has great nobility of meaning. He does not say “in a vesture of gold” but “in a vesture woven with gold.” Listen intelligently. A vesture of gold is one which is gold throughout: but a vesture woven with gold is one which is partly of gold, partly of silk. Why then did he say that the bride wore not a vesture of gold, but one woven with gold? Attend carefully. He means the constitution of the Church in its varied manifestations. For since we do not all belong to one condition of life, but one is a virgin, another a widow, a third lives a life of devotion—so the robe of the Church signifies the constitution of the Church.

15. Inasmuch then as our Master knew that if He carved out only one road for us, many must shrink from it, He carved out divers roads. Thou canst not enter the kingdom it may be by the way of virginity. Enter it then by the way of single marriage. Canst thou not enter it by one marriage? Perchance thou mayest by means of a second marriage. Thou canst not enter by the way of continence: enter then by the way of almsgiving: or thou canst not enter by the way of almsgiving? then try the way of fasting. If thou canst not use this way, take that—or if not that, then take this. Therefore the prophet spoke not of a garment of gold, but of one woven with gold. It is of silk, or purple, or gold. Thou canst not be a golden part? then be a silken one. I accept thee, if only thou art clothed in my raiment. Therefore also Paul saith “If any man builds upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones.”⁸⁷⁷ Thou canst not be the precious stone? then be the gold. Thou canst not be the gold? then be the silver, if only thou art resting upon the foundation. And again elsewhere, “there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars.”⁸⁷⁸ Thou canst not be a sun? then be a moon. Thou canst not be a moon? then be a star. Thou canst not be a large star? be content to be a little one if only thou art in the Heaven. Thou canst not be a virgin? then live continently in the married state, only abiding in the Church. Thou canst not be without possessions? then give alms, only abiding in the Church, only wearing the proper raiment, only submitting to the queen.⁸⁷⁹ The raiment is woven with gold, it is manifold in texture. I do not bar the way against thee: for the abundance of virtues has rendered the dispensation of the king

⁸⁷⁶ Ps. xlv. 10.

⁸⁷⁷ 1 Cor. iii. 12.

⁸⁷⁸ 1 Cor. xv. 41.

⁸⁷⁹ *i.e.*, the Church.

easy in operation. “Clothed in a vesture woven with gold, manifold in texture.” Her vesture is manifold: unfold, if you please, the deep meaning of the expression here used, and fix your eyes upon this garment woven with gold. For here indeed some live celibate, others live in an honourable estate of matrimony being not much inferior to them: some have married once, others are widows in the flower of their age. For what purpose is a paradise? and wherefore its variety? having divers flowers, and trees, and many pearls. There are many stars, but only one sun: there are many ways of living, but only one paradise; there are many temples, but only one mother of them all. There is the body, the eye, the finger, but all these make up but one man. There is the same distinction between the small, the great, and the less. The virgin hath need of the married woman; for the virgin also is the product of marriage, that marriage may not be despised by her. The virgin is the root of marriage: thus all things have been linked together, the small with the great, and the great with the small. “The queen did stand on thy right hand clothed in a vesture wrought with gold, manifold in texture.” Then follows “Hearken! O daughter.” The conductor of the bride says that thou art about to go forth from thy home to the home of the bridegroom who in his essential nature far surpasses thee. I am the conductor of the bride. “Hearken O daughter.” Did she immediately become the wife? Yea: for here there is nothing corporeal. For He espoused her as a wife, He loves her as a daughter, He provides for her as a handmaid, He guards her as a virgin, He fences her round like a garden, and cherishes her like a member: as a head He provides for her, as a root he causes her to grow, as a shepherd He feeds her, as a bridegroom He weds her, as a propitiation He pardons her, as a sheep He is sacrificed, as a bridegroom He preserves her in beauty, as a husband He provides for her support. Many are the meanings in order that we may enjoy a part if it be but a small part of the divine economy of grace. “Hearken O daughter” and behold, and look upon things which are bridal and yet spiritual. Hearken O daughter. She was at first a daughter of demons, a daughter of the earth, unworthy of the earth and now she has become a daughter of the king. And this He wished who loved her. For he who loves does not investigate character: love does not regard uncomeliness: on this account indeed is it called love because it oftentimes hath affection for an uncomely person.⁸⁸⁰ Thus also did Christ. He saw one who was uncomely (for comely I could not call her) and He loved her, and He makes her young, not having spot or wrinkle. Oh what a bridegroom! adorning with grace the ungracefulness of his bride! Hearken O daughter! hearken and behold! Two things He saith “Hearken” and “Behold,” two which depend on thyself, one on thy eyes, the other on thy hearing. Now since her dowry depended on hearing (and although some of you have been acute enough to perceive this already, let them tarry for those who are feebler: I commend those who have anticipated the truth, and make allowances for those who only follow in their track) since the dowry then depended on hearing — (and what is meant by hearing? faith: for “faith cometh by hearing” faith as opposed to fruition, and actual experience) I said before that He divided the dowry into two, and gave some portion to the bride for an earnest, whilst He promised others in the future. What did He give her? He gave her forgiveness of sins, remission of punishment,



⁸⁸⁰ The statement is grounded on a mistaken etymology. There is also an allusion to the proverbial blindness of love.

righteousness, sanctification, redemption, the body of the Lord, the divine, spiritual Table, the resurrection of the dead. For all these things the Apostles had. Therefore He gave some parts and promised others. Of some there was experience and fruition, others depended upon hope and faith. Now listen. What did He bestow? Baptism and the Sacrifice. Of these there is experience. What did He promise? Resurrection, immortality of the body, union with angels, a place in the joyful company of archangels, and as a citizen in His kingdom, immaculate life, the good things “which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard nor have entered into the heart of man, things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.”

16. Understand what is said, lest ye lose it: I am labouring to enable you to perceive it. The dowry of the bride then was divided into two portions consisting of things present and things to come; things seen and things heard, things given and things taken on trust, things experienced, and things to be enjoyed hereafter; things belonging to present life, and things to come after the resurrection. The former things you see, the latter you hear. Observe then what He says to her that you may not suppose that she received the former things only, though they be great and ineffable, and surpassing all understanding. “Hearken O daughter and behold;” hear the latter things and behold the former that thou mayest not say “am I again to depend on hope, again on faith, again on the future?” See now: I give some things, and I promise others: the latter indeed depend on hope, but do thou receive the others as pledges, as an earnest, as a proof of the remainder. I promise thee a kingdom: and let present things be the ground of thy trust, thy trust in me. Dost thou promise me a kingdom? Yea. I have given thee the greater part, even the Lord of the kingdom, for “he who spared not his own son, but gave him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”⁸⁸¹ Dost thou give me the resurrection of the body? Yea; I have given thee the greater part. What is the nature of it? Release from sins. How is that the greater part? Because sin brought forth death. I have destroyed the parent, and shall I not destroy the offspring? I have dried up the root, and shall I not destroy the produce. “Hearken O daughter and behold.” What am I to behold? Dead men raised to life, lepers cleansed, the sea restrained, the paralytic braced up into vigour, paradise opened, loaves poured forth in abundance, sins remitted, the lame man leaping, the robber made a citizen of paradise, the publican turned into an evangelist, the harlot become more modest than the maid. Hear and behold. Hear of the former things and behold these. Accept from present things a proof of the others; concerning those I have given thee pledges, things which are better than they are. “What is the meaning of this thy saying?” These things are mine. “Hearken O daughter and behold.” These things are my dower to thee. And what doth the bride contribute? Let us see. What I pray thee dost thou bring that thou mayest not be portionless? What can I, she answers, bring to thee from heathen altars, and the steam of sacrifices and from devils? What have I to contribute? what? sayest thou? Thy will and thy faith. “Hearken O daughter and behold.” And what

881 Rom. viii. 32.



wilt thou have me do? “Forget thy own people.” What kind of people? the devils, the idols, the sacrificial smoke, and steam, and blood. “Forget thy own people, and thy father’s house.” Leave thy father and come after me. I left my Father, and came to thee, and wilt thou not leave thy father? But when the word leave is used in reference to the Son do not understand by it an actual leaving. What He means is “I condescended, I accommodated myself to thee, I assumed human flesh.” This is the duty of the bridegroom, and of the bride, that thou shouldest abandon thy parents, and that we should be wedded to one another. “Hearken O daughter and behold, and forget thy own people, and thy father’s house.” And what dost thou give me if I do forget them? “and the king shall desire thy beauty.” Thou hast the Lord for thy lover. If thou hast Him for thy lover, thou hast also the things which are his. I trust ye may be able to understand what is said: for the thought is a subtle one, and I wish to stop the mouth of the Jews.

Now exert your minds I pray: for whether one hears, or forbears to hear I shall dig and till the soil. “Hearken O daughter, and behold, forget also thy own people, and thy father’s house, and the king shall desire thy beauty.” By beauty in this passage the Jew understands sensible beauty; not spiritual but corporeal.

17. Attend, and let us learn what corporeal, and what spiritual beauty are. There is soul and body: they are two substances: there is a beauty of body, and there is a beauty of soul. What is beauty of body? an extended eyebrow, a merry glance, a blushing cheek, ruddy lips, a straight neck, long wavy hair, tapering fingers, upright stature, a fair blooming complexion. Does this bodily beauty come from nature, or from choice? Confessedly it comes from nature. Attend that thou mayest learn the conception of philosophers. This beauty whether of the countenance, of the eye, of the hair, of the brow, does it come from nature, or from choice? It is obvious that it comes from nature. For the ungraceful woman, even if she cultivate beauty in countless ways, cannot become graceful in body: for natural conditions are fixed, and confined by limits which they cannot pass over. Therefore the beautiful woman is always beautiful, even if she has no taste for beauty: and the ungraceful cannot make herself graceful, nor the graceful ungraceful. Wherefore? because these things come from nature. Well! thou hast seen corporeal beauty. Now let us turn inwards to the soul: let the handmaid approach the mistress! let us turn I say to the soul. Look upon that beauty, or rather listen to it: for thou canst not see it since it is invisible—Listen to that beauty. What then is beauty of soul? Temperance, mildness, almsgiving, love, brotherly kindness, tender affection, obedience to God, the fulfilment of the law, righteousness, contrition of heart. These things are the beauty of the soul. These things then are not the results of nature, but of moral disposition. And he who does not possess these things is able to receive them, and he who has them, if he becomes careless, loses them. For as in the case of the body I was saying that she who is ungraceful cannot become graceful; so in the case of the soul I say the contrary that the graceless soul can become full of grace. For what was more graceless than the soul of Paul when he was a blasphemer and insulter: what more full of grace when he said “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the

course, I have kept the faith.”⁸⁸² What was more graceless than the soul of the robber? what more full of grace when he heard the words “Verily I say unto thee to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise?”⁸⁸³ What was more graceless than the publican when he practised extortion? but what more full of grace when he declared his resolution.⁸⁸⁴ Seest thou that thou canst not alter grace of body, for it is the result not of moral disposition, but of nature. But grace of soul is supplied out of our own moral choice. Thou hast now received the definition. Of what kind are they? that the beauty of the soul proceeds from obedience to God. For if the graceless soul obeys God it puts off its ungracefulness, and becomes full of grace. “Saul! Saul!” it was said, “why persecutest thou me?” and he replied “and who art Thou Lord?” “I am Jesus.”⁸⁸⁵ And he obeyed, and his obedience made the graceless soul full of grace. Again, He saith to the publican “come follow me”⁸⁸⁶ and the publican rose up and became an apostle: and the graceless soul became full of grace. Whence? by obedience. Again He saith to the fishermen “Come ye after me and I will make you to become fishers of men:”⁸⁸⁷ and by their obedience their minds became full of grace. Let us see then what kind of beauty He is speaking of here. “Hearken O daughter and behold, and forget thy own people and thy father’s house, and the king shall desire thy beauty.” What kind of beauty will he desire? the spiritual kind. How so? because she is to “*forget*” He saith “hearken and forget.” These are acts of moral choice. “Hearken!” he said: an ungraceful one hears and her ungracefulness being that of the body is not removed. To the sinful woman He has said “Hearken,” and if she will obey she sees what manner of beauty is bestowed upon her. Since then the ungracefulness of the bride was not physical, but moral (for she did not obey God but transgressed) therefore he leads her to another remedy. Thou didst become ungraceful then, not by nature, but by moral choice: and thou didst become full of grace by obedience. “Hearken O daughter and behold and forget thy own people, and thy father’s house, and the king shall desire thy beauty.” Then that thou mayest learn that he does not mean anything visible to sense, when thou hearest the word beauty, think not of eye, or nose, or mouth, or neck, but of piety, faith, love, things which are within — “for all the glory of the king’s daughter is from within.” Now for all these things let us offer thanks to God, the giver, for to Him alone belongeth glory, honour, might, for ever and ever. Amen.



882 2 Tim. iv. 7.

883 Luke xxiii. 43.

884 Luke xix. 8.

885 Acts ix. 4, 5.

886 Matt. ix. 9.

887 Matt. iv. 19.