

Early Church Classics.

ST. CHRYSOSTOM

ON THE PRIESTHOOD

Chrysostomus, Joannes.

BY THE

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WITH PREFACE BY THE

RIGHT REVEREND THE LORD BISHOP OF SOUTHWELL.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

THANKS to the very kind help of the Bishop of Southwell, there seems to be no need of an Editorial Preface.

In preparing the present treatise in an English form I have had in mind especially the large number of clergy to whom such a work in an accessible edition ought to be valuable; I have also hoped that it would appeal to a still larger public of educated and thinking laymen, who may be glad to read the ideas of so eminent a writer of an early age on the subject of the Christian Priesthood.

I wish to acknowledge the kindness of Dr. Nairn, who has read through the whole of the present version in proof, and contributed many important improvements, and also my indebtedness to my colleague, Rev. B. F. Simpson, B.D., for valuable suggestions.

I have adhered throughout to the text of Dr. Nairn (Cambridge University Press, 1906) and found his edition very useful. Since completing my version I have consulted the edition of Dean Stephens (Vol. IX. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, New York, Christian Literature Co.) and incorporated several ideas from him.

T. ALLEN MOXON.

2 Soho Square, London, W.
September 1907.

PREFACE

BY THE BISHOP OF SOUTHWELL

IN days when the making of books hath no end we owe a real debt of gratitude to those who remind us that God gave wisdom to men of old, and that it is well for us who live in later days to draw out of their rich storehouse, rather than to be ever seeking things that are new.

The very strength of our position in the Anglican Church lies in this, that we get behind mere mediævalism or ever-changing Protestantism, and in thought drink of the wide stream which flows from the early Church through the writings of the Fathers. But hitherto it has been only the few who have been able to carry their pitchers to these fountains.

Well is it therefore that such writings, apologetic, doctrinal or hortatory, should be placed within the reach of a greater number, that, in the struggles which are approaching, Churchmen may bring their best thought to bear upon modern controversy.

In the performance of such a task Mr. Moxon has taken his share, and has given to us one of the most remarkable of St. Chrysostom's treatises. Though entitled "On the Priesthood" no Bishop can read such a treatise without feeling how great is the call to Bishops especially to realize the awful solemnity of their office. But we must not read such a treatise as though it stood alone, lest such words of fire should drive to despair. It must be read along with the whole life of the

who shrinking as he did from the call, yet lived to do such noble deeds and lead so saintly a life by the grace of God. As with St. Paul, so with St. Chrysostom, the great dignity of the office only brings out in relief the might of the Divine Power working through man.

I have said above that we owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Moxon, and we owe it for another reason. In a day when our clergy are constantly saying that they have no time to read, no time to write, no time to prepare sermons, the Editor of this treatise has shown how a Priest in the midst of heavy parochial work in London can so arrange his time and concentrate his thought as to give to the world a most valuable result of his labour.

My hope is that such a labour of love may stir us up to a higher conception of the character of our office as Priests and Bishops, and act as an incentive to nobler deeds on behalf of the Church, and of Him Who has called us into the Ministry.

EDWYN SOUTHWELL.

INTRODUCTION

I. THE AUTHOR

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, familiar to many from the beautiful prayer recited in the daily offices of the Anglican liturgy, was famous as the greatest pulpit orator of the Eastern Church. Originally called John, he received the title of Chrysostom (Golden Mouth) from his admirers, a name which has clung to him ever since, almost to the exclusion of his own baptismal name.

He was born at Antioch about 345 A.D. His father Secundus (§ 11) held the important position of *magister militiæ*, but died while his son was still an infant. His mother Anthusa, worthy to be ranked with Monica, the mother of St. Augustine, as a pattern of Christian mothers, devoted herself to the rearing and education of her only son (§§ 10-22). She gave him the best of educations, sending him to learn rhetoric from the eminent Libanius, and philosophy from Andrathagius (§ 7). As a young man he was destined for the bar, and he describes himself as wonderfully devoted to the law-courts and theatres of Antioch (§ 8). Possibly he never actually practised at the bar, though eminently fitted to do so on the ground of ability, but, as his heathen master Libanius complained, "the Christians stole him."

A turning point in his life was his baptism, which he received at the hands of Meletius, Bishop of Antioch between 368 and 370 A.D. The custom at this time

for baptism to be deferred until comparatively late in life, a habit due to a superstitious terror of post-baptismal sin, which was regarded by many as *the* sin against the Holy Ghost.

After his baptism he was appointed by Meletius as a "reader" in the Church, an office which gave him power to take a minor part in the public services. From this time he was seized with the desire to devote himself to "true philosophy" (§ 4), or, in other words, to enter a monastery. This he would have done but for the entreaties of his mother Anthusa (§§ 10-22), which, as described by himself in the present treatise, form one of the most pathetic passages in all his writings.

Induced by his mother for the moment to remain at home, he was startled to hear the report that he and his intimate friend Basil were in imminent danger of being taken against their will and consecrated Bishops to two of the Sees at that time vacant in Syria. The two friends agreed to act in concert, and Chrysostom pretended to acquiesce in receiving the office, but when the time of consecration came he concealed himself and left Basil to receive the office alone. When taxed with his breach of faith he alleged his own incompetence for the work, and his fear of depriving the Church of the good services of Basil, if he had revealed his intention to him beforehand (§§ 24 sqq.).

Chrysostom now spent some seven years of his life (374-381) as a hermit in the mountains near Antioch. It has been supposed that this took place after his mother's death, but the reference in § 542 of this treatise seems to suggest that he entered upon monastic life while his mother still lived. Here he endured all kinds of privations and hardships, and permanently injured his health. Many of his experiences are reflected in this treatise, especially in the Sixth Book, in which he does not give the impression of retaining the whole of his early enthusiasm for the monastic ideal.

He returned to Antioch in 381, when he was ordained Deacon, and later Priest, and entered upon the seventeen

years of his life during which he gained his chief reputation as a preacher. His sermons are full of incident, and give us a good insight into life in Antioch. Preaching several times each week, he fearlessly denounced the vices and immorality of the city; the theatre, the races, the prevailing avarice, luxury and lust, all came in for a share of his denunciation, and so packed was his church that he was compelled to warn his hearers against the many pickpockets who found it profitable to be regular members of the congregation!

One incident of historic importance, and illustrating the personal influence of Chrysostom, may be mentioned. In the year 387 a great riot arose in Antioch against the Emperor Theodosius, owing to the burden of taxation. The people broke down the royal statues, including that of the Emperor's noble and blameless wife Flacilla, who had recently died. The anger of Theodosius was so great that he would have utterly destroyed the city but for the action of Chrysostom, who induced the aged Bishop Flavian to intercede in person for its safety. Chrysostom's celebrated course of twenty-one sermons preached at this time "on the Statues" still exist, and are among his most admired works.

In the year 397 Chrysostom was appointed Patriarch of Constantinople, much against his will. Here at the centre of court influence and court intrigue he found himself in uncongenial surroundings. His eloquence soon attracted the masses of the people, but his outspoken denunciations of the worldliness of the clergy and court circle, and his simple method of life made him many enemies. The Empress Eudoxia, at first an admirer, was converted into an opponent by his uncompromising hostility to all that was base in the court, and the climax was reached when Eudoxia believed she saw a reference to herself in a sermon of the Patriarch's relating to Elijah and Jezebel.

As if his opponents at Constantinople were not numerous enough, Chrysostom had the misfortune to incur the enmity of Theophilus, Bishop of Alex

because of his kindness to certain monks banished from Egypt on the ground of heresy, for favouring the teaching of Origen. Four of these men, known as "the tall brethren," owing to their great stature, fled to Constantinople, and persuaded Chrysostom to intercede for them. Theophilus, long since jealous of Chrysostom, resolved as a result of this to join his enemies in an attempt to overthrow him. A packed synod was convened on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus in the year 403, known as "the Synod of the Oak," and condemned Chrysostom on the most absurd charges. He was sentenced to banishment, and left for the Pontus. Such, however, was the fury of the populace that the Empress Eudoxia, alarmed at their violence, and terrified by an earthquake which she superstitiously attributed to the departure of Chrysostom, sent to recall him at once. The reconciliation was brief. Two months later he preached a sermon on the death of John the Baptist, and in denouncing the vices of the city was reported to the Empress to have used these words: "Again Herodias is mad; again she is raging; again she is dancing; again she is demanding the head of John upon a charger." It is uncertain whether these words, attributed to him, were ever uttered; but the Empress believed him to have used them and insisted on his banishment. Amid scenes of great disorder Chrysostom was exiled on June 5, 404. Sent to one of the most inhospitable spots in the Empire (Pityus on the Caucasus), he only survived three years, and died on September 14, 407, at a little over the age of sixty, the saintliest man and the greatest orator that ever graced the Patriarchal chair of Constantinople.

II. THE OCCASION OF THE TREATISE

THE treatise "On the Priesthood" originated in the incident, already referred to, in the previous section, of

Chrysostom's deception of Basil when it was proposed that they should be consecrated together to the office of Bishop.

The defence begins with a justification of deception, if used for a good end ; or rather Chrysostom is unwilling to use the term "deception," and prefers to call his action, "good management" or "economy." This theory, that the end justifies the means, is associated in our minds with the methods of the Jesuits ; but however abhorrent it is to our ideas it should be remembered that it was not so abhorrent to the notions of his age, and is actually upheld by others of the Fathers (cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* vii. 9, Augustine, *de mendacio*).

The greater part of the treatise is devoted by Chrysostom to the heavy responsibility of the episcopal office, and his own incompetence for the work. It is by reason of the eloquent descriptions of the magnitude and dignity of the Priesthood that this treatise is generally regarded as the finest of all Chrysostom's works. The dangers and temptations of the ministry are so well described, the characters depicted are so human, that the treatise is of permanent value to the clergy of every age.

III. THE STRUCTURE OF THE TREATISE

THE treatise "On the Priesthood" is divided into six books—

Book I. deals with Chrysostom's friendship with Basil, and their desire to lead a common life of monastic retirement ; the protest of his mother against the plan ; the proposal to consecrate the two friends to be Bishops ; Basil's consecration and Chrysostom's withdrawal ; Basil's reproaches and Chrysostom's reply, in which he remarks on the great advantage of deceit when it is well-timed.

Book II. emphasizes the great importance of the priestly office, the delicate tact required, and Chrysostom's unfitness contrasted with Basil's fitness for the work. Chrysostom

concludes by asserting that his flight, so far from insulting the electors, freed them from much blame.

Book III. describes further the dignity of the Priesthood. The Christian Priest is greater than the old High Priest, than a king or father. St. Paul's view of the office is cited, and the Bishop is compared to a navigator guiding a ship ; he is in danger of being discredited by unworthy holders of the office ; he should not fear deposition ; he should have a grasp of detail, and possess great powers of self-repression ; he must be prepared for the arduous tasks of making promotion, and supervising the widows and virgins, in addition to his judicial duties.

Book IV. shows that it is no excuse for mismanagement that the office was not voluntarily sought. The importance of preaching is greatly emphasized, both to instruct, to soften, and to resist heretical teaching. The book closes with a great eulogy on the person and character of St. Paul.

Book V. deals with the need for indifference to human praise, and emphasizes again the importance of preaching, and the need for preparation, especially on the part of gifted preachers.

Book VI. contrasts the work of a Bishop and that of a Monk. The fear with which the office was anticipated is described under two pictures, one of a lover, and the second of a great battle. The treatise closes with a description of the fierce warfare of Satan, and a promise that Chrysostom will come to the aid of Basil should opportunity arise.

IV. THE DATE OF THE TREATISE

THE date of the incidents recorded in the First Book, and the date of the treatise itself are two distinct questions ; for although the work is apparently the immediate reply to Basil's complaint against Chrysostom, yet in reality this incident only serves as a picturesque setting, while the actual production belongs to a later period.

Three dates have been assigned to the treatise ; the earliest date would make it written while Chrysostom was in the desert (374-381) ; others (including Socrates) attribute the work to his diaconate (381-386). Dr. Nairn, however, who discusses the subject at considerable length, and adduces new evidence, concludes that neither of these suppositions is correct, but that *the treatise was written in 387, immediately after Chrysostom's ordination to the Priesthood*. The arguments in favour of this view, which seem quite conclusive, are appended—

I. *Internal evidence*. The maturity of thought in the work, as well as the somewhat antagonistic attitude adopted towards monastic life, especially in Book VI. of the treatise, tend to show that it was written after 381, when Chrysostom abandoned monastic life for active work.

II. *External evidence*. (a) There is extant a sermon preached by Chrysostom at Antioch, in which he expresses his intention of publishing shortly a work on the Priesthood. That this is the work to which he alluded there can be scarcely room for doubt. The fact is rendered more certain by two points of resemblance between the subject matter of this sermon and our treatise. i. In one passage he compares the priestly and kingly office in favour of that of the Priest, and he refers to the throne of the priestly office as set up not on earth but in heaven (cf. §§ 181-189). ii. Shortly afterwards he quotes the passage from St. Matthew, xviii. 18, in which the power of absolution is given to the Church—a passage alluded to several times in this treatise.

This sermon must have been preached after Chrysostom's ordination as Priest (386 A.D.) as, at Antioch, preaching was no part of the duties of a Deacon. The work was published therefore after the year 386.

(b) Jerome, writing in 392, refers¹ to the treatise "On the Priesthood" as known to himself.

¹ *De viris illustribus*, 129.

It therefore follows that the work was published between the years 386 and 392.

If we make allowance for the time which would inevitably elapse between the publication of the work and the reference to it by Jerome, and assume that the occasion of writing it would reasonably be suggested to Chrysostom by his own ordination as Priest, we may date the treatise with tolerable certainty as 386, or very shortly after that year.

V. THE TEXT OF THE TREATISE

ALTHOUGH the present edition does not call for any detailed account of the extant manuscripts of the Greek of Chrysostom's work "On the Priesthood," and their relative value,¹ yet the English reader may not unnaturally ask to know something of the sources to which we are indebted for the text of the treatise, as we have it at present. It will not therefore be out of place to give a brief summary of the various manuscripts and versions which enable us to form our present text. Such evidence may be divided into four classes: (1) manuscripts; (2) quotations in other writers; (3) ancient translations; (4) printed editions. Owing to the popular character and practical value of the work these various authorities are more numerous than in the case of most theological treatises.

(1) *Manuscripts.* For over a thousand years after the publication of the treatise, the copies were multiplied by scribes who copied them out into "Manuscripts." Of these manuscripts a very large number exist now in different libraries in various parts of Europe. The Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, contains no less than nineteen; others are to be found in Oxford, Munich, Berlin, Florence, Rome, Venice and Vienna.

¹ See *Dr. Nairn's* edition, pp. xlix.-lv.; also *Journal of Theological Studies*, July 1906, pp. 575-590.

Dr. Nairn, in his comparison of these with one another, divides them into four main groups; each of these groups consists of manuscripts which (by their resemblance to one another, and difference from members of the other groups in certain details and errors which are bound to occur when transmission is by writing) appear to be descended from a common ancestor. As a number of these manuscripts date back to the ninth century, it is clear that the parent manuscripts go back considerably further, and by a comparison of the points of difference it is possible to arrive with some degree of certainty as to the original form of the text.

(2) *Quotations.* Side by side with the actual manuscript evidence, it is possible to verify the accuracy of certain passages when they are found quoted by other writers. Thus Anthusa's appeal (§§ 10 sqq.) is quoted at length by Symeon Metaphrastes (a writer of the tenth century), is paraphrased by Georgius Alexandrinus (seventh century), and is quoted again by an anonymous writer of the tenth or eleventh century. Two passages also (§ 291 sq. and § 528 sq.) are quoted by Suidas (earlier than the twelfth century).

(3) *Ancient translations.* The work was translated in early times into Syriac, portions of which (dated from the ninth century) exist in the British Museum, and also into Latin. The best and earliest Latin version cannot be dated with accuracy, but it is believed by Bengel (who edited the treatise in 1725) to be "perhaps older than all existing manuscripts."

(4) *Editions.* Since the invention of printing, the Greek text has been edited seventeen times, and translated into English seven times. Montfaucon's edition of the works of Chrysostom (1713-1738) has long been regarded as the standard, while Dr. Nairn's edition of this treatise (Cambridge University Press, 1906) presents it in its best and handiest form for the use of students.

The following is a list of the editions and English translations already referred to—

EDITIONS.

- Editio princeps*, from printing press of Froeben, at Basle, with prefatory letter addressed by Erasmus to Wilibald Pirkheimer. 1525.
 Nicolas Clenard: published by Rutgers Rescius. Louvain, 1529.
 David Hoeschel: Augsburg, 1599.
 Savile: 1612.
 Fronto Ducaeus: Paris, 1614.
 Hughes: Cambridge, 1710.
 Thirlby: Cambridge, 1712.
 Montfaucon: 1738.
 Bengel: Stuttgart, 1725.
 Leo: Leipzig, 1834.
 Lomler: Rudolstadt, 1837.
 Theobald Fix: Gaume Frères, 1839.
 Migne, in *Patrologia Graeca*.
 Dübner: Paris, 1861.
 Euelpides: Athens, 1867.
 Seltmann: Münster, 1887.
 Nairn: Cambridge University Press, 1907.

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS.

- H. Hollier: London, 1728.
 J. Bunce: London, 1759.
 T. Mason: Philadelphia, 1826.
 F. W. Hohler: London, 1837.
 Marsh: London, 1844.
 Cowper: London, 1866.
 Stephens: New York, 1892.

The following works on St. Chrysostom will be found useful by the English reader—

- Fathers for English Readers*, vol. on Chrysostom. S.P.C.K.
Dictionary of Christian Biography, vol. i, article on Chrysostom.
 Brightman, *Eastern and Western Liturgies*, vol. i. Oxford, 1896.
 Chase, *Chrysostom: a Study in the History of Biblical Interpretation*. London, 1887.
 Harnack, *History of Dogma*, Eng. tr., vol. iv. p. 297. London, 1898.
 Puller, *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*. London, 1900.

ST. CHRYSOSTOM

ON THE PRIESTHOOD

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

Chrysostom's chief friend was Basil.

1. I HAD many genuine and true friends who knew the laws of friendship and strictly observed them. There was, however, one¹ of this numerous band who surpassed them all in his friendship to myself, and who strove to leave them as far behind as they left those who viewed me with indifference.

2. He was one of my constant companions. We applied ourselves to the same studies and attended the same teachers.² We had, further, an equal eagerness and zeal for the studies to which we were devoted, and the same earnestness produced by common interests. Not only while we were at

¹ This friend was Basil (see s. 36). He was certainly not the famous Basil, Bishop of Cæsarea, but his identity cannot be definitely established. Among several suggestions, Dr. Nairn (following Tillemont, Montfaucon, and other authorities) inclines to identify him with Basil, Bishop of Raphanea, a town near Antioch.

² These would include Libanius (in rhetoric) and Andragathius (in philosophy).

school, but when we left it and were compelled to decide what path of life we had better choose, the similarity of our tastes was clear. 3. Besides these, there were other bonds which remained unbroken and secure. The one could not boast more than the other of the greatness of his country;¹ nor was he wedded to extreme poverty and I very rich; on the contrary, our means were as similar as our views; our families were of equal rank and everything was in keeping with our common tastes. 4. But when the time came to enter upon the blessed life of the monastery and the true philosophy,² the balance no longer remained even. His scale ascended high, while I, still fettered by worldly lusts, dragged my scale down, weighting it with youthful vanities, and was forced to stay in a lower plane. 5. From that time our intimacy was broken, for it was impossible for men not interested in the same pursuits to spend much time together. But our friendship remained firm as of old; 6. and when I emerged slightly, of my own accord, from the waves of worldly cares, he received me with open arms. Not even then could we maintain our former equality; for he had got the start of me, and, by displaying intense earnestness, was rising far over my head and was reaching great eminence. 7. Still, inasmuch as he was a man of great goodness and rated my friendship highly, he withdrew himself from all the rest of his friends, and spent his whole time with me. He had been anxious for this before, but, as I explained, had been hindered by my indifference. 8. It was impossible for one who was regularly attending the

¹ Both were natives of Antioch.

² Viz. a life of asceticism and religious contemplation.

law-courts¹ and was excited over the pleasures of the stage, to associate constantly with one who was devoted to his books and never even went out into the market-place. 9. On this account he was kept from my company; but as soon as ever he prevailed on me to follow the same method of life, then he suddenly gave birth to a desire which he had conceived long before. He would not leave my side even for a moment, but persisted in urging the plan that we should each abandon his own home and make our dwelling together. He succeeded in persuading me, and the arrangements were in hand.

CHAPTER II

Chrysostom's mother begs him not to enter monastic life.

10. HOWBEIT the unceasing entreaties of my mother² hindered me from granting him this favour—or rather from receiving it at his hands. As soon as she saw that this was my intention, she took my hand and led me to her own private chamber; and sitting close by me on the bed on which she had given me birth she opened the fountains of her tears, and added words more touching than tears, as she poured forth the following lamentation:—11. “My child,” she said, “I was not suffered long to enjoy your father’s virtues,

¹ It does not follow from this passage that Chrysostom ever practised at the bar. Indeed this is expressly contradicted by Socrates (*Eccl. Hist.*, 6, 3) and Sozomen (8, 2). His presence may have been simply as a hearer.

² Anthusa; his father (who died when Chrysostom was an infant, s. 11) was Secundus.

since such was the will of God. His death followed my travail over you, and left you an orphan and me a widow before my time, with all the horrors of a widow's life, which only those who have experienced them can estimate correctly. 12. No words could describe the stormy sea into which a girl enters, who has only just left her father's house without any experience of the world, and is suddenly stricken with irrepressible sorrow, and compelled to face cares too great for her age and sex. 13. She is compelled to correct the indolence of servants, to guard against their misdeeds, to repel the designs of kinsmen, to submit with a noble spirit to the rudeness of the tax-gatherers, and the extortion with which they exact the tribute. 14. And should her dead husband have left a child behind, even if that child be a girl, great anxiety will be caused to her mother, but still that anxiety will be freed from expense and fear. But a son fills her with countless alarms every day that passes, and still more numerous anxieties. I say nothing of the heavy expenditure of money which she is compelled to incur if she is desirous of giving him a liberal education. 15. Still, none of these thoughts induced me to contract a second marriage and to introduce another husband to your father's house; on the contrary, I remained patient while troubles surged around me, and I did not turn my back upon the iron furnace¹ of a widow's life. My chief help was from above; 16. but I received also no slight consolation amid those trials, as often as I looked on your features and preserved in you a living and

¹ A Hebrew expression, meaning a furnace hot enough to melt iron, and applied metaphorically to any great trial: cf. Deut. iv. 20; Jer. xi. 4; and Is. xlvi. 10.

exact image of my dead husband. For this reason, while you were still an infant, and had not yet so much as learnt to speak, at the time when children give most pleasure to their parents, great was the comfort which you afforded me. 17. And further, you cannot cast even this reproach against me, that although I bore my life as a widow with fortitude, yet I diminished your father's property owing to the needs of my widowhood—a fate which, I know, many suffer who have had the misfortune to be fatherless. I preserved this property intact and entire, and I omitted nothing of the expenditure which your reputation demanded, but paid it from my own purse and from the dowry which I brought from my home. 18. Do not think that I recount this now by way of reproach. But in return for all this I beg one boon of you ; do not inflict a second bereavement upon me, and do not rouse afresh that grief which has now sunk to rest. Nay ; wait for my death. It may be that I shall depart before long. 19. They who are young look forward to a distant old age ; but we who are grown old have nothing to wait for but death. 20. When then you have consigned me to the ground and mingled my remains with your father's bones, then set out on long travels, and sail whatever sea you desire. Then there will be none to hinder you. But so long as I breathe, endure to live with me. Do not give offence to God in vain, by overwhelming me with such misfortunes ; for I have never injured you. 21. If indeed you have reason to complain that I distract you with worldly cares and compel you to direct my property, then respect neither nature's laws, nor education, nor custom, nor anything else, but flee from me as a traitor and an enemy. But if, on the

other hand, I do everything to provide much leisure for you in your journey through this life, at least let this bond, if nothing else, keep you by my side. 22. Even if you argue that thousands love you, yet none will allow you to enjoy such freedom as this ; for there is not one person to whom your reputation is so dear as to me."

23. These words and more than these my mother uttered, and I repeated them to that generous friend of mine. But, so far from being put out of countenance by these arguments, he was the more instant in making the same request as before.

CHAPTER III

His deceit to avoid consecration, and Basil's complaint.

24. WHILE we were thus situated, he constantly entreating and I not assenting, we were both suddenly disquieted by a rumour which reached us. The rumour was that we were to be promoted to the dignity of bishops.¹ 25. As soon, therefore, as

¹ The word "Hieruus" is translated throughout as "Bishop." To be consistent, the title of the treatise should be rendered "On the Office of a Bishop." It is clear that the intention was to consecrate Basil and Chrysostom as Bishops, and the fact that Chrysostom (and therefore probably Basil also) was under the canonical age of thirty need not weigh seriously, as such exceptions were common. A large number of the responsibilities mentioned in this treatise are common to the two orders, and in many passages it is not easy to say which of the two Chrysostom has chiefly in mind. In many instances he is probably not thinking of one more than the other. Often the jurisdiction of a Bishop did not, at this time, extend beyond his own

I heard this report, I was overcome with fear and bewilderment; with fear, lest I should be seized against my will;¹ with bewilderment, as I cast often in my mind what had induced those men to form such a design for us. For when I examined my character, I could find no quality there worthy of that office.

26. But that generous friend came up to me in secret, and informed me of these matters as though I had not heard the rumour, and begged that in this also it might be seen that we agreed in action and counsel as of old. He said that he was ready to follow my lead whichever course I should take, whether it were needful to escape the honour or to accept it. 27. I therefore, perceiving his zeal, and thinking that I should inflict a loss on the whole commonwealth of the Church if, by reason of my own weakness, I should deprive the flock of Christ of a young ruler so good and so suited to govern men, did not unfold my opinion on these matters to him, although I had never before allowed any of my designs to be hidden from him. But I said that it was needful to defer our plans on these matters until another season (for at present the question was not urgent), and persuaded him to take no thought for these matters for the moment, and caused him to feel confident that I should act in concert with him, should any

town, and his work would bear more resemblance to that of the Incumbent of a large Parish, in modern times, than to that of the Bishop of a Diocese.

¹ Forced ordinations were a common feature in this period. The danger here alluded to may be illustrated by the cases of St. Augustine (who was carried weeping to the Bishop), St. Ambrose (who fled, in vain, from Milan to avoid consecration), and St. Martin of Tours (who was dragged from his hermit's cell).

such fortune ever befall us. 28. Howbeit when a short time had passed, and he who was to consecrate us had come, I remained in hiding; while he, knowing nothing of this, was taken away on some other pretext and received the yoke, expecting, from my promises to him, that I, too, should certainly follow, or thinking rather that he was following me. 29. For certain of those who were with him, seeing him chafing at his capture, deceived him by crying out that it was strange that he whom all considered the more headstrong (that is, myself) had yielded to the decision of the Fathers with great submission, while Basil, who was far the more reasonable and submissive, waxed bold and vainglorious, and showed himself restive, unruly and wilful. 30. He yielded to these words, but when he heard that I had escaped, he came to me with downcast eyes and sat by my side. Then he tried to speak, but was prevented by grief, and was unable to express in words the violent emotions which he felt. No sooner did he open his lips than speech failed him, inasmuch as sorrow cut short his words before they could pass his lips. 31. So when I saw his eyes overflowing with tears and that he was filled with great agitation, knowing the cause, I began to laugh in my great delight, and taking his right hand I essayed to cover it with kisses, and I glorified God, because my plan had succeeded well, as I had always prayed it might. 32. Now when he saw that I was filled with joy and bright of countenance, and realized that he had been deceived by me, he was the more overcome by vexation and anger.

CHAPTER IV

Basil's bitter reproaches against Chryostom.

WHEN at last he had a slight abatement of his agitation of mind, he said :—" Even if you despise my interests and have no regard for me (and I know not wherefore this should be) you should at least have considered your own repute. But, as it is, you have opened the lips of all, and every man says that it was through love of vainglory that you declined this ministry. And there is no one to free you from this accusation. 33. For my part, I cannot endure even to enter the market-place, so many there are who come up to me and reproach me every day. For whenever they see me anywhere in the city, all those who are intimate with me take me aside and impute to me the greater share of the blame. " Since you knew his intention," they say, "(for none of his plans could be hidden from you) you should not have concealed it, but ought to have imparted it to us ; and in any case we should not have been at a loss for a device to capture him." 34. And I am ashamed, and blush to tell them that I did not know that you had long been devising this plan, lest they should think our friendship a mere sham. For if it is so—and indeed it is, nor would you deny this yourself as your action just now shows—it is right at all events to conceal our troubles from strangers and from those who entertain even a moderately good opinion of us. 35. I shrink then from telling them the truth and the real state of matters with us ; and I am compelled for the future to hold my peace, to bow my head to the ground, and to turn

aside from those who meet me, and avoid them. 36. For if I escape the former condemnation, I must needs be brought to judgment later for lying, as they will never bring themselves to believe that you ranked Basil with the rest who were not permitted to know your secrets. 37. Howbeit this is of small import to me since such is your pleasure. But how shall I endure the future disgrace? Some accuse you of arrogance and others of vainglory; while the more unsparing of your accusers bring both of these charges equally against us, and add that of insolence towards those who selected us for honour; 38. and they say that it would have served them right if they had endured worse dishonour than this at our hands, for passing over so many men of eminence, and for taking mere striplings who yesterday or the day before were still engrossed in the cares of the world (if they for a moment contract their brows and robe themselves in black and feign a pensive aspect), and for suddenly exalting them to greater dignity than they had even dreamt of attaining; and that men who, from their earliest years to a ripe old age, have practised self-discipline are under authority, and are ruled by their sons who have never so much as heard of the laws which should guide them in administering this office. These reproaches and others more bitter than these they are continually fastening upon us. 39. I do not know what answer to make to them. I beg you to tell me; for I suppose that it is not without due thought and reflection that you took to flight, and incurred the serious hostility of men of such importance. You must have approached this action with due thought and consideration, whence I infer that you have some

reason ready to give in defence. Tell me then whether I shall be able to offer any just excuse to those who accuse you. 40. I do not demand any account for the wrong you have done to me, nor for your deceit, nor your treachery, nor for the treatment which you have enjoyed at my hands in the past. 41. Indeed I freely entrusted my very soul (so to speak) to your hands ; but you used as much craft towards me, as if your work had been to watch against an enemy. 42. And yet, had you known that our plan was profitable, you should not yourself have refused the advantage ; but if you thought it harmful, you should have saved me too from the loss, since you always professed to honour me above others. 43. Yet you did everything to involve me in the snare, and you must needs use guile and craftiness towards one who in his words and actions towards you was always open and sincere. 44. Nevertheless, as I said before, I bring no such charge against you now, nor do I reproach you with the loneliness into which you have led me by destroying that intercourse from which we have often reaped no little pleasure and advantage. 45. All this I pass by, and endure it in silence and gentleness ; not because your conduct towards me has been gentle, but because I have always laid down this rule for myself from the day on which I first cherished affection for you, that I would never demand an explanation of whatever pain you might choose to cause me. 46. Indeed, you know yourself that you have inflicted no slight wrong upon me ; you remember the words spoken about us again and again by strangers and by ourselves to the effect that it was a great advantage that we should be of one mind and strengthened by our mutual

friendship. 47. And though all other men said that our concord would confer no slight profit on many other people; I, for my own part, never thought of conferring profit on any people; but I said that we should reap at least one great advantage from it, that we were no easy victims to those who desired to compass our downfall. 48. I never ceased to remind you of this:—"The times are dangerous; our enemies are many; true love has perished; the bane of malice has succeeded it; we are treading in the midst of snares¹ and are walking upon battlements of cities. Many there be on every side who stand ready to rejoice over our misfortune, should aught befall us. There are few, if any, to share our sorrow. Beware lest we incur much ridicule, and damage worse than ridicule, should we be ever divided. A brother² helped by a brother is like a strong city and like a barred kingdom. Do not therefore destroy this true love or break this barrier." 49. These words and more than these I was ever repeating, although I never suspected any such evil; on the contrary I thought that your mind was sound towards me and I was needlessly desiring to heal a sound mind; yet it seems that I was unwittingly administering medicine to a sick man; and not even thus, alas! did I gain my end, nor have I reaped any reward from my excessive forethought. 50. Heedlessly you cast away all those maxims and laid none of them to heart, but have turned me adrift like a vessel without ballast into an unexplored sea, and given no thought to those cruel waves with which I must needs contend. 51. Should it ever befall me to encounter calumny, or mockery, or any other manner of insolence and abuse (and such things

¹ Ecclus. ix. 13.

² Prov. xviii. 19.

must needs occur), to whom shall I flee for help? to whom shall I impart my sorrow? Who will consent to help me? Who will repel those who grieve me and make them to cease, and comfort me and enable me to endure the ill-mannered conduct of others? There is no one, while you stand aloof from this fearful warfare and cannot even hear the din of battle. 52. Do you not know how great is the evil you have wrought? Do you not now see, after delivering the blow, how deadly is the wound that you have dealt me? 53. Howbeit, let this pass, for it is no longer possible to undo the past or to find a way where there is no way. But what answer shall I give to strangers? What reply shall I make to their charges?"

CHAPTER V

Chrysostom's reply. Deceit is often justifiable.

54. *Chrysostom.* "Be of good cheer; I am ready to submit to be questioned not only about this, but will endeavour myself also to explain, as best I may, those matters whercin you have not questioned me. If you wish it, I will make them the very opening of my defence. 55. For it would be strange, and indeed most perverse in me, were I anxious for the good opinion of strangers, and ready to do anything to prevent them from accusing us, and yet should fail to acquit myself in the eyes of my greatest friend; and that although he has treated me with such gentleness that he will not accuse me for my supposed injuries to him, but sets his own interests aside and can still

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think of mine—and (strange) if I thus showed indifference to him greater than the zealous care which he has displayed towards me. 56. How then did I wrong you? For this is the point at which I am resolved to launch into the sea of my defence. Is it that I misled you and concealed my own intention? But this was for the advantage alike of yourself who suffered deception, and of them into whose hands I entrusted you after I had deceived you. 57. For if deception is under all circumstances wrong,¹ and it is never lawful to use it when it be needed, then I am ready to submit myself to any court you may wish. Or rather, as you will never consent to bring me to court, I will pronounce verdict against myself, exactly as the jurors do against evil-doers when they are convicted by their accusers. 58. But if the deed is not always harmful, but is right or wrong according to the intentions of those who use the device, cease to accuse me of deception and prove that I used the device for an evil end; since, as long as this charge is absent, it will be the duty of those who are right minded not to find fault and criticize, but to receive the offender with open arms. 59. A timely deception used with a right purpose is

¹ Chrysostom's defence of fraud is the weakest part of the treatise. The use of stratagem in war, at a time when all human relations are altered, is no parallel; the example from physicians, to save a patient's life, is stronger, but even this will scarcely justify the habitual extension of the habit among Christian people.

Among the Biblical instances quoted, St. Chrysostom's statement (see s. 78) is not true that God commended Jacob for his fraud on Isaac and Esau; and St. Paul's action in circumcising Timothy fails as a parallel, as Timothy was the son of a Jewess, while St. Paul's words to the Galatians were addressed definitely to Gentiles.

attended by such profit that many men have often been brought to account through being straightforward. 60. If you will examine famous generals from the beginning of time you will find that most of their triumphs are successes due to deceit, and that such as these win more praise than those who conquer by straightforward methods. 61. The latter kind are successful in their wars at a greater expense both of money and men ; the result is that they gain no advantage from their victory, but the victors suffer almost as much as the vanquished, both in the loss of life and in the emptying of the treasury. In addition to this, their methods do not allow them to enjoy the whole of the credit of the victory. As a consequence those who have fallen reap no small share of the credit, because they were victorious in spirit and vanquished only in body ; so that, had it been possible for them not to fall beneath the shower of missiles and for the visitation of death not to check their career, they would never have desisted from their zeal. 62. But he who can conquer by deceit subjects his enemy not only to loss but also to ridicule. For whereas, in the case of a pitched battle, both sides win the credit due to valour, in the case of stratagem both sides do not gain the credit for wisdom, but the prize belongs to the victors alone ; and another point no less important is that they preserve for their country the pleasure of victory unimpaired ; for prudence of mind is not like wealth in money, or numbers in men. When any one continually uses money and men in war, the supply becomes diminished and fails the possessors. Yet in the case of wisdom, the more it is exercised the more it is wont to increase. 63. And not only in war but also in peace you may find

many cases where the use of deceit is needful ; and not only in politics but also in domestic matters ; a husband needs it for a wife, a wife for a husband, a father for a son, a friend for a friend, and sometimes even children for a father. 64. For Saul's daughter¹ could not have rescued her own husband by any other device from her father's hands except by misleading him ; and when her brother² wished to save the man whom she had rescued, when he was in peril, again he used the same weapons as did the lady." 65. Here Basil said :—"None of this applies to me. I am not a foe and an enemy, nor am I one who plans your hurt, but just the contrary. I always entrusted all my plans to your decision and was following in the path where you bade me." 66. *Chrysostom.* "Why, my good and dear friend, this is the very reason why I myself said before that it is right to use deceit not in war alone, nor towards enemies alone, but in peace and towards valued friends. 67. To learn that deceit is useful not only to those who practise but also to those who suffer it, go up to any physician and inquire how they rid the sick of their disease. You will hear them tell you that their skill unaided is not enough, but on occasions they take deceit to their aid, and unite the assistance derived from this with their skill, and so restore the sick man to health. 68. When the plans of the physicians are hindered by the whims of the sick and the obstinate nature of the disease itself, then it is needful to put on the mask of deception, to the end that they may be able to conceal the true character of what is happening, as they do on a stage. 69. If you wish it, I myself will relate to you one of the many frauds which, as I have heard, the sons of the

¹ 1 Sam. xix. 11-18.

² 1 Sam. xx. 5 sq.

physicians devise. Once a fever fell suddenly upon a patient, with much violence, and his temperature kept rising; the sick man refused those potions which were able to alleviate it, but longed and earnestly prayed and besought all who entered his chamber that a copious draught of wine should be given him, and that this fell desire of his should be gratified. Howbeit it would not only have kindled the flame of the fever but have driven the poor victim mad, had any one granted him this favour. 70. Thereupon, as professional skill was baffled and at the end of its resources and utterly useless, deception stepped in and showed its power to be such as you shall now hear. 71. The physician took an earthenware vessel newly-baked, and steeped it in wine; and then drew it up empty and filled it with water. He then gave orders for the room where the patient was lying to be darkened by thick curtains, to the end that light might not enter and convict the fraud, and he gave him the cup to drink, saying that it was filled with pure wine. 72. Now even before the patient took it into his hand he was deceived at once by the perfume which reached him, and had not patience to examine closely what was offered him; in simple faith, deceived by the darkness and impelled by his craving, he snatched the vessel with much impatience. And when he had drunk his fill he shook off the fever, and escaped the danger that awaited him. 73. Do you see the advantage of deceit? If you were to collect all the frauds of physicians, the list would be extended without limit. 74. You will find that not only those who heal the body but those who care for diseases of the soul, constantly use this remedy. By this means the blessed Paul won

over so many thousands¹ of Jews. With this intent he circumcised Timothy,² notwithstanding that he instructed the Galatians,³ that Christ should not profit them that be circumcised. On this account he became subject to law,⁴ and that though he thought that, after faith in Christ,⁵ the righteousness which comes from the law was loss.

75. Great is the power of deceit, provided only that it be not applied with guileful intent; or rather it is not right to call such action deceit, but good management, tact and skill, able to find ways where resources fail, and to correct errors of the mind.

76. I should not describe Phinehas⁶ as a murderer, although he took two lives with one blow; nor again should I call Elijah a murderer in spite of the hundred soldiers⁷ and their captains and the vast stream of blood which he caused to flow from the slaughter⁸ of those who did sacrifice to the false gods.

77. If we were to admit this and if you should strip all action of the intention of the doers and examine it on its own merit, you may if you like, condemn Abraham⁹ for murdering his son, and accuse his grandson and his descendant of evil-doing and fraud. It was by this means that the one¹⁰ gained the birthright, and the other¹¹ transferred the wealth of the Egyptians to the host of the Israelites.

78. However, it is not so. Shame on their effrontery! Not only do we acquit these of blame, but we revere them on this account; for God praised them because of this.

79. He

¹ Acts xxi. 20.

³ Gal. v. 2.

⁶ Phil. iii. 7.

⁷ 2 Kings i. 12.

⁹ Gen. xxii. 3.

¹¹ Exod. xi. 2.

² Acts xvi. 3.

⁴ 1 Cor. ix. 20.

⁶ Numb. xxv. 7.

⁸ 1 Kings xviii. 40.

¹⁰ Gen. xxvii. 19.

may justly be called a deceiver who performs the act for unjust ends, since oftentimes it is needful to deceive and to gain great advantage from this craft; while he who proceeds in a straightforward manner does great harm to him whom he will not deceive.

BOOK II

CHAPTER I

Chrysostom's deceit caused Basil to serve Christ.

80. "I COULD have explained at greater length that it is possible to use the power of deception for a good end, or rather that it is not right to call such an act deception at all, but a kind of good management of an admirable nature. But since what I have said is enough to prove my case, it would be wearisome and tedious to extend my argument. Your duty is then to show whether I have used this device to your disadvantage."

81. Then said Basil:—"What manner of advantage has befallen me from this good management or wisdom or whatever be the name by which you prefer to call it, so as to persuade me that I was not deceived by you?"

82. *Chrysostom.* "Why, what greater advantage could there be, than to be seen to be doing what Christ Himself declared to be evidence of love towards Christ? 83. When speaking to the chief of the Apostles, He said, "Peter, lovest thou Me?"¹ and when Peter confessed that he did, He added, "If thou lovest Me, feed My sheep." 84. The Master asked the disciple if he loved Him, not that He might learn Himself—how should He who searcheth the

¹ John xxi. 15.

hearts of all men?—but to teach us how much He cares for the supervision of these sheep. Now, since this is evident, it will be equally evident that a great and unspeakable reward will be in store for him who is engaged in that work which Christ values so highly. 85. For if, when we see any one caring for our servants or flocks, we regard his zeal for them as a sign of his love for us—although this attention might be bought for money—with what gift will He reward those who shepherd His flock, which He purchased by His own death when He gave His own blood as the price for it? 86. And so when the disciple said, “Thou knowest, Lord, that I love Thee,” and called Him Whom he loved as a witness of his love, the Saviour did not stop at this point, but added the sign of His love. 87. He did not wish to show then how much Peter loved Him (for this has now been proved to us in many ways) but how much He loved His own Church, and it was His wish that Peter and all of us should learn it, to the end that we too might bestow much zeal upon it. 88. Why did God not spare His only-begotten Son,¹ but give Him up, although He had no other Son? It was that He might reconcile to Himself them who hated Him and make them a peculiar people.² Why did He also shed His blood? It was to the end that He might purchase the sheep which He entrusted to Peter and his successors. 89. Those words of Christ were then natural and just:—“Who is the faithful and wise servant³ whom his Lord shall make ruler over His household?” Again the words denote perplexity, but He Who uttered them did not utter them in perplexity.

¹ John i. 18, iii. 16; Rom. viii. 32.

² Tit. ii.

³ Matt. xxiv. 45.

On the contrary, as when He asked Peter if he loved Him, He did not ask because He wanted to know His disciple's affection, but because He wished to show His own exceeding love; so also when He asked the question, "Who then is the faithful and wise servant?" He did not ask this because He did not know the faithful and wise one, but because He wished to show how few there were and how great is this office. Mark, at any rate, the greatness of the reward:—"He will set¹ him over all His possessions." 90. Will you continue then to dispute that your deception was for a good purpose, inasmuch as you were to be set over the possessions of God, and to undertake the same office as that which Peter performed when Christ said that he would be able to surpass the rest? For He said, "lovest thou Me, Peter, more than these? Feed My sheep." 91. And yet He might have said to him, "If thou lovest Me, practise fasting,² couching on the ground, prolonged vigils; champion those who suffer wrong; be a father to the fatherless and a husband to their mother." But in truth He passed all this by; what then did He say? "Feed My sheep."

¹ Matt. xxiv. 47.

² Cf. ss 244-248, where Chrysostom states definitely that an ascetic life is not needful, and may be actually detrimental to clergy in the discharge of their public duties. He had undermined his own health by his austerities as a monk.

CHAPTER II

The difficulty of feeding Christ's sheep.

92. "THOSE exercises which I just mentioned might well be performed by many even of those who are under authority, and not by men only but even by women ; but when it is needful to rule the Church and to be entrusted with the supervision of souls, all womankind must give way to the greatness of the task, and indeed so must most men.

93. Let those be brought before us who far excel all others, and are as much above the rest in spiritual qualities as Saul¹ surpassed the whole nation of the Hebrews in bodily stature, or indeed much more. 94. We must not be content to seek one who is head and shoulders taller ; on the contrary, the difference between shepherd and sheep should be as great as the distinction between rational and irrational creatures, not to say even more ; for matters of much greater importance are at stake. 95. He who allows sheep to perish either through the ravages of wolves or the attacks of robbers, or through murrain or some other accident, might meet perhaps with some measure of pardon at the hands of the owner of the flock ; and even if he were called upon to make reparation the loss could be made good by money. But he who is entrusted with men, the reasonable flock of Christ, incurs the loss not of money but of his own soul through the destruction of the sheep. 96. Then he has a far greater and more difficult battle to fight. He has not to contend with wolves nor has he fears for robbers, nor care to avert pestilence

¹ 1 Sam. x. 23.

from the flock. 97. Well, then, against whom is the war? With whom is the battle? Listen to the blessed Paul who says,¹ "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Do you see the terrible host of enemies and their savage legions, not clad in steel, but content with their natural ferocity, which is as good as any suit of armour? 98. Do you wish also to see another cruel and savage army, which is lying in wait against this flock? You shall see this also from the same point of vantage. He who spoke of the other enemies indicates these foes to us as well, when he uses words² to this effect:—"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, fornication, adultery, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strifes, jealousies, wraths, factions, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, and tumults;" and others beside these, for the list is not complete, but from these others can be inferred. 99. In the case of dumb animals, those who wish to destroy the herd cease to contend against the shepherd when they see him fleeing, and are content with seizing the beasts; but in this case, if they catch the whole flock, even then they do not refrain from seizing the shepherd, but are the more urgent, and the more emboldened, and do not cease until they have either overthrown him or are overcome themselves. 100. Besides this, the sufferings of beasts are easy to discern, if there be famine or pestilence or wound or any other evil; and this is of no slight value in freeing them from what troubles them. 101. There is also another greater advantage in bringing to pass a speedy release

¹ Eph. vi. 12.² Gal. v. 19, 20, 21; 2 Cor. xiii. 20.

from that infirmity. What is this? Shepherds have full power to compel the sheep to submit to the art of healing when they do not endure it of their own accord. It is easy to bind them when it is needful to use cautery or the knife; and to keep them within the fold for a long time when this is required; and to employ one manner of diet after another, and to keep them from water. And all other remedies which they think fit to use to assist in their recovery they apply with perfect ease. 102. But in the case of human infirmities, in the first place, it is not easy for a man to see them; for "no one knows¹ the things of the man, save the spirit of the man which is in him."

CHAPTER III

The shepherd must use gentle remedies.

"HOW, then, may the remedy be applied to a disease when its character is obscure and its very existence cannot be perfectly seen? 103. But even when its existence is evident the difficulty it causes is greater than in the case of beasts. It is impossible to treat men with the same authority as the shepherd treats a sheep. In that case he has power to bind it and to restrict its diet and to apply cautery and the knife; but the power to receive the physician's cure depends not on him who administers the medicine so much as on the patient. That wondrous man knew this fact when he said to the Corinthians,² "Not that we

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 11.

² 2 Cor. i. 24. See ss. 413-442 for St. Chrysostom's great eulogy of St. Paul.

have lordship over your faith, but are helpers of your joy." 104. For Christians, above all men, are not allowed violently to correct the stumblings of the sinful. When secular judges convict evil-doers under the law, they show their authority to be great, and compel men, whether they will or no, to submit to their methods. But in this case it is needful to make such an one better not by compulsion, but by persuasion. 105. We neither have had authority granted to us by law to restrain sinners, nor, had they given it to us, should we have known for what end to use it, since God crowns not those who are forcibly kept from evil, but those who deliberately refrain from it. 106. On this account much tact is needed, that the sick may be persuaded of their own accord to submit themselves to the treatment of the priests, and not only this, but that they may thank them for the cure. 107. If one who is bound become restive (for he may still do this) he makes his sufferings worse; and if he neglect the words which cut like steel, through his contempt, he adds a second wound, and the intention to heal becomes the occasion of a more severe disease; for no one can, by compulsion, cure an unwilling man.

CHAPTER IV

*The treatment must be adapted to the individual.
Chrysostom's inability to undertake the work.*

108. "WHAT then can be done? For if you apply too mild a treatment to one who needs severe measures, and do not make a deep incision in one who requires it, you cut away part of the

wound but leave the rest. 109. But if you cut as deep as is required, often the patient, in despair at his sufferings, heedlessly rejects everything, medicine and bandage alike, and casts himself recklessly down a precipice, breaking¹ the yoke and bursting the bond. I could tell you of many who have been stranded in utter misery, because a punishment has been required which their offence merits. 110. It is not right to take an absolute standard and fit the penalty to the exact measure of the offence, but it is right to aim at influencing the moral feeling of the offender, lest perchance, while you wish to mend what is torn, you should make the rent worse, and while you are eager to raise up that which is fallen you should make the fall greater. 111. If the weak and dissipated and those who are given overmuch to worldly luxury and who are able to pride themselves on their birth and rank be corrected gently and gradually where they err, they may be freed partially, if not perfectly, from the evils which possess them. But if any one apply a violent restraint he deprives them even of this slight improvement. 112. For when once a soul is forced to lose the sense of shame it becomes callous, and henceforth neither yields to gentle words nor bends to threats nor is restrained by kindness, but becomes much worse than that city of which the prophet² said in reviling it:—"Thou hadst a whore's forehead; thou refusedst to be ashamed before all men." 113. On this account the shepherd needs great wisdom and a thousand eyes, so as to examine the soul's condition from every side. 114. As there are many men who become arrogant, and then despair of their own salvation because they

¹ Jer. v. 5.

² Jer. iii. 3.

cannot endure severe remedies, so there are some, who, because they do not receive a punishment of equal magnitude with their offences, are led to think lightly of them, and become far worse, and are led on to commit greater sin. 115. The priest must therefore overlook none of these considerations but examine them all with care, and use all his remedies in a manner suitable to each case lest his zeal be wasted. 116. And you can see his great responsibility not in this alone, but also in uniting the severed members of the Church. 117. The shepherd of the sheep finds that the flock follow him wherever he leads the way; or if any turn aside from the direct path and leave the good pasture to feed on barren and rocky ground, it suffices for him to raise a loud cry in order to bring them back again and restore to the fold those which were lost. 118. But should a *man* wander away from the direct faith, the shepherd needs much carefulness, patience and endurance. He cannot forcibly drag him back or constrain him by fear, but he must by persuasion lead him again to the truth from which at first he fell. 119. He needs therefore a noble soul, that he may not grow despondent or despair of the safety of the wanderers, that he may ever meditate on and repeat these¹ words:—"If peradventure God may give them knowledge of truth and they may be freed from the snare of the devil." 120. Therefore the Lord, when He spake to the disciples said,² "Who then is the faithful and wise servant?" He who disciplines himself brings profit to himself alone. But the profit of the shepherd's art extends to the whole people. And he who distributes money to them who need, or in other ways

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 25.² Matt. xxiv. 45.

ministers aid to them who suffer wrong, benefits his neighbours to some degree, but less than the priest in proportion as the body is inferior to the soul. 121. The Lord then said rightly that zeal for the sheep was a sign of love to Him."

122. *Basil.* "But you, do you not love Christ?"
Chrysostom. "Yes, I love Him and shall never cease loving Him; but I am afraid of angering Him whom I love."

123. *Basil.* "What riddle could be obscurer than this? Christ charged him who loved Him to feed His sheep, and you say that your reason for not feeding them is that you love Him who gave the charge."

124. *Chrysostom.* "My saying is no riddle, but a clear and simple statement. If I had been qualified to administer the office, as Christ wished, and then had refused it, I might well have been without excuse to plead; but since the infirmity of my spirit makes me unserviceable for this ministry, why do you question my words? 125. I am afraid that if I receive the flock from Christ in good condition and well-fed, and then suffer it to be injured through my inexperience, I may provoke anger towards myself from God who so loved it that He gave Himself for the sake of its salvation and redemption."

126. *Basil.* "You say this in jest, for if you say it in earnest I know of no other means by which you could have proved the justice of my resentment more clearly than by the argument with which you strove to allay my despondency. I knew before that you had deceived and betrayed me, but now since you endeavour to refute the charges, I understand and realize full well the extent of the evil into which you have led me. 127. If you

withdrew from such an office because you knew that your mind was unequal to the importance of the work, you should have removed me from it first, even if I had been filled with eagerness to undertake it, much more when I entrusted to you all the plans needful in this matter. 128. But as it is, you looked to yourself and forgot me. Nay, I only wish you had forgotten me and I had been content. But you plotted that I might become a ready prey to those who desired to seize me. 129. You cannot even seek refuge in the plea that popular opinion deceived you and led you to suspect great and wondrous qualities in me ; for I am not one of your famous and distinguished men, nor if this had been so, ought you to have preferred popular opinion to the truth. 130. If I had never permitted you to enjoy my companionship you might have appeared to have a reasonable excuse for giving your verdict in accordance with the rumour current about me. But if no one knows me as well as yourself, and if you know my inner nature better than my parents who brought me up, what argument will you find convincing enough to be able to persuade those who hear it that you did not deliberately thrust me into this danger? 131. However, let this pass now ; I do not compel you even to answer these charges ; but tell me, what reply shall we make to those who attack us?"

132. *Chrysostom.* "Nay, I will not myself proceed to those other matters until I have settled my differences with you, even though you be willing to release me ten thousand times over from these charges. 133. You said that ignorance would have condoned my offence and freed me from all responsibility, if I had known nothing of your character and so had raised you to

your present office; but that since I betrayed you though I was not ignorant but knew your character quite well, all just excuse and reasonable defence was gone. 134. But I maintain the opposite case. Why is this so? Because such matters need close examination, and it is not right for one who is about to present another as fit for the priestly office, to be content merely with popular report, but in addition to this he ought, beyond and before all else, himself to examine his manner of life. 135. For when the blessed Paul¹ said, "Moreover he must have also good testimony from them which are without," he does not do away with a careful and exact examination, nor does he set up this testimony as a chief sign of the inquiry into such men. Although he had given many directions before, he afterwards added this requirement to show that one must not be content with it alone for elections of this kind, but that this should be added to his general qualifications. It often happens that popular report is false; but when a careful examination has led the way no further danger need be apprehended from it. 136. Therefore he adds it after the other kinds of evidence. He did not say absolutely "He must have a good testimony," but he added the word "also," because he wished to show that before adducing the report of those who are without he himself must be examined with care. 137. Since then I myself knew your character better than your own parents, as you admitted yourself, I should deserve to be acquitted of all blame."

138. *Basil.* "This is the very reason why you would not have been acquitted, had any one wished to indict you. Or can it be that you forget how

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 7.

you have heard from my lips and learnt from my actions how ignoble is my spirit? Were you not ever mocking at my smallmindedness, because I so easily succumb to commonplace cares?"

139. *Chrysostom.* "I remember often hearing such words from you, I will not deny it; but if ever I mocked you, I did so in jest and not in earnest.

CHAPTER V

The pre-eminent need of Christian charity.

"HOWEVER, I will not dispute this now; but I beg you also to show me equal forbearance when I try to call to mind some of the good qualities which you possess. 140. For if you try to prove that my words are false, I shall not spare you, but show that you are speaking out of modesty and not with an eye to truth, and I shall use your own words and deeds as evidence of what I say. 141. In the first place I would ask you one question: Do you know the power of love? Christ passed over all the marvellous works which were to be performed by the Apostles, and said,¹ "By this shall men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another." And Paul said that love is the fulfilling² of the law, and that without³ it spiritual gifts profit nothing. 142. Now this choice virtue, the badge of the disciples of Christ, which is higher than spiritual gifts, was, I saw, nobly implanted in your spirit and laden with much fruit."

143. *Basil.* "I confess myself, that I give much

¹ John xiii. 35.

² Rom. xiii. 10.

³ 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

care to this matter and endeavour myself to keep this commandment ; but I have not performed the half of it, as you yourself might testify if you would cease to flatter and give truth its due."

CHAPTER VI

An anecdote to show Basil's charity.

144. *Chrysostom.* "I will turn then to the evidence, and will do what I threatened, and show that you wish to disparage yourself rather than to speak the truth. I will tell you a circumstance that happened recently, that no one may suggest that by relating ancient events I am trying to obscure the truth through a long lapse of time, while men's short memories do not allow them to criticize my compliments to you. 145. When one of our friends had been wrongfully accused on a charge of insolent and foolish behaviour and was in the utmost danger, then although no one made any charge against you, and he who was about to face the danger made no appeal to you, you threw yourself into the midst of the peril. 146. Such then was your action ; but that I may convict you from your words as well, when there were some who did not approve of your zeal while others were praising and admiring it, you said to those who found fault with you, "What am I to do? I know no other form of love than to be willing to sacrifice my own life when one of my friends who is in danger needs to be saved." 147. With other words, but with the same meaning, you cited the sayings of Christ to His disciples,

when He laid down the limits of perfect love. "Greater love," He said,¹ "hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." If then no greater love than this can be found, you have already reached the height of it, and both by your deeds and your words you have stood on love's summit. 148. That is the reason why I betrayed you, and why I laid my crafty plan. Do I convince you that I dragged you into this arena not from ill-will nor from a desire to expose you to danger, but because I knew that you would be useful?" 149. "Then do you think," he said, "that the power of love is sufficient to enable any one to direct his fellows?" 150. "Yes," I said, "it can contribute a great share towards this. But if you wish me to show examples of your wisdom I will proceed to this quality also and show that your prudence is even greater than your love." 151. At this he blushed crimson and said, "Let my character alone now; I did not at the outset ask you to give account of that. But if you have any reasonable answer to give to our outside critics, I should gladly hear it from you. Therefore leave this vain contention, and tell me what answer I shall make both to those who proposed us for promotion and those who are resentful on their behalf as though they had suffered insult?"

CHAPTER VII

Chrysostom by his flight saved the electors from blame.

152. "I MYSELF also," I said, "am hastening to this point. Now that I have unfolded my defence

¹ John xv. 13.

towards yourself, I shall turn gladly to this portion also of my defence. What then is their accusation and what are the charges they bring?"

Basil. "They say that they have endured insult at our hands and shameful treatment, because we would not receive the honour which they wished to bestow on us."

153. *Chrysostom.* "I say in the first place that we need not be afraid of insulting men, when by honouring them we offend God. And I say to those who are resentful, that it is not safe to be offended by these things, and it does them great harm. Those who are consecrated to God should, I think, look to Him alone, and be so pious in their disposition as not to consider any such treatment an insult, even if they should receive a thousand slights. 154. But it is clear that I did not dare to do this, even in thought. For if I had been induced by arrogance and vainglory, as you said certain often slanderously affirm, to side with my accusers, I should be one of the most iniquitous of men, in treating with contempt persons of note and eminence, and that though they were my benefactors. For if men deserve punishment for wronging those who have done them no wrong, how much vengeance do they deserve who requite with the opposite treatment those who wished spontaneously to do them honour? For no one could say that they were requiting me for any kindnesses, great or small, which I had shown them. 155. But if this never occurred to me, but I had another reason for avoiding so heavy a burden, why do they refuse to pardon me (if indeed they cannot approve of my action) and accuse me because I was merciful to my own soul? 156. I was so far from insulting the men in question, that

I would affirm that I have done them honour by refusing their offer. Do not be surprised if my statement sounds a paradox; I will soon give an explanation of it. 157. Had I accepted the dignity, those who take pleasure in backbiting, if not other men as well, would have been able to make many suspicious remarks about myself, who was ordained to the office, and them for appointing me; as for example, that they had an eye to wealth, or were admirers of an illustrious family, or that they had been flattered by me and so had promoted me; I do not know whether some might not have suspected that they had taken a bribe from me. 158. Or again:—"Christ called fishermen¹ and tentmakers and publicans to this office; but these scorn men who live by their daily toil, and if any man devotes himself to secular studies and lives in idleness, they choose him and regard him with awe. Why ever did they pass by those who have endured countless toils to meet the needs of the Church, and suddenly drag into this dignity one who had never tasted such toils, but who had spent all his youth in the vain pursuit of secular learning?" 159. Such complaints as these and more they might have uttered, had I accepted the office, but they cannot now. Every pretext for evil speech has been removed; they cannot accuse me of flattery, nor them of corrupt action, unless they wish to act like madmen. 160. How could one who used flattery and bribery to gain office have resigned the honour to others when he should have received it? It would be the same as if a man had taken infinite pains over his land that his corn-field might be laden with crops, and his presses overflowing with wine, and after his countless toils

¹ Matt. iv. 18-21; Luke v. 27.

and heavy expense of money, when the time came to gather the corn and pluck the grapes, then should leave it to others to reap the fruit. 161. Do you see that in the one case, however wide of the mark their words had been, still those who wished to slander them could have found a pretext to do so, on the plea that they had made their choice not in a straightforward way? But as it is I have not allowed them to lift up their voice, nor even so much as to open their lips. Yet this, and more than this, is what they would have said at first. 162. But after entering on my ministry I should not have been able to answer their attacks day by day, even if all my actions had been perfect; and still less in view of the fact that I should have been compelled through my inexperience and youth to make many mistakes. In the present case I have freed them from this charge, but in the other event I should have covered them with countless reproaches. 163. What would they not have said? "They have entrusted foolish boys with matters so sacred and important. They have injured the flock of Christ. The interests of Christianity have been set up to ridicule and laughter." But now all iniquity shall stop her mouth;¹ for if they were to say this on your account, you at any rate will soon show them by your actions that they must not measure understanding by age, nor judge an old man by his grey hairs, and that they must not preclude the young man altogether from so high an office but only the novice,² and there is a great difference between the two."

¹ Ps. cvii. 42.

² 1 Tim. iii. 6.

BOOK III

CHAPTER I

Chrysostom's withdrawal was not due to arrogance.

164. *Chrysostom.* "Such then is the reply I should give in answer to the charge of insulting those who would have promoted me, and to prove that, in refusing this dignity, I had no wish to bring disgrace on them. I will now endeavour, to the best of my power, to make it clear that I was not puffed up with arrogance. 165. Had the offer of a generalship or a kingdom been made to me, and had I then formed this decision, perhaps this idea might have occurred to some; or rather, they would not have judged me guilty of arrogance, but of folly. But when what is offered is the priestly office, which is as far superior to a kingdom as spirit is to flesh, will any one dare to charge me with contempt? 166. Is it not strange to charge with folly those who refuse small honours, but, when men do the same with regard to exceeding great honours, to exempt them from the accusation of folly and to substitute that of pride? It is as if you were to accuse a man of insanity and not of arrogance, who despised a herd of oxen, and refused to take charge of it, but were to say that he who refused the kingdom of the whole world and the generalship of all armies everywhere was guilty not of madness but of extreme pride. 167. However, this

is absolutely wrong, and those who make such statements disparage themselves, and not us. Merely to think that it is possible for human nature to despise that dignity, shows the opinion of the office held by those who express such an idea; for if they had not regarded it as commonplace and unimportant, such a suspicion would never have occurred to them. 168. Why has no one ever dared to suspect or suggest the idea about the office of angels, that the human soul is so proud as to refuse to enter their rank? We form high ideas of those powers, and this fact does not allow us to believe that any man could conceive anything greater than that dignity. 169. And so those who accuse us of this could more justly be accused of arrogance themselves; for they would never have suspected this in others if they had not despised the office as insignificant.

CHAPTER II

He was not actuated by ambition.

170. "IF they say that my action is caused by ambition, they will be convicted by their own words and be manifestly fighting against themselves. I do not know what arguments they could have sought instead of these, had they wished to acquit me of the charge of vainglory. For if this desire ever entered my mind, I should have been sure to accept the office and not refuse it. 171. Why? Because it would have brought me great fame. If any one, as young as myself, who had only just abandoned worldly pursuits, was suddenly

deemed by all so marvellous as to be preferred to those who have spent all their life in such toil, and to receive more votes than any of them, this would have caused all men to suspect that I had some great and wonderful qualities, and would have made me famous and distinguished. 172. But now the greater part of the Church, with few exceptions, do not know me even by name. So my very refusal of the honour is not known to all, but only to a few; and I do not think that all of these know the facts, but many of them probably concluded either that I was not chosen at all, or that I was rejected as unsuitable after being chosen, and not that I voluntarily refused the office."

CHAPTER III

His unworthiness of so high an office.

173. *Basil.* "But those who know the truth will admire your action."

Chrysostom. "And yet you said that they were accusing me of vainglory and pride. From whom is it possible to expect praise? From the many? But they do not know the facts. Well, then, from the few? But there your argument has veered quite round. Your only reason for visiting me now was that you might learn what answer you should give them. 174. Why am I now so exact on these matters? Wait a moment and you shall learn that, even if all men had known the truth, they need not have accused me of arrogance or vainglory; and you shall learn one fact more

that there is no slight danger in store for those who make this venture, if there are any such, (which I do not believe), as well as for those who suspect it of others.

CHAPTER IV

The majesty of the Christian Priest at the Eucharist.

175. "ALTHOUGH the priestly office is discharged upon earth, it ranks among celestial ordinances. And this is natural; for no man, no angel, no archangel, no other created power, but the Comforter Himself appointed this order, and persuaded us while still abiding in the flesh to represent the angelic ministry. Wherefore the Priest must be as pure as if he were standing in heaven itself, amid those powers. 176. Fearful and awful were the symbols which existed before the ministry of grace; as, for example,¹ the bells, the pomegranates, the stones on the breastplate, the stones on the ephod, the mitre, the diadem, the long robe, the golden crown, the Holy of Holies, the deep hush within; but should any one examine the things belonging to the ministry of grace, he will find that, however simple they be, they are yet fearful and awful, and the statement made about the law² is true in this matter also:—"That, which hath been made glorious, hath not been made glorious in this respect, for the sake of the glory that surpasseth." 177. When you see the Lord sacrificed and lying before you, and the Priest standing over the Sacrifice, and praying, and all who partake

¹ Cf. Exod. xxviii.

² 2 Cor. iii. 10.

reddened with that precious Blood, can you think that you are still among men, and standing on earth? Are you not straightway transported to heaven, and, having cast forth from your soul every fleshly thought, do you not, with naked soul and pure mind, look around upon the things in heaven? Oh the marvel! Oh the loving-kindness of God to men! He that sits above with the Father is, at the same time, held in our hands, and suffers Himself to be clasped and embraced by those who wish; and all then do this by the eyes. Do you think that this work deserves contempt, or that it is such that any one can be uplifted against it?¹ 178. Would you also see the magni-

¹ The doctrine of St. Chrysostom about the Holy Eucharist is extremely interesting. The following points should be noted:—

(a) The passage is highly rhetorical, and must not be read in the light of subsequent controversies.

(b) With regard to the sacrificial character of the act, St. Chrysostom undoubtedly regards the Eucharist as a sacrifice, but not in the later mediæval sense of a sacrifice distinct from that on Calvary. He held the doctrine of the Eucharist as a "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving," and as a "perpetual memorial" (offered to God) of Christ's death. This is shown clearly in his Homily xvii. c. 3, on the Epistle to the Hebrews, where he says, "What then? do we not make a daily offering? We do, by making a memorial of His death. . . . We offer now what was offered then. . . . 'Do this,' said He, 'for a memorial of Me.' We do not then offer a distinct sacrifice, but always the same; or rather, we celebrate a memorial of a sacrifice."

(c) With regard to Christ's objective presence, St. Chrysostom certainly held very definitely what would now be called "the doctrine of the Real Presence," but there is nothing in his glowing rhetoric to justify the scholastic theory adopted by the Roman Church under the title of Transubstantiation. (Cf. on this passage Dr. Nairn's edition, introd., pp. xviii-xxi. See also Bp. Gore's "Body of Christ," preface to 2nd edition, pp. vii-ix.

tude of this sacred office from another marvel? Picture, I pray, before your eyes Elijah and the vast crowd standing round him, and the sacrifice lying on the altar of stones. All the rest are still and hushed in deep silence; the prophet alone is praying. Then of a sudden the flame is flung down from heaven upon the offering.¹ This is a wonderful and awful picture. 179. Pass from that scene to what is now performed. You will see things not only wonderful to look upon, but transcending all terror. The priest stands bringing down not fire, but the Holy Spirit; and he offers prayer for a long space, not that a fire may be kindled above and destroy the offering, but that grace may fall on the sacrifice through that prayer and kindle the souls of all, and make them appear brighter than silver refined by fire. 180. Can any one, not utterly distraught and frenzied, despise this awful rite? Do you not know that no human soul could ever have borne the fire of that sacrifice, but they would all have been brought utterly to nought, had not the help of the grace of God been lavishly bestowed?

CHAPTER V

The power of absolution raises the Priest beyond kings.

181. "IF any one should consider how great is the marvel for a human being, still compounded of flesh and blood, to be able to approach that blessed and spotless nature, then he will see clearly how great is the honour which the grace of the Spirit has

¹ 1 Kings xviii.

bestowed upon the priests. It is through them that this work is performed, and other work no less than this in its influence alike upon our dignity and upon our salvation. 182. For dwellers upon earth, although abiding on earth, have been entrusted with the stewardship of things in heaven, and have received an authority which God has given neither to angels nor to archangels. It has never been said¹ to them, "What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven; and what things soever ye shall loose, shall be loosed." 183. Those who are lords upon the earth have indeed the power of binding, but over bodies only; but this binding touches the soul itself, and reaches through heaven, and all things that the priests shall do on earth, God ratifies above, and the Master confirms the decision of His servants. 184. Indeed He has given them nothing less than the whole authority of heaven. For He says,² "Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven; and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained." What authority³ could be greater than this? "The Father hath given all judgment to the Son;"⁴ but I see that the Son has placed it all in their hands; for they are as though they were already translated to heaven, and had transcended human nature, and were freed from our passions and so have been

¹ Matt. xviii. 18.

² John xx. 23.

³ Although St. Chrysostom clearly recognizes the power of the Priest to pronounce absolution, and to exercise discipline in dealing with individuals (cf. ss. 108-121), yet he is not so strong an advocate of regular auricular confession as others of the Fathers; cf. his remark (quoted by Dr. Nairn) in the treatise, "On the Incomprehensible Nature of God," 490 c. "I do not compel you to reveal your sins to men. Unfold your conscience in the presence of God, shew your wounds to Him and seek relief from Him."

⁴ John v. 22.

raised to this great office. 185. Further, if a king bestow this honour on one of his subjects, authorizing him to cast whom he will into prison, and again to release him, such an one is envied and looked up to by all. But the Priest has received from God an authority as much greater as heaven is more precious than earth, and souls than bodies; and yet there are men so little impressed with the honour bestowed upon the Priest, that they can conceive that some of those entrusted with it will even despise the gift. 186. Shame on such madness! For it is palpable madness to despise this great office, without which we can receive neither salvation nor the good things promised to us. 187. For if a man cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven except he be regenerate through water and the Spirit,¹ and he who eateth not the Lord's Flesh and drinketh not His Blood is excluded from everlasting life,² and all these things are brought to pass through no one else but only through those hallowed hands, I mean the priests', how shall any one, without their help, be able to escape the fire of hell, or to obtain the crowns which await us? 188. These are they who have been entrusted with the pangs of spiritual travail, and charged with the birth that is through baptism. Through them we put on Christ and are united with the Son of God, and become members of that blessed Person. 189. They should therefore be not only more feared than rulers and kings but more honourable even than parents. These beget us of blood and the will of flesh; but the others are the authors of our birth from God, of that happy regeneration, of the true freedom and of the adoption according to grace.

¹ John iii. 5.

² John vi. 53.

CHAPTER VI

The power of a Priest greater than that of a father.

190. "THE priests¹ of the Jews had authority to cure leprosy of the body, or rather not to cure it but only to examine those who have been cured. And you know how the office of the priest was at that time an object of eager contention. But our Priests have received absolute authority not over leprosy of the body but over uncleanness of the soul, and not to examine it when cured but to cure it. 191. So that they who make light of these must be far more accursed than Dathan² and his company, and deserving of greater punishment. Although they claimed an office which did not belong to them, still they held it in wonderful esteem, and they showed this by coveting it with great eagerness. But these men have dared a deed contrary to, yet far more insolent than, theirs, though the office has since been enhanced in power and dignity. 192. As touching the right estimate of the office, there is no difference between coveting an honour which does not belong to you and making light of it. The difference between contempt and admiration marks the excess of one sin over the other. 193. What soul then is so wretched as to despise such mighty blessings? None, I should say, unless it were subject to a demoniacal impulse. 194. Howbeit, I will proceed again to the topic from which I digressed. God has given a greater power to Priests than to natural parents, not only in administering chastisement, but in deeds of mercy. And the difference between the present and the

¹ Lev. xiii.

² Numb. xvi.

future life shows the difference between the two. 195. Parents bring us into the present life, but these into the life to come. Parents cannot avert bodily death nor drive away the visitation of disease ; but these have often saved the sick soul that is about to die, in some cases by making the punishment greater, in the case of others by not suffering them to fall, and that not only through instructing and warning them, but through helping them by prayers.

196. Not only when they make us regenerate, but after this, they have authority to remit our sins. "Is any among you sick ?¹ Let him call for the elders of the church ; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord ; and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him." 197.

Again, natural parents cannot help their sons if they offend any that are mighty and powerful ; but priests have often appeased the anger, not only of rulers or of kings, but even of God. 198. Is there any who still will dare to charge me with arrogance ? I think that my reasoning has brought such religious awe to the souls of my hearers, that they are no longer accusing those who avoid this honour of arrogance and daring, but those who seek and covet it.

199. If it be true that, when those entrusted with the government of cities are unwise and over-hasty, they overturn the cities and ruin themselves as well, how much power do you think he needs both in himself and from above to avoid error, who has received the task of adorning the Bride of Christ ?

¹ James v. 14.

CHAPTER VII

St. Paul's view of the Priestly office.

200. "NO one loved Christ more than Paul ; no one showed greater zeal than he, no one was thought worthy of higher grace. Still, in spite of all these advantages, he fears and trembles on behalf of this government and those who are his subjects. "I fear," he said,¹ "lest as the serpent beguiled Eve, so your thoughts should be corrupted from the simplicity which is towards Christ," and again² "I was with you in fear and much trembling." 201. And yet he was a man who was caught up into the third heaven³ and shared in the unspeakable⁴ things of God, and endured deaths⁵ every day after he came to believe ; he was a man who did not wish to use even the authority given him by Christ,⁶ lest any of those who believed should be made to stumble. 202. If then he who went beyond the commands of God, and nowhere sought his own advantage⁷ but that of those whom he governed, was so filled with fear when he looked on the greatness of his office, what shall we suffer who often seek our own, who not only fail to go beyond the commands of Christ but oftener fall short of them? "Who is weak," he says,⁸ "and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble and I burn not?" 203. Such an one should the Priest be ; or rather it is not enough to be such an one ; for these qualities are little or nothing compared with what I am about to say.

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 3.³ 2 Cor. xii. 2.⁶ 1 Cor. xv. 31.⁷ 1 Cor. x. 33.² 1 Cor. ii. 3.⁴ 2 Cor. xii. 4.⁶ 1 Cor. ix. 14, 15.⁸ 2 Cor. xi. 29.

204. What is this? "I could wish," he says,¹ "that I were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh." If any man can utter these words, if there be any who has a soul reaching the greatness of this prayer, he might be justly accused for refusing office. 205. But if any man should fall as far short of this virtue as I do, he deserves to be hated, not when he refuses but when he accepts. 206. If there were need to choose one for the post of general, and if those appointed to bestow the honour dragged forward a coppersmith or a cobbler or any other such mechanic, and entrusted the army to him, I should not have praised that wretched fellow for not refusing it and omitting to take every precaution to avoid thrusting himself into inevitable ruin. 207. If it suffices simply to be called pastor and to administer the work haphazard, and there is no danger, then let him who will charge me with vain-glory. But if one who undertakes this care needs much wisdom and, before wisdom, much grace of God, and uprightness of character, and purity of life, and superhuman virtue, do not refuse to pardon me because I was unwilling to perish in vain and without reason. 208. If any one were to bring a merchant-vessel of large tonnage, filled with rowers, and weighed down with a costly freight, and were to seat me at the rudder and command me to cross the Aegean or Etruscan Sea, I should have recoiled at his first words. If any one had asked me my reason, I should have replied "lest I should sink the ship."

¹ Rom. ix. 3.

CHAPTER VIII

The Priest compared to a navigator.

209. "THEN when the loss concerns money and the danger is bodily death, no one will accuse me for using much forethought. But where the shipwrecked are destined to be plunged not into this sea, but into the abyss of fire, and the death which awaits them is not that which separates the soul from the body, but that which sends both the one and the other into eternal punishment, then will you be angry and hostile towards me for not throwing myself headlong into such unutterable woe? Do not, I beg and pray you. 210. I know how weak and puny is my own soul; I know the magnitude of that ministry and the great difficulty of the work. 211. More billows vex the soul of the Priest than the gales which trouble the sea.

CHAPTER IX

The dangerous rocks, and the savage beasts upon them.

"FIRST of all there is that most terrible rock of vainglory, more dangerous than the Sirens' rock of whose marvels the poets¹ sing. 212. For many were able to pass that rock and escape unscathed; but to me this rock is so dangerous, that even now, when no necessity drives me into that abyss, I cannot keep clear of the peril. If any one were to commit this charge to me, he would practically

¹ Homer, *Od.* xii. 161.

bind my hands behind my back and deliver me as a victim to the wild beasts that inhabit that rock, for them to rend me every day. 213. What wild beasts are these? Anger, gloom, envy, strife, slanders, accusations, falsehood, hypocrisy, intrigue, imprecations against those who have done no harm, delight at unseemly behaviour of fellow-priests, sorrow at their successes, desire for praise, yearning for honour (which more than anything else hurls the human soul to destruction), teaching intended to please, paying sordid court, ignoble flattery, contempt for the poor, fawning on the rich, bestowing unreasonable honours and harmful favours which are dangerous alike to those who give and who receive them, servile fear befitting only the meanest of slaves, loss of freedom of speech, a great affectation of humility, the destruction of truth, the suppression of convictions and reproof, or rather an excessive exercise of it against the humble, while no one dares so much as to open his lips against those who wield power. 214. These are the wild beasts, and there are worse than these bred upon that rock, and those who are once seized by them are perforce dragged into such slavery that to please even women they often do many things which it is not fitting to relate. 215. The divine law excluded women from this ministry, but they struggle violently to thrust themselves in; and since of themselves they can do nothing, they perform all their actions through others; and they have acquired such power¹ that they choose and expel priests at their will. 216. The world is turned upside down and the truth

NB for Self-
Examination

Prohibited
Women

¹ So Chrysostom found to his cost later, when deposed from the See of Constantinople by the influence of the Empress Eudoxia.

of the proverb can be tested that "the ruled govern their rulers," and I only wish that the offenders were men, but they are those who are not even suffered to teach. To teach, do I say? The blessed Paul did not even allow them to speak in church.¹ But I heard some one say the Priests had given them such freedom of speech that they even rebuke the prelates of the churches, and censure them with greater bitterness than masters censuring their own servants. 217. And let no one think that I am bringing these charges against all. There are, I know, many who have escaped these entanglements, and they are more numerous than those who have been caught in them.

CHAPTER X

The office must not be blamed for its unworthy members.

218. "NOR do I venture to blame the priestly office for these evils. God forbid that I should be so mad. Wise men do not blame the steel for murder, nor wine for drunkenness, nor strength for outrage, nor courage for reckless daring, but they say that those who make a wrongful use of the gifts of God are to blame, and punish them accordingly." 219. For the priestly office might justly accuse us of not handling it aright; it is not to blame itself for the evils I have described; on the contrary we for our part have defiled it with so many stains by entrusting it to ordinary men; and they eagerly receive what is offered to them,

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 34.

without first acquiring knowledge of their own souls, or considering the gravity of the work; and when they come to the exercise of it their eyes are blinded with inexperience, and they infect the people with whom they have been entrusted with countless ills. 220. This fate then is what had nearly befallen myself, had not God speedily rescued me from these dangers, in His mercy to His Church and my soul. 221. Tell me, what is the source from which you suppose all the disorder arises in the Churches? I think the only source is the careless and random way in which the prelates are chosen. 222. For the head should be the strongest member, in order that it may be able to control the evil exhalations which proceed from the rest of the body below, and regulate them properly; but when it happens to be weak in itself, it is unable to repel those attacks that engender disease and is rendered weaker than it is by nature, and destroys the rest of the body along with itself. 223. To prevent this happening in the present case, God has placed me in the position of the feet, a position which I received at the beginning.

224. There are many other qualities, Basil, in addition to those I have enumerated, which a Priest ought to have and which I lack, and before all these is this:—his soul should be clear on every side from the ambition for office. 225. For if he has a natural inclination for this dignity, when he attains it he kindles the flame more strongly, and being seized violently, he undergoes countless evils, in order to secure his hold upon it, to the extent of using flattery or submitting to ignoble and unseemly treatment, or expending large sums of money. 226. I pass over for the present the

fact that some men have filled churches with streams of blood¹ and overturned cities in contending for this dignity, lest some should think my words incredible. 227. The right course, I think, is to be so careful about the task as to avoid so grave a responsibility at the outset. But when once you are placed in office, do not wait for the judgment of others if you should happen to have been guilty of a sin that calls for deposition, but anticipate this and resign your office². In this way there is a likelihood of receiving God's mercy; but if you cling to office beyond your deserts, you deprive yourself of all pardon, and kindle God's anger the more by adding a second and more serious offence. However, no one will always endure the strain; for it is a terrible thing indeed to covet this honour. 228. And in saying this I am not at variance with the blessed Paul, but entirely in concord with what he says. What are his words? "If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."³ But I said it was terrible to desire not the work, but the power and authority.

¹ Chrysostom no doubt had in his mind the contest of 367 A.D. for the See of Rome between Damasus and Ursicinus. As many as 137 persons are said to have been slain on one day in a single church.

² So Gregory of Nazianzus voluntarily resigned the Bishopric of Constantinople in 381.

³ 1 Tim. iii. 1.

CHAPTER XI

The Bishop must not fear deposition, and must avoid ambition.

229. "I THINK it right to repel this longing with all possible earnestness, and not for a moment to suffer our soul to be overcome by it, to the end that we may have freedom to do what we will. 230. For he who does not desire to gain fame in this position of authority does not fear the loss of it. And if he has not this fear, he can act with the freedom which befits Christian men. 231. Whereas they who fear and dread deposition from that office endure bitter slavery which overflows with all manner of evil, and are often compelled to offend against both man and God. 232. Now the soul ought not to be in this condition, but, as in warfare we see the noble-spirited fight eagerly and fall bravely, so also they who have attained this dignity should be ready either to be consecrated to the office or to be relieved of it, as befits Christian men, knowing that such deposition brings no less a crown than the office itself. 233. For when any one suffers such a fate because he is determined not to submit to something which is unbecoming or unworthy of his position, he procures punishment for those who wrongfully depose him, and a greater reward for himself. "Blessed are ye," says our Lord,¹ "when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven." 234. And this is so when any one is expelled by men of his own

¹ Matt. v. 11, 12.

order, either through envy, or to please others, or through enmity, or from any other wrong motive. 235. Now when it falls to the lot of any one to suffer this treatment at the hands of his enemies, I do not think that I need to argue in order to prove the greatness of the profit which they confer on him by their wickedness. 236. We must therefore be vigilant on every side and make a careful search that no spark of that desire be secretly smouldering anywhere. 237. It is much to be wished also that they who at first were free from this affection should be able to avoid it when they have entered the office. But if any one cherishes in himself this terrible and savage monster before he attains the office, it is impossible to say into what a furnace he will fling himself after he has attained it. 238. For my own part, I possess this desire in a great degree (do not think that I would ever lie to you out of self-depreciation), and this fact, combined with all the other reasons, alarmed me greatly, and impelled me to take to flight. 239. Just as lovers of a human person endure a severe torment of their passion so long as they are allowed to be near the objects of their love, but throw off their madness when they are removed as far as possible from those whom they desire; so also they who covet this office find the evil intolerable while they are near it; but they extinguish the desire along with the expectation as soon as they abandon hope. 240. This then is no slight motive; and if it had been the only motive, it would have sufficed to keep me from the dignity.

is he to resist
with profit
their impending
punishment or is
he to resist in
order to do God's
work?

CHAPTER XII

The Bishop should have a grasp of detail.

241. "BUT, as it is, there is another motive, no less than the former. What is this? A priest must be sober and clear-sighted and possess a thousand eyes in every direction, for he lives, not for himself alone, but for a great multitude. 242. But I am sluggish and remiss, and scarcely sufficient for my own salvation, as even you would admit, who are most eager to hide all my faults by reason of your love to me. 243. Do not now speak to me of fasting and vigils, and sleeping on the ground, and other bodily discipline. You know how far I come short in all this. But even if these exercises had been carefully regulated by me, they would have been unable with my present sluggishness to benefit me at all with a view to this post of authority. 244. Such practices might be of great benefit to a man shut up in a cell and concerned only about his own soul. But when a man is divided among so great a multitude, and inherits all the private cares of those who are under his rule, what appreciable help can he give towards their improvement unless he be endowed with a robust and vigorous soul?"

CHAPTER XIII

Self-mortification is less important than self-repression.

245. "MARVEL not if, in connection with such endurance, I require another test of bravery of the

soul. 246. We see that indifference to food and drink and a soft couch, is no hard matter to many, and especially to such as are rudely constituted and have been thus trained from their early days, and to many others also ; for bodily discipline and custom mitigate the severity of these exercises. But insult and abuse and vulgar language, and taunts from inferiors, whether idly or justly uttered, and complaints vainly and rashly made by the rulers and the ruled, few can endure, indeed only one or two here and there. 247. You may see those who are strong in the former exercises so bewildered by these as to be more furious than savage wild beasts. 248. We must keep such men as these outside the precincts of the priesthood. For if a prelate should neither stubbornly refuse food, nor go barefooted, he would do no injury to the wellbeing of the Church ; but a furious temper causes great disaster both to its possessor and to his neighbours. 249. There is no threat from God against those who fail to do the things mentioned ; but they who are angry without a cause¹ are threatened with hell and hell fire. 250. As then the lover of vainglory adds fresh fuel to the fire when he assumes the government of numbers, so he who cannot control his temper while alone or in the company of friends, but is easily carried away by it, should he be entrusted with the rule of an entire congregation, is like a wild beast goaded by thousands on every side and cannot abide in peace himself, while he spreads innumerable evils among the people committed to his charge.

¹ Matt. v. 22.

CHAPTER XIV

The danger of a passionate temper.

251. "NOTHING bedims the purity of the mind and clearness of vision so much as undisciplined, and impetuous anger. 252. "This," says a writer,¹ x
 "destroys even the prudent." For the soul's eye is darkened, as in a battle by night, and cannot distinguish friends from enemies, nor the dishonourable from the honourable. It treats all men alike, even though some evil consequence ensues, bearing it all lightly in order to gratify the soul's pleasure. 253. For the fire of anger is a kind of pleasure, and it tyrannizes over the soul more grievously than pleasure, and thoroughly unsettles all its healthy condition. It easily excites men to arrogance, ill-timed enmities and unreasonable hatred, and is for ever causing them to commit vain and foolish offences, and engenders many other such violent words and deeds, and the soul is swept along with the loud rush of passion and has no base on which to rest her own weight and resist such violence."

254. *Basil.* "I will no longer suffer your mock modesty to proceed further. Who does not know how far you are removed from this disease?"

255. *Chrysostom.* "Well then, my friend, do you wish to bring me near the pyre and rouse the sleeping monster? Do you not know that my freedom from this fault is due not to my innate goodness, but to my love of retirement? It is much to be desired that one in this condition should remain by himself, or in company with one or two friends, for so he will be able to escape from the fire arising from that passion, but not if he falls

¹ Prov. xv. 1.

into the abyss of all these cares. 256. For then he draws, not himself alone, but many others with him, to the brink of ruin, and makes men more careless in the pursuit of righteousness. For the mass of people under government are wont, for the most part, to regard the character of their rulers as a kind of model, and to fashion themselves by them. How then can you check this fury if swollen yourself with passion? Who among the multitude would forthwith desire to learn self-control when he sees his ruler irritable? 257. It is quite impossible for the failings of the priests to be concealed; on the contrary, even their smallest weaknesses are soon detected. 258. As long as an athlete remains at home and engages in contest with no one, however weak he be, he can keep his weakness secret; but when he strips himself for the trial of strength he is soon detected. So with other men; those who lead a retired and quiet life have their solitude as a cloak for their private failings; but when they are brought into public life they are compelled to strip themselves of their retirement, as of a garment, and to display their souls naked for all eyes to gaze upon, through their visible movements. 259. As, then, their right deeds benefit many, and challenge them to equal zeal, so their faults make other men idle in the quest of virtue, and render them indolent in their pursuit of what is excellent. Wherefore the beauty of his soul must shine bright on every side, to the end that it may be able both to gladden and to enlighten the souls of those who see him. 260. The sins of ordinary men are committed, as it were, in the darkness, and ruin only those who do the deeds. But when a man becomes famous, and is known to many, his misdeeds inflict a

common injury on all, by making the remiss yet more supine in their efforts for what is good, and by goading those who wish to improve themselves to despair. 261. Apart from this, the offences of the insignificant, even when published abroad, inflict no serious injury; but those who are seated upon the heights of this honour can in the first place be seen by every eye; then, if they make a mistake in the most trifling matter, their small error is magnified in the eyes of the rest; for all men measure the sin, not by the standard of the deed, but by the position of him who committed the deed. 262. Thus the priest must be girt around with armour of steel, by unremitting zeal and constant sobriety of life, and he must ever be on the alert lest any one finding a naked and unguarded spot should strike him a deadly blow; for all men stand round him ready to wound him and cast him down, and these are not only his foes and enemies, but many of those who pretend to love him. 263. We must therefore choose souls as hardy as the grace of God once made the bodies of those saints¹ in the Babylonian furnace. It is not brushwood, pitch and tow, that are the fuel of this fire, but something far worse than that. It is no material fire to which they are exposed, but the all-devouring flame of envy envelopes them, which rises up on every side and covers them more completely, and searches their life more thoroughly than the fire did the bodies of those young men. When then it finds the slightest trace of stubble, at once it fastens upon it and burns up that weak part, while all the rest of the edifice, even if it is brighter than the sun's rays, is scorched and utterly blackened by the smoke. 264. For, so long as the

¹ Viz. Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. Dan. iii. 27.

life of the priest is well regulated at every point, their intrigues cannot hurt him; but if he be guilty of a small oversight, as is likely for a human being who is crossing the devious ocean of this life, none of the rest of his good deeds are of any avail to enable him to escape the words of evil-speakers, but that small offence casts a shadow over all the rest of his life; and all men wish to judge the priest not as one clothed in flesh, nor as one possessing a human nature, but as an angel, and as one freed from future frailty. 265. As all men fear and flatter a tyrant so long as his power lasts, because they cannot depose him, but when they see his power going, those who were just now his friends throw aside their hypocritical esteem and are suddenly converted into foes and enemies, and discover all his weaknesses, and assail and dethrone him; so it is always with a Bishop. Those who but now flattered and courted him when his authority was unimpaired, when once they find a slight handle, make vigorous preparations to depose him, not merely as a tyrant, but as something far worse than that. 266. Again, as a tyrant fears his bodyguard, a Bishop dreads above all his neighbours and his fellow-ministers; for no others covet his office so greatly, or know his character so intimately; for, should any accident be like to befall him, they, being near him, perceive it before the others. And in any slanderous statements which they make they can easily win belief, and by exaggerating trifles take their victim captive (for the well-known saying¹ of the Apostle has been inverted:—"And if one member suffereth, all the members rejoice; and if one member is honoured, all the members suffer"), unless there

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 26.

be one who by great discretion can face all dangers. 267. Do you then send me forth to so terrible a war? Did you think that my spirit would suffice for so subtle and diverse a contest? From what, or on whose information, did you form this belief? If it was God who certified it, show me the oracle,¹ and I obey. But if you cannot do so, and form your decision from popular conjecture, then suffer yourself no longer to be deceived; for on the matter of my own powers you should believe me in preference to others, since "no man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man which is in him."² 268. I think I have persuaded you now by these remarks of mine, if I did not before, that I should have made both myself and those who chose me ridiculous by accepting this office, and that it would have entailed great loss if I had returned again to the path of life in which I now am. 269. For it is not merely envy, but desire for office, a power far more potent than envy, that is wont to arm the majority of men against one who possesses it. 270. And, as covetous sons view with displeasure their father's protracted life, so when certain of these see the priestly office held by any one for a prolonged period, they are anxious to depose him, as it would be sacrilege to make away with him, since all are anxious to succeed him, and each man expects that the office will fall to himself.

yet Ch. has
decided for
himself

CHAPTER XV

The care needful in making promotions.

271. "DO you wish me to show you still another form that this contest assumes, and one fraught with

¹ *i. e.* the text or passage.

² I Cor. ii. 11.

Ch. is a
pious
self-
denying
clergyman
and
a
good
man

countless dangers? Come then, peep into the public festivals, at which, according to custom, ecclesiastical vacancies are generally filled¹ You will see the Bishop assailed with accusations as numerous as the people whom he rules. 272. All those who have the right of bestowing the honour are then divided into many sections, and the synod of elders can be seen agreeing neither among themselves nor with the one who has received the episcopal office, but every man is opposed to all others, while one is in favour of this candidate and another in favour of that. 273. The reason is that they do not all regard purity of character as the one qualification at which they ought to look, but there are other considerations which favour appointment to the office, for example:—"Let this man be chosen," says one, "because he belongs to a distinguished family." "Let that candidate be selected, because he possesses great riches and would not need to be sustained out of the Church's revenues." "Let this man be chosen, because he is a convert from the other side." And one is anxious to single out a friend for honour, another a kinsman, another his flatterer; but none will look for the suitable

¹ It is not easy to say in whose hands ecclesiastical preferment was vested at this time. Chrysostom refers to the "public festivals" in which the Bishop presided over a "synod of elders." Certainly the people also, whether legally or informally, had a considerable voice in the appointment of Bishops; see Socrates (*Ecc. Hist.*, 6, 2), where it is stated that Chrysostom was selected to be Patriarch of Constantinople "by the united vote of all, clergy and laity." Stephens quotes the rule of Pope Leo (A.D. 440-461) that at the election of a Bishop "he is to be preferred who is demanded by the unanimous consent of clergy and people," and Justinian's law restricting the right of voting at such an election to clergy and men of highest rank.

man, or make character any test. 274. For my part I am so far from regarding these qualifications as worth consideration, that if a man showed that he possessed the important quality of piety to a great degree I should not at once venture to select him, unless he combined with this considerable intellectual power. 275. For I know many who have kept themselves under discipline all their life and have exhausted their bodies with fasting, who, so long as they were permitted to live alone and attend to their own needs, were acceptable to God, and every day made great progress in this kind of wisdom. Yet when they emerged from their retirement, and were compelled to rectify the ignorance of others, some did not for a moment suffice for so great a responsibility, while others, who were compelled to remain at their post, abandoned their former careful practices and seriously injured their own souls without benefiting those of others. 276. Again we will not, out of simple respect for his age, elevate a man to the higher office who has spent all his life in the lower orders of the ministry and has reached extreme old age. What if, after that life of his, he should still be unsuited to the work? 277. And I do not say this out of disrespect for grey hairs, nor do I lay down a rule that we should exclude from this office those who come from the monastic circle; for it has happened that many from that body have shed lustre upon this office. But I am anxious to show that, if neither piety by itself nor old age are sufficient to prove a man worthy of the office of Bishop, the reasons mentioned above are hardly likely to do so.

278. Others add reasons which are stranger still. Some are singled out for election in order that they may not join the enemy's ranks; others

because of their bad character, to prevent them doing great harm if they are overlooked. 279. Could any worse violation of right take place than when men of bad character, who are filled with innumerable faults, are courted for the very reasons for which they should be punished, and are elevated to the rank of Bishop for reasons for which they should be forbidden to cross the threshold of the Church? 280. Need we go any further to seek the cause of God's anger, when we allow such sacred and fearful things to be profaned by wicked or worthless men? When some men are entrusted with things unsuited to them and others with things quite beyond their powers, they make the Church as shifting and unstable as the Euripus.⁽¹⁾ 281. I used to deride secular rulers because they distribute honours, not on grounds of excellence of character, but of wealth, and of length of years, and of worldly rank. But when I heard that this unreasonable attitude had invaded our domain, I no longer regarded their action as so serious. 282. For what wonder is it if worldly people, who love popular praise, and whose chief motive is desire for money, make this mistake, when those whose aim is to be rid of all these desires act no better; for although they are contending for heavenly rewards, they form their plans as though they had to decide merely about acres of land, or something else of the same kind, and take ordinary men and set them over matters of such value that for their sake the only-begotten Son of God disdained not to empty Himself of His own glory²

¹ The Euripus,—the strait separating Euboea from the mainland of Greece—was famous for its numerous tides, and is often used as a type of instability.

² Phil. ii. 7.

and to be made man and to receive the form of a servant, and to be spitted upon, and to be buffeted, and to die the death of shame? 283. And they do not stop at this, but add other actions which are stranger still. They do not merely choose the unworthy, but they reject the suitable. As though it were necessary to assail the safety of the Church from both positions, or as though the former action were not sufficient to kindle the wrath of God, they have added another deed not less pernicious. I think it as shameful to keep out the good as to bring in the bad; and this is done to the end that the flock of Christ may be unable to find comfort on any side and to draw its breath freely. 284. Does not this action deserve innumerable thunderbolts? Does it not deserve a hotter hell than that with which we are threatened? But yet all these ills are borne patiently by Him who desires not the death of a sinner,¹ so much as that he should be converted and live. How can we sufficiently admire His love? How can we marvel at His mercy? They who are Christ's destroy the things of Christ more than His enemies and adversaries. But the good Lord still shows His kindness and calls us to repentance. 285. Glory be to Thee, O Lord! Glory to Thee! How unfathomable is Thy love! How great the riches of Thy forbearance! They who through Thy Name have come to be honourable and respected instead of poor and dishonoured, use that honour against Him who gave it, and dare to do deeds which none should dare, and insolently intrude into holy things, rejecting and excluding the earnest, to the end that wicked men may have perfect freedom and utmost security in subverting whatso-

¹ Ezek. xviii. 23, xxxiii. 11.

ever they desire. 286. And if you wish to learn the causes of this scandal, you will find them like unto those mentioned before. They have one root, and (if I may say so) one mother; namely, envy; and they are of various kinds. 287. "Let this man be excluded," says one, "because he is young; and that man because he has not learnt to flatter, a third because he has offended so and so; a fourth that such and such a man may not be hurt by seeing that one whom he recommended rejected and this man selected; a fifth because he is good and just; a sixth because sinners fear him; and a seventh for some other such reason; for indeed they have no lack of as many pretexts as they may desire. Nay the very number of existing bishops is brought up against them,¹ when they have no better pretext, or they argue that it is inadvisable to promote a man suddenly into this honour, but gradually and by degrees. And they can find as many other causes as they wish. 288. But I am anxious to ask you a question at this point:—what ought a bishop to do when he has to contend against so many winds? How can he resist such mighty waves? How can he repel all these attacks? 289. If he faces the problem in a straightforward manner he converts all men into opponents and adversaries of himself and those whom he chooses; and all their actions are guided by hostility to him; they stir up feuds daily and heap endless ridicule on those whom he chooses, until they either secure the rejection of these or introduce candidates of their own. It is the same as if a captain had pirates sailing with him on his ship, continually plotting every hour against

¹ Others translate:—"The very extent of his wealth is brought up against a man."

himself, the sailors and the crew. 290. If he prefers gaining favour with him to securing his own safety, by choosing unsuitable men, he will incur God's enmity in place of theirs; and what could be more terrible than this? And his relations with them will involve greater difficulties than before, since all will be co-operating and therefore greater in strength. As, when savage winds meet from contrary quarters, the sea which before was quiet becomes suddenly mad and furious, and destroys those who sail on it; so the calm of the Church, on admitting evil men, is covered with surf and strewn with wrecks.

CHAPTER XVI

The charge of widows and management of finance.

291. "CONSIDER then the character needful for him who is to oppose so terrible a tempest, and to direct aright such obstacles to the common welfare. 292. He must be dignified yet modest, awe-inspiring yet kindly, masterful yet accessible, impartial yet courteous, humble yet not servile, vehement yet gentle, in order that he may be able easily to resist all these dangers and to promote the suitable man with great firmness, even though all men gainsay him, and reject the unsuitable with the same firmness, even though all favour him; he must consider one end only, the edification of the Church, and must be actuated neither by hostility nor favour. 293. Well, then, do you think that I acted unreasonably when I refused to administer this work? However I have not yet enumerated all my reasons to you, but have still more to say. Do not then grow impatient while a friend and intimate

acquaintance endeavours to clear himself of your accusations. For indeed my words will not only be of service to defend me against your charges, but will, it may be, contribute no small profit to yourself for the administration of the work. 294. For it is needful for him who is about to enter this path of life, first to examine all things well, and so to approach the ministry. Why so? Because if he studies the dangers beforehand he will have this advantage, if none other, that they will not be strange to him when they befall. 295. Do you wish us then first to approach the superintendence of the widows,¹ or the charge of the virgins, or the difficulties of the judicial work? For in each of these cases there is a different kind of anxiety, while the dangers are greater than the anxiety. 296. And first, to begin with that which appears to be easier than the rest, responsibility for the widows seems to involve care of a *financial* nature only to those in charge of them. But this is not so; on the contrary, here too there is need for careful inquiry when it is needful to enrol them. 297. To enter their names carelessly and without examination is productive of untold ills. They have often destroyed houses, spoiled marriages, and been detected in theft and immoral trade and other such unseemly conduct. 298. That such as these should be kept at the Church's expense incurs anger from God and extreme condemnation from

¹ Compare St. Paul's remark (1 Tim. v. 9 *sqq.*) and also Acts vi. 2, from which passages it is evident that the care of widows came to be recognized as a duty of the Church in very early times. Second marriages were discouraged (1 Tim. v. 11), and these large communities of widows became very difficult to control, and were often attended by grave abuses, as is more than hinted at in s. 297.

men, and causes hesitation among those who wish to do good. For who would ever choose to spend the money which he was commanded to devote to Christ on those who bring Christ's name into dishonour? 299. Therefore it is needful to make a long and careful inquiry, to the end that neither those whom we have described, nor yet those who are able to provide for their own needs, may be able to plunder the table of the poor. 300. After this examination there is another great anxiety, that the means for their nourishment may pour in abundantly in a continuous and unfailing stream. For involuntary poverty is an insatiable ill, querulous and unthankful. Great wisdom and much energy is required to seal lips and take away all cause of complaint. 301. Most men, when they see any one superior to avarice, at once point to him as suitable for this administration. But I do not think that this quality is sufficient by itself. It is needed, I admit, beyond all others. Without it a man will be a spoiler rather than a guardian, and a wolf instead of a shepherd. But in addition to this you must demand the possession of another quality. This is forbearance, the cause of all human blessings, which guides and escorts the soul into a fair haven. 302. Widows, as a class, owing partly to their poverty, partly to their age, and partly to their sex, use an unbridled freedom of speech (for so it is better to describe it) and exclaim out of season, and find unnecessary fault, and lament things which they need not have lamented, and murmur about matters for which they should have been grateful. He who has them in charge must bear all things generously, and suffer his anger to be kindled neither by their unseasonable troublings nor by their unreasonable complainings.

303. For this class of persons deserves to be pitied, not reproached, for their misfortunes; and it would be the utmost cruelty to exult over their misfortunes and to add to the pain of poverty the pain of insult. 304. Therefore one of the wisest men, regarding human avarice and disdain, observed the terrible characteristic of poverty, that it debases the most generous soul and often causes it to lose all shame on such matters. Therefore lest he who is entreated by them should be angered, and lest he who ought to aid them should become their enemy, provoked by their continuous entreaties, he bids us be gentle and accessible to the needy, saying¹ "Let it not grieve thee to bow down thine ear to the poor, and give him a peaceful answer with meekness." And putting aside him that exasperates—for what can one say to the fallen?—he converses with him that can bear another's infirmity, exhorting him to raise him up by kindness of looks and gentleness of words, before the gift is bestowed. 305. Now if one should not indeed take the goods of the widows, but should cover them with reproaches, and insult them and be angered against them, so far is he from relieving the sadness of their poverty by his gift that he makes the evil greater by his abuse. 306. For though they are compelled by the force of hunger to be very unabashed, they are nevertheless grieved by this compulsion. Now since they are forced to beg by the fear of hunger, and are forced to lose their sense of shame by their begging, and again are insulted because of this loss, the power of sadness which assails their soul is manifold and brings a great shadow upon them. 307. He who has care of them should be so longsuffering that he will not only not increase

¹ Ecclus. iv. 8.

their sorrow by his indignation but rather allay it by his consolation. For as a rich man, when he suffers an insult, does not realize the benefit of his wealth, because he is wounded by the insult, so he who hears a kindly word and receives a gift and consolation as well, rejoices and is glad, and his gift is thereby doubled. 308. I say not this of myself, but after him whose exhortation we just heard:—"My son," he says,¹ "blemish not thy good deeds, neither use uncomfortable words when thou givest anything. Shall not dew assuage heat? So is a word better than a gift. Lo, a word is better than a gift; and both are with a gracious man." 309. The guardian of these must not only be just and longsuffering but also a capable manager. For if this last quality be wanting, the money of the poor again suffers the same loss. 310. Before now it has happened that one entrusted with this office, who has collected much money, has neither wasted it himself nor spent it on the needy, with the exception of a few, but has hidden and hoarded most of it until a time of danger arose which delivered it into the hands of enemies. 311. Much foresight therefore is needed that the property of the Church may not be either defective or excessive. It is better to divide all that is collected among the needy without delay, and to heap up the treasures of the Church in the shade of the good-will of the laity. 312. But how much expense and how much care and thought on the part of those in charge is required for the entertaining of strangers and the cure of the sick! For this expenditure is never less than that I have mentioned, but often it must be even greater. And he who is placed in charge must be a capable manager

¹ Ecclus. xviii. 15-17.

and show great tact and wisdom, so as to arrange that the wealthy shall emulate one another and cheerfully give of their substance, so that, while providing for the refreshment of the sick, he may not wound the feelings of the contributors. 313. Here, too, he must show unusually great forbearance and energy. Sick men are apt to be hard to please and given to languor. Unless great carefulness and vigilance be used at every point, even a slight oversight is sufficient to cause the patient great evil.

CHAPTER XVII

The charge of virgins.

314. "IN the matter of the care of virgins¹ the anxiety is all the greater in proportion as the treasure is more valuable, and this group is more princely than the others. Before now multitudes have invaded the ranks of these holy women, full of innumerable evils. And in this matter the sorrow is the greater. 315. And as it is not the same thing for a free-born maiden and her handmaid to fall into sin, so it is not the same for a virgin and a widow. For in the case of widows, it has become a common thing to talk idly, and to indulge in abuse one to another, and to flatter, and to lose self-respect, and to be seen everywhere, and to go about the market. But the virgin has prepared herself for a greater struggle and emulates the highest philosophy,² and professes to exhibit on earth the life of angels, and

¹ These virgins apparently lived not in communities but in their own homes. They had taken vows of virginity and undertook to lead a life of religious contemplation.

² See note on s. 4.

while yet in this flesh she professes to do deeds which belong to incorporeal powers.

And she must not fare afield unnecessarily or often, and may not utter vain or idle words, and should not so much as know the name of abuse or flattery. 316. Therefore she needs the most minute guard and the greater assistance. For the enemy of holiness is ever attacking these persons and laying wait for them with especial care, ready to swallow them up should one ever stumble and fall; and there are many men plotting against them, and in addition to all this there is the passion of their nature; and they have to arm themselves against a twofold conflict, one attacking them from without and one troubling them from within. 317. Therefore their guardian at any rate has much anxiety and still greater danger and distress should anything that he dreads (which God forbid!) ever befall them. 318. For if a daughter is a secret source of sleeplessness to her father,¹ and his anxiety for her banishes rest, where his fear is so great that she may be barren, or pass her prime unwedded, or be hated by her husband, what will he feel whose anxiety is for none of these things but others far greater than these? For here it is not a man who is set at nought, but Christ Himself; and the barrenness does not stop at reproaches, but the danger ends in the ruin of the soul. "For every tree," He says,² "which beareth not good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire." And if she is hated by the Bridegroom (*sc.* Christ) it does not suffice to take a writing of divorcement³ and depart; but she suffers an everlasting punishment for that hatred. 319. And the father according to the flesh has many things that make the watching over the daughter

¹ Ecclus. xlii. 9.

² Matt. iii. 10.

³ Matt. v. 31.

easy. For a mother and a nurse, and an abundance of maidservants, and the security of the house, help in guarding the virgin. She is not allowed to be perpetually rushing into the market-place; and when she does go, she is not compelled to show herself to any one whom she meets, since the darkness of the evening, no less than the walls of the house, conceal her who does not wish to be seen. 320. But apart from this she is freed from every cause which might compel her to appear before the presence of men; for neither the provision of the necessaries of life, nor the insults of wrong-doers, nor any other such circumstance make it necessary for her to submit to such an ordeal, since her father can represent her in any matter. But she herself has one care only, that she may be guilty of no word or deed unworthy of her proper dignity. 321. But in this case there are many circumstances that make it difficult or rather impossible for her spiritual father to protect her; for he could not keep her at home with himself; for such a life in one house would be both unseemly and dangerous; for even if they themselves should suffer no wrong, but continue to keep their chastity unimpaired, they will have an account to render on behalf of the souls which they have offended, no less than if they had been guilty of sin one with another. Now since this plan is impossible, it is not easy to understand the tendency of her character, and to remove all that tends to disorder, and to regulate and improve all that is well ordered and symmetrical, nor is it simple to inquire into her movements abroad. 322. For her poverty and her unprotected condition do not suffer him to examine minutely into the propriety which befits her life. For since she is compelled to minister to her own needs in everything,

she has many pretexts for faring afield should she be desirous of acting imprudently. So he who commands her always to remain at home should remove these pretexts and make a sufficient supply for her daily needs, and give her a woman to minister to these wants. She must also be forbidden funerals and vigils.¹ For that subtle serpent knows full well how to spread his poison even by means of good deeds. The virgin must be kept in on every side, and suffered to leave her house but rarely every year, and only when urgent necessity compels her. 323. Should any one say that there is no need for a Bishop to attend to this, let him know well that all anxieties and all accusations are referred to him. It is far more expedient for him to manage all details, and be freed from charges which he must incur through the faults of others, than to neglect these details and fear to be called to account for the deeds of others. 324. Besides this, he who superintends everything himself, gets through all his business with great ease. But he who is compelled to do this and to persuade other men's judgments as well, does not have sufficient relief, through freedom from personal labour, to make up for the trouble and turmoil caused by those who oppose him and resist his judgments. 325. Howbeit I could not enumerate all the anxieties on behalf of the virgins. For when they have to be enrolled they cause extraordinary trouble to him who is entrusted with this administration.

¹ That these religious exercises were sometimes occasions of misbehaviour of various kinds is found in several references to the subject. Dr. Nairn quotes the 35th Canon of the Council of Eliberis regulating this evil.

CHAPTER XVIII

The settlement of disputes and need for personal tact.

326. "THE settlement of disputes¹ involves countless burdens and much expenditure of time, and greater discontent than even those incur who sit to try secular cases. The difficulty is to find the justice of the case, and it is hard not to subvert it when found. 327. Expenditure of time and discontent is not all; there is also no little danger. Before now some of the weaker brethren have fallen into difficulties, and finding no protection have made shipwreck² concerning the faith. 328. For many of those who have suffered wrong hate those who fail to help them no less than those who inflicted it. And they will take into account neither the complicated nature of the business, nor the difficulty of appointing a suitable time, nor the limitation of ecclesiastical authority, nor anything else; but they are unpitiful judges, who recognize one form of defence only, relief from the troubles which oppress them; and he who cannot offer them this relief, however many the excuses he urges, will never receive acquittal at their hands. 329. Now that I have mentioned patronage, come, let me reveal to you another pretext for blame. If the bishop do not, every day, pay a round of visits more extensive than ordinary loungers, causes of offence arise which baffle description. Not only the sick but also the healthy wish to be visited, not so much because their piety prompts them, as because most of them pretend to honour and distinction. And should he ever happen to visit

¹ The judicial duties of Bishops had their origin, no doubt, in St. Paul's remarks in 1 Cor. vi. 1-6. Later these functions obtained civil recognition.

² 1 Tim. i. 19.

one of the richer and more powerful men more frequently, prompted by some special need, with a view to the common welfare of the Church, immediately he wins the reputation of flattery and subservience. 330. Why mention cases of patronage and visiting? By the very way in which they address a person, they incur such a load of criticism, that they are often overweighted by the burden of despondency. Why! they have to render account for the merest glance. Most people subject their casual doings to a minute examination, measuring the loudness of their tones, the expression of their face and the degree of their laugh. "He smiled affably," says one, "on so and so, and addressed him with a bright face and hearty voice; but he was less pleasant with me and indeed quite casual." If, when many are seated together, he do not turn his eyes in every direction, while conversing, the rest say that his action is positively insulting. 331. What man then who is not unusually strong could suffice against so many accusers, so as either not to be indicted by them at all, or to escape after the indictment? He should have no accusers; or if this is impossible, he should face their charges; but if this is not easy either, as many take pleasure in vain and random accusations, he must bear the annoyance of these complaints. 332. He who is justly charged can easily endure the charge; for since there is no accuser more bitter than his own conscience, therefore when we are first convicted by that severe standard, we have no difficulty in bearing the greater attacks from without. But when he who has no consciousness of evil is accused without cause, his anger is quickly roused and he is a ready prey to vexation, unless he has trained himself before that to bear the annoyances of the

vulgar. For it is quite impossible for one who is subjected to groundless charges and attacks to be undisturbed and unaffected by such unreasonable conduct. 333. Who can describe the distress they feel when it is needful to excommunicate any one from the body of the Church? 334. Would that the danger went no further than distress! But as it is there is no slight peril. There is reason to fear that, if a man be punished beyond measure, he may undergo the experience mentioned by the blessed Paul, and be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.¹ 335. There is need in that case also for great care, that what should have been helpful may not be an occasion of greater loss. 336. For the sins which such an one commits after such treatment are shared by the physician who treats the wound unskillfully. 337. What punishment then must he expect when he has not only to render account for his own offences but is also brought to the utmost peril for the sins of others? If we shudder when our own offences are examined, for fear that we shall not be able to endure that fiery ordeal, what must he expect to endure who is asked to make a defence on so many charges? 338. To learn that this is true, hear the words of the blessed Paul, or rather not his words, but the words of Christ Who speaks in him:—"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves to them; for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account."² 339. Is the fear then of this threat small? We may not say it is. 340. Well, then, what I have said is enough to persuade the most stubborn and obstinate that my reason for escaping this office was not arrogance or desire for glory, but that I was afraid for my own safety and was regarding the burden of the duty."

¹ 2 Cor. ii. 7.² Heb. xiii. 17

BOOK IV

CHAPTER I

*Misgovernment is punished alike in those who seek office
and those thrust into it.*

341. BASIL heard this, and after a short pause he said:—"Well, if you had been personally ambitious to obtain this office, your anxiety would have been reasonable. 342. He who, by his ambition to receive the work, has made a profession of power to administer it, cannot have recourse to the plea of inexperience when he fails. When he put himself forward he deprived himself of this excuse by eagerly seizing the ministry, and he who of his own free will and accord has voluntarily taken up the work can no longer say "I committed such and such an error against my will," or "I did such and such mischief against my will." 343. For He Who will judge him on that day will say:—"Since thou wert conscious of thy great inexperience, and hadst not ability to undertake this charge without failure, why wert thou so eager to obtain it and so presumptuous as to undertake work beyond thy power? Didst thou struggle and resist? and did another press thee forcibly into it?" You, at any rate, will never hear such words as these. 344. You could never reproach your own conscience with such a thing, and it is clear to all that you never showed any eagerness, great or small, for th

honour, but the success of the design was due to others. The very fact which deprives them of pardon for the mistakes committed provides you with a plentiful field of excuse."

345. *Chrysostom.* In answer to this I shook my head and smiled gently, marvelling at his simplicity, and I replied:—"I could wish myself that it were as you say, my best of friends, not that I might receive the office from which I just now escaped; for if there were no punishment in store for me for attending to the flock of Christ without either diligence or experience, it would be worse than any punishment to prove so base after being entrusted with such great matters. 346. Why then do I wish that your opinion were not mistaken? It is for the sake of those wretched and miserable men, for thus I must describe those who cannot discover how to administer this work, even though you tell me times without end that they were forced into it and made their mistakes in ignorance, that they might avoid that unquenchable fire, and the outer darkness, and the worm that never dies, and the cutting asunder, and the perishing with the hypocrites.¹ But what can I do? It is quite untrue. 347. If you wish it I will begin with the kings, whose office is not so highly accounted of by God as the priesthood, and from it I will give you the proof of what I say. 348. When Saul, the son of Kish, was made king he was not eager for the work; on the contrary, he left home to seek the asses, and visited the prophet to inquire about them; but the prophet spoke to him about the kingship. Even then he did not grasp the office, notwithstanding that he had heard a prophet's words; but he tried to avoid it and to

¹ Is. lxvi. 24; Matt. xxiv. 51, xxv. 30; Mark : 18.

escape, saying,¹ "Who am I, and what is my father's house?" What then? When he had made an evil use of the honour bestowed on him by God, did this plea prevail to save him from the anger of Him Who made him king? 349. And yet he might have said, in answer to the accusation of Samuel, "Did I grasp the kingdom myself? Did I violently seize this power? I wished to live a private life in quietness and peace, but you forced me into this position. Had I remained in my lowly station I should easily have avoided these offences; for surely, if I had been one of the obscure multitude. I should never have been sent to this work, nor would God have entrusted to me the war against the Amalekites;² and had I not been entrusted with it, I should never have been guilty of this sin." 350. But all these excuses are weak, and not only weak but also dangerous, and kindle God's anger more fiercely. 351. For he who has received undeserved honour should not use the greatness of this honour as a cloak for his faults; he ought rather to use God's bountiful favour towards him as a greater incentive to improvement. 352. But he who has been promoted to honour thinks it lawful for himself to commit sin, and is thereby eager to prove that the kindness of God to him was the cause of his own sins; and this is always the argument of the wicked and careless. We must not be so minded, nor must we fall into the same error as they; rather we should at all times be eager to do our duty to the best of our power, and be reverent in word and thought. 353. Again, to leave the kingdom and to come now to the priesthood with which our subject deals, neither was Eli eager to obtain the

¹ 1 Sam. ix. 21.

² 1 Sam. xv.

office ;¹ what therefore did this profit him when he sinned ? Why do I say obtain it ? He could not even have escaped, had he wished, by reason of the law ; for he was of the tribe of Levi, and was compelled to accept the office, which fell to his lot in due course by reason of his birth. Yet he, too, paid no slight penalty for the excesses of his sons.² 354. Again, the first High Priest of the Jews,³ about whom God spake so much to Moses,⁴ came very nigh perishing himself, what time he availed not alone to withstand the madness of so large a multitude, had not the intercession of his brother softened God's anger. 355. And since I have mentioned Moses it is right to establish the truth of my argument from what befell him. This same blessed Moses was so far from coveting the lot of leader of the Jews, that, when it was offered him, he withdrew ;⁵ and, though God commanded him, he was so unwilling that he even kindled the anger of God who appointed him.⁶ Not only then, but after that, when he held the office, he would gladly have died to be released from it. "Slay me," he said,⁷ "if 'thou wilt thus deal with me." 356. What then ? When he sinned at the water⁸ did those repeated refusals avail to make excuse for him and to persuade God to pardon him ? For what other cause was he deprived of the promised land ? For no cause, as we all know, save for this sin, for which cause that wondrous man prevailed not to obtain the same blessings as those whom he

¹ 1 Sam. iv. 18.

² This is hardly correct. Eli was punished not for his sons' excesses, but "because they made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

³ Aaron.

⁴ Ex. xxxii. 10, 11.

⁵ Ex. iii. 4, iv. 10.

⁶ Ex. iv. 14.

⁷ Numb. xi. 15.

⁸ Numb. xx. 12.

governed ; but after his many conflicts and sufferings, after those unspeakable wanderings and the wars and triumphs, he died outside the land for the sake of which he toiled so much ; and after enduring the perils of the sea he did not enjoy the blessings of the haven. 357. Do you see then that not those alone who seize the office, but those who are led to it through the zeal of others, have no excuse left when they fall ? Inasmuch as they who often refused the work, when ordained by God, were punished so severely, and this fact availed not to save from this danger either Aaron or Eli, or that blessed man,¹ the saint, the prophet, the wonderful, who was meeker than all men upon earth, who spake as a friend with God ; surely we who fall so far short of his goodness shall not be able to plead as excuse our consciousness that we were never eager for this office. This is especially true when many of these ordinations proceed not from the Divine Grace, but from human ambition. 358. God chose Judas and set him in that holy company, and granted him the rank of Apostle with the rest, and gave him something more than the others in the management of the money.² What then ? When he abused both of these trusts and betrayed Him whom he was appointed to preach, and spent badly that which he was appointed to administer well, did he escape punishment ? Nay, for this very reason he had to pay a heavier penalty, and rightly so. 359. For we must not use the honours bestowed on us by God to offend God, but to please Him the more. 360. But he who, when he should be punished, claims to be exempt because he has received greater

¹ Moses, cf. Numb. xii. 3 ; Ex. xxxiii. 11.

² John xii. 6.

honour, is doing the same as if the unbelieving Jews who heard Christ say "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin,"¹ and "If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin," were to accuse their Saviour and Benefactor and say, "Why then didst Thou come and speak? Why didst Thou work miracles that Thou mightest punish us the more?" 361. But these words are signs of madness and utter insanity. The Physician came not to condemn you but to heal you and to free you utterly of your disease. But you wilfully refused those healing hands. Receive then the heavier punishment. As you would have been freed from your former ills if you had yielded to the treatment, so you will no longer be able to cleanse yourself from them now that you saw and rejected Him; and, since you cannot be cleansed, you will be punished both for them and for making His zeal vain, so far as in you lay. 362. Therefore we are not subject to the same test before being honoured by God and after our honour, but we have a much severer test afterwards; for he whom kindly treatment did not make good would deserve to suffer more bitterly. 363. Since then this excuse has been proved weak, and is so far from saving those who have recourse to it that it increases their guilt, we must provide another path of safety."

364. *Basil.* "What path is this? for I cannot now control myself; so timid and fearful have you made me by these words."

¹ John xv. 22, 24.

CHAPTER II

Hence the need for careful examination.

365. *Chrysostom.* "Do not, I beg and entreat you, deject yourself so far. There is, there is, a path of safety. To us who are weak this path is to refrain from entering upon these duties; to you who are strong it is this, to suffer your hopes of salvation to depend on nothing, after God's Grace, save the avoidance of all that is unworthy of that gift and of God the giver. 366. They deserve the greatest punishment who, after receiving this office by their own ambition, abuse the trust either through idleness, or through wickedness, or through inexperience. I do not imply that there is any pardon for those who have not sought the office; on the contrary, they, too, are deprived of all excuse. 367. For I think that even if ten thousand men invite and constrain you, you must not look to them; you must first examine your own soul, and when you have thoroughly tested your whole self, then and then only should you yield to their violence. 368. No one who is not a builder would venture to build a house; and no one who has not learnt the physician's art would attempt to tend the bodies of the sick. On the contrary, although many men press and constrain them, they will refuse, and not blush to confess their ignorance. And shall not he, who is to be entrusted with the care of so many souls, first examine himself? Shall he, though he be the most inexperienced of men, accept the ministry because this man begs him, and that man constrains him, and lest he offend such and such an one? 369. How shall he fail to cast himself with

them into an abyss of evil? For, whereas he might have saved his own soul, he involves others in ruin with himself. How can he hope for safety? How can he hope to obtain pardon? Who are there who shall then intercede for him? Those perhaps who now constrain and violently compel him? But who shall save them at that hour? They themselves need the help of others, if they would escape the fire. 370. To prove that I say this not to frighten you but to tell you the truth, hear what the blessed Paul says to his disciple Timothy, his true and beloved child¹:—

“Lay hands hastily on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins.”² 371. Do you see how great is the blame and the punishment of which, so far as in me lay, I have freed those who would have led me into this course? 372. As it is not sufficient excuse for those who have been chosen to say, “I did not come forward of my own accord, and I accepted the office because I did not foresee its dangers,” so it cannot avail those who make choice of him to say that they did not know the character of him whom they chose. 373. Why, the fault is all the greater because they promoted one whom they knew not; and that which seems to be an excuse increases the sin. 374. Is it not strange that, when men wish to purchase a slave, they show him to physicians, and demand sureties for the purchase, and make inquiries of neighbours, and after all this they still feel insecure and demand a long time for trial; yet when they are about to select a man for this great ministry, they make a careless and random choice without further examination, according as some casual person sees fit to testify for or against other people? 375. Who then will intercede for us at the hour when those

¹ 1 Tim. i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 2.

² 1 Tim. v. 22.

who should protect us themselves need protection ?

376. Nay rather, he who is about to lay hands on one should make a careful search ; but he who is to be ordained should be more careful still. 377. Although they who appointed him share his punishment, still he is not free from the penalty, but shall receive a greater vengeance than they, unless those who made choice of him did so for some personal cause, against their better judgment.

378. For if they should be detected in so doing, knowing him to be unworthy, their punishment will be as great as his, perhaps even greater, for choosing an unfit man. He who gave the power to one minded to do so to ruin the Church will himself be held accountable for the other's outrages. 379. But if he be guilty of none of this, and plead that he has been misled by popular opinion, even then he is not free from punishment. Howbeit he pays a somewhat lighter penalty than he who is ordained. Why so ? It is reasonable that they who made the choice may be deceived by a false opinion ; but he who has been chosen cannot urge the plea that others might, " I did not know myself." Since then he is liable to a severer punishment than those who promoted him, he ought to make a minuter examination of his own character, and, if they who bring him forward do so in ignorance, he should go to them and instruct them in the reasons of his unworthiness, and thereby remove the deception ; and when he has shown himself unworthy of the test he will escape so responsible a work: 380. Why is it that when a matter of warfare or merchandise or husbandry or other worldly business is under consideration, the husbandmen would never consent to sail, nor the soldier to plough, nor the pilot to lead an army, though he

should be threatened with untold deaths? It is clearly because each one sees the danger which would attend his inexperience. 381. Then shall we use such foresight when the penalty is trifling, and refuse to yield to compulsion; but where the penalty is everlasting to those who do not know how to administer the Bishop's office, shall we lightly and thoughtlessly incur so great a danger, and shelter ourselves behind the persuasion of others? Nay, He Who then judges us will not suffer it. 382. We ought to have used far greater precaution over spiritual than over worldly matters; yet in reality we are found to employ less. 383. Tell me; if we believed that a man was a good craftsman who was no craftsman, and were to ask him to complete some work and he followed us, and when he had laid his hands on the material of the builder's trade were to ruin the wood and ruin the masonry, and build the house in such wise that it should forthwith fall asunder, would it be enough excuse for him that he was compelled by others to undertake the work and did not come on his own invitation? Surely not; and it is reasonable and just, for he ought to have refused the work though invited to it by others. 384. Shall we say then that he who ruins wood and masonry shall have no forgiveness; but he who destroys souls and builds them up carelessly may be forgiven by pleading that he was persuaded by others to undertake the work? 385. Is this not foolish? I will not yet add the argument that no one can compel another against his will. Let it be granted that he has been subject to irresistible force, and every manner of artful device, so that he fell in the snare. Shall this plea save him from punishment? Pray let us never deceive ourselves so utterly; let us not

reply that we do not know facts which are clear to mere children. For surely this affectation of ignorance will not be able to help us at the Day of Judgment. 386. Were you reluctant to undertake this office, conscious as you were of your weakness? Very good. You should then, with this resolve, have evaded it, though others were inviting you. Were you weak and unsuitable so long as no one invited you; and when men came to promote you, did you suddenly become strong? 387. This is absurd and ridiculous, and deserves the uttermost punishment. This is the very reason why the Lord bids him who wishes to build a tower not to lay the foundation until he calculate his own power,¹ that he may not give those who pass by innumerable occasions of laughing him to scorn. His penalty is ridicule; but ours is fire unquenchable, and the worm that never dies, and gnashing of teeth,² and outer darkness, and the cutting asunder, and being numbered with the hypocrites. 388. But they who accuse us will consent to see nothing of this; otherwise they would have ceased to blame him who is unwilling needlessly to perish. 389. The question before us does not deal with the management of wheat and barley, nor oxen and sheep, nor any other such matter; it concerns the very Body of Jesus. 390. For the Church is Christ's own Body, according to the blessed Paul;³ and he who is entrusted with the task of developing it into health and beauty should look round at every point, lest there be anywhere a spot or wrinkle,⁴ or any other such blemish, marring its bloom and comeliness, and in short he should make it worthy, so far as lies within human power, of the pure and

¹ Luke xiv. 28.

³ Col. i. 24.

² Matt. xxv. 30.

⁴ Eph. v. 27.

blessed Head which it possesses. 391. If those who are eager for the condition of body befitting an athlete need physicians and trainers, and careful diet and continual exercise, and innumerable other attentions (for the neglect of a trifle in these matters overthrows and destroys all their hopes), how shall they who have received the task of attending to this Body which has to contend not against flesh and blood, but against the unseen powers, be able to guard it spotless and sound, unless they far exceed human wisdom and understand all treatment needful for the soul ?

CHAPTER III

The importance of preaching.

392. "PRAY, are you ignorant that that Body is subject to more diseases and attacks than this flesh of ours, and is marred more quickly and cured more slowly? 393. Those who treat the human body have devised manifold medicines, and divers kinds of instruments, and forms of diet suited to the needs of the sufferer; and the character of the climate has often been sufficient by itself to restore the patient's health. There are occasions also when seasonable sleep has relieved the physician of all trouble. 394. But in the present case none of these devices are of avail; but one only means and one way of cure has been given us after any trouble, and that is teaching of the Word. This is the best instrument, this the best diet and climate; this serves instead of medicine, this serves instead of cautery and cutting ;

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whether it be needful to burn or to amputate, this one method must be used; and without nothing else will avail. By it we rouse the lethargy, we allay the swelling, we remove the growths and make good the defects of the soul, and in short we do everything which tends to promote its health.

395. To help a man to order his life aright it is true that the life of another may excite him to emulation; but when the soul is suffering under spurious doctrines then there is great need of the Word not only for the safety of those within the fold, but also to meet the attacks of foes without.

396. For if a man should have the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith¹ so powerful as to be able to work marvels, and by his mighty deeds to stop the mouths of the shameless, he would have no need of the help of the Word; or rather, I should say, that even then the Word would not be useless, but very necessary.

397. The blessed Paul used it, although he aroused wonder on every side by the signs he wrought. And another of that company² bids us take heed of this power, saying, "Be ready to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you."³ And further, with one accord they entrusted Stephen⁴ and his company with the charge of the widows, for no reason save that they might devote themselves to the ministry of the Word.

398. Howbeit we should not seek this so eagerly if we had the power of working miracles. But if there is not so much as a trace of that

¹ Eph. vi. 13.

² St. Peter. Such passages as this show that the exaggerated importance attached to this Apostle had not yet come into being.

³ 1 Peter iii. 15.

⁴ Acts vi. 1-6.

power left, while many enemies are continually assailing us on every side, it remains for us to support ourselves by this defence that we be not overwhelmed by the shafts of the enemy, but that we may overthrow them.

CHAPTER IV

The need to refute heresies.

399. "WHEREFORE we must show great zeal that the word of Christ may dwell richly in us¹. Our preparation for battle is not against a single attack. This warfare assumes manifold forms and is composed of divers enemies; for all do not use the same arms, nor have they trained themselves to attack us in one manner. 400. And he who is undertaking to engage in warfare with all, must know the arts of all; he must be at the same time an archer and slinger; cavalry officer and infantry officer; private soldier and general; foot-soldier and horse-soldier; marine and engineer. 401. In ordinary battles each man takes the work assigned to him and so repels the attacks of the enemy. In our warfare this is not so, but unless he who is to win the victory understands all the forms of the art, the devil knows how to introduce his own agents at each spot which is neglected, and to plunder the sheep; but he is baffled when he sees the shepherd well equipped with knowledge, and able to meet his plots. 402. Wherefore we must

¹ Col. iii. 16.

arm ourselves at every point. So long as a city is encircled with walls all round, it laughs its besiegers to scorn and remains in perfect safety. But if a breach be made in the wall no larger than a gate, the rest of the circuit is useless, although the whole of it stands safe. So it is with the City of God; so long as the wit and wisdom of the shepherd encompasses it like a wall on every side, all the devices of the enemy end in his own shame and ridicule, and they who dwell within remain unharmed; but when one of them is able to destroy a part of this defence, though the rest stand never so firm, well nigh the whole city is ruined through that portion. What if the Jews spoil the Church while it is contending with success against the Greeks?¹ or if it prevail against both of these, but is plundered by the Manichæans?² or if, after it has overcome these also, they who bring "destiny"³ within its fold make havoc of the sheep? Why need I enumerate the heresies of the devil? Unless the shepherd has skill enough to banish them all, the wolf can enter by any one of them and devour most of the sheep. 403. In ordinary warfare we must expect the victory to be won or the defeat to be sustained by those who stand and fight; but in our case it is far different. Often the battle against others secures victory for men who neither

¹ The Jews were essentially monotheistic while the Greeks were polytheistic.

² The Manichæans were followers of Manes, who lived during the middle and latter portion of the third century A.D. He believed in two creative principles, one good and the other evil. As all matter was (in his view) evil, he held that the Body of Jesus was only a phantom. St. Augustine of Hippo was a Manichæan before his conversion.

³ "Destiny." The reference is to the Stoics, who were strong in St. Chrysostom's time.

engaged in conflict at all nor endured its toil, while they were actually sitting idle; and he who is inexperienced in these matters falls on his own sword and excites ridicule among his friends and foes alike. 404. I will try to make my meaning clear to you by an example. Those who follow the wild teaching of Valentinus and Marcion¹ and all who share in their disease, reject the law given by God to Moses from the sacred Canon. But the Jews hold it in such esteem that they are anxious to keep it all, though the time forbids it and God wills it not. But the Church of God, avoiding either extreme, steers a middle course, and neither allows herself to be subjected to its yoke, nor allows men to revile it, but commends it, although its time is past, because it was serviceable for a season. 405. He then who will oppose both these parties must understand this harmony. If, in his desire to teach the Jews that they are out of date in clinging to their ancient legislation, he should begin unsparingly to revile it, he gives no slight handle to those heretics who wish to destroy it; but if, in his eagerness to stop their lips, he extol the law and exalt at it as though it were necessary at the present season, he unseals the mouths of the Jews. 406. Again, they who share in the madness

¹ Valentinus and Marcion (140 A.D.) both founded Gnostic sects, and distinguished between the God of the Old Testament (an erratic Being, often guilty of mistakes) and the God of the New Testament (a God of Love). Valentinus represented Gnosticism on its speculative side, and attacked the Law of Moses; Marcion represented the practical side, and based his teaching on an exaggeration of some of St. Paul's mystical sayings about Christ. "Marcion," says Harnack (*History of Dogma*, Eng. trans., p. 89), "was the only Gentile Christian, of the first century and a half, who really understood Paul, and even he misunderstood him."

✕ of Sabellius¹ and the ravings of Arius, in both cases have fallen away from the sound faith by departing from the mean course². Each of these parties claim the name of Christian, but should any one examine their doctrines he would find the former no better than Jews except in so far as they differ in name, while the latter have a great affinity to the heresy of Paul of Samosata³ and that they both err widely from the truth. 407. There is then great danger in such cases, and strait and narrow is the way, with abrupt precipices on both sides; and there is no slight risk lest, while wishing to aim a blow at the one, we should be smitten by the other. If a man say that the Godhead is one, forthwith Sabellius distorts the expression to favour his own madness; if again he distinguish the Godhead, saying that the Father is one, the Son another and the Holy Ghost a third, up gets Arius perverting the distinction of Persons into a difference of Substance. We should avoid and shun the impious confusion of Persons of the one, and the mad division of Substance by the other, and confess indeed that the Godhead of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are one, but add the three essences; for by this means we shall be

Sabellius
Arius

Uranometria

Paulus
Samosata

¹ Sabellius "confounded the Persons" of the Holy Trinity, making the three Persons merely different aspects of the one God. Arius, on the other hand, "divided the Substance," making the Son distinct from and inferior to the Father.

² This reference to the "mean course" may be a reminiscence of Aristotle's definition of Virtue as the mean state between two opposite vices (*Ethics*, ii. 7). The same argument has often been used to explain the position of the Church of England in reference to Romanism and Protestantism.

³ Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch about 260 A.D., denied the Godhead of Jesus Christ, but believed that He "progressed towards divinity" while on earth.

able to defend ourselves from the attacks of both. 408. I might have told you of many other conflicts which will cost him who does not enter them with spirit and care scars innumerable.

CHAPTER V

The need to check idle speculation.

409. "WHY need I mention the contentions of our own people? These contentions are not fewer than the attacks from without, while they cause the teacher even greater trouble. Some are so officious that they try, idly and senselessly, to elaborate doctrines which cannot be understood, or, if understood, cannot profit them. Others again demand of God reasons for His judgments, and struggle to measure the great deep. "For," says the Psalmist, "thy judgments are a great deep."¹ 410. You will find few eager on matters of faith and practice, whereas most are idly inquiring into matters which cannot be discovered and whose very quest kindles God's anger. For when we struggle to learn things which He Himself did not will that we should know, we shall never succeed—how can we if God wills it not?—and shall reap nothing save the danger by our quest. 411. Howbeit, though this be so, when we use our authority to close the mouths of those who seek to answer these riddles, we gain credit for arrogance and ignorance. Wherefore the Bishop needs great tact to dissuade men from unprofitable questionings,

¹ Ps. xxxvi. 6.

and to escape the faults I have described. 412. In dealing with all these matters no help has been vouchsafed save the help of the Word, and if one be deprived of this power, the souls of those under him (I refer to the weaker and more curious among the brethren) will be in no better plight than ships tossed by the sea. Wherefore the Bishop should do everything to gain this power.”

CHAPTER VI

St. Paul did not underrate the value of preaching.

413. *Basil.* “Why then was Paul not eager to attain perfection in this quality? He is not ashamed of his poverty of speech, but expressly confesses that he is rude¹ in it, and he says this in writing to the Corinthians who were admired for their eloquence and prided themselves upon it.”

414. *Chrysostom.* “This is the very excuse that has ruined most men and made them less zealous for true doctrine. Being unable to examine with care the depth of the mind of an Apostle, or to understand the meaning of his words, they continued for ever nodding and yawning, and holding in high esteem not the form of ignorance which Paul admitted, but a form from which no man beneath this heaven was ever so notably free.

415. Howbeit let us concede this point for a moment; in the meantime I say this—let us assume that he was rude in this quality, as they aver, what has that to do with us? 416. He had a greater power than speech, a power which was

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 6.

able to effect greater results; for by his mere presence and without a word, the devils feared him; but if the men of to-day should all assemble they could not with numberless prayers and tears do as much as was effected once by the handkerchiefs of Paul. 417. And Paul by his prayers was wont to raise the dead¹ and work other such miracles, so that he was regarded as a god² by the heathen; and before he departed from this life he was thought worthy to be caught up to the third heaven,³ and to share in unspeakable words which it is not lawful for human ears to hear. But as for the men of to-day—and I wish to say nothing unkind or severe; for indeed I am not speaking by way of reproach, but only in surprise—how can they refrain from shuddering when they compare themselves with so great a man? 418. For if we put miracles aside and approach the life of the saint and examine his angelic conversation, in this even more than in his miracles we shall see the Christian athlete a conqueror. Why need I mention his zeal, his forbearance, his continual perils,⁴ his constant cares, his unceasing anxieties for the Churches, his many tribulations, his unwonted persecutions, his deaths daily?⁵ What place in the world, what continent, what sea did not witness the conflicts of that righteous man? Even the desert saw him and sheltered him often when he was in peril. He endured every form of intrigue; he attained every kind of victory. His contests and his crowns never failed. 419. Howbeit, unknown to myself, I have been impelled to injure him. His successes surpass all eloquence, and they exceed mine just as practised orators exceed me. Yet since that blessed saint

¹ Acts xx. 10.² Acts xiv. 12.³ 2 Cor. xii. 2.⁴ 2 Cor. xi. 26-29.⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 31.

will judge me not from my results but from my intentions, I will not desist until I have stated one fact which surpasses what I have said, as much as he surpasses all other men. 420. What then is this? After all these successes, after his innumerable crowns, he prayed that he might be cast into hell¹ and be submitted to eternal punishment, if so be that the Jews who had often stoned him and done what they could to compass his death, might be saved and come near to Christ. Who longed for Christ as he did? if indeed we may call his feeling longing and not by some name yet stronger. 421. Shall we then continue to compare ourselves with him after the great grace which he received from above and after the great virtue which he displayed in himself? What action could be more presumptuous than this? 422. I will try to prove also that, despite all this, he was not rude of speech, as these men think him. 423. For they do not apply the title merely to one who is unversed in profane rhetoric, but also to one who does not understand how to contend for the doctrines of the faith. And they are right. But Paul did not say that he was rude in both these qualities, but in the former alone. And to establish this fact he carefully made the distinction, by saying that he was "rude in speech, but not in knowledge." 424. But as for me, if I demanded the polish of Isocrates, and the grandeur of Demosthenes, and the dignity of Thucydides, and the sublimity of Plato, then it would be right to confront me with this testimony of Paul. But as it is I let those qualities pass, and the superfluous embellishments of pagan writers. I take no account of style or expression. Yea, let a man's style be

¹ Rom. ix. 3.

poor and his diction simple and unadorned, but let him not be rude in the knowledge and careful statement of doctrine, nor, to cloak his own idleness, let him deprive that blessed man of the greatest of his qualities and the chief of his claims to eulogy.

CHAPTER VII

Instances of St. Paul's eloquence.

425. "TELL me, how did he confound¹ the Jews dwelling in Damascus, when he had not yet begun his miracles? How did he overthrow the Grecians²? Why was he sent forth to Tarsus? Was it not because he mightily prevailed in the Word, and so far discomfited them that they were incited to slay him, not being able to bear the defeat? Then he had not yet begun his wonderful works; and no one could say that the multitudes marvelled at him because of his reputation for mighty works, and that those who contended against him were overthrown by his fame alone. For at this time he prevailed merely by dint of speech. 426. How did he contend and dispute with those who tried to teach Jewish customs in Antioch? Did not the Areopagite, who was of that most religious city, with his wife,³ follow him because of his speech alone? And how came Eutychus⁴ to fall from the window? Was it not because he was attending until midnight to Paul's teaching? 427. And what occurred at Thessalonica and Corinth? What at

¹ Acts ix. 22.

² Acts ix. 29, 30.

³ Dionysius and Damaris, see Acts xvii. 34.

⁴ Acts xx. 9.

Ephesus and at Rome itself? Did he not spend whole days and nights continuously in expounding the Scriptures? Why should we mention his disputes¹ with the Epicureans and Stoics? For if I should tell all, my story would grow to an excessive length. 428. When, then, both before working miracles and while he performed them, he appears to have made much use of argument, how can any one dare to call him rude of speech whose disputations and sermons were much admired of all? 429. Why did the Lycaonians² believe him to be Hermes? The idea that he and Barnabas were gods was due to their miracles; but the idea that he was Hermes was due not to his miracles but to his eloquence. 430. In what did this blessed saint excel the rest of the Apostles? and how comes it that throughout the whole world he is much on every one's lips? How comes it that not merely among ourselves, but also among Jews and Greeks, he is admired beyond all men? Is it not because of the excellence of his epistles? For by this not only among the faithful of his day, but among those who shall believe until the coming of Christ, he has been and will be a source of profit, and will never cease to be such so long as the human race remains. 431. For his writings fortify the Churches all over the world like a wall of adamant; and like some noble champion he stands even now in our midst, leading captive every thought unto the obedience of Christ,³ and casting down reasonings and every high thing which exalts itself against the knowledge of God; and all this he does by means of those wonderful epistles he has left us, so full of divine wisdom. 432. His writings are not only useful to us for the overthrow of false doctrine and the

¹ Acts xvii. 18.

² Acts xiv. 12.

³ 2 Cor. x. 5.

establishing of the true, but they help us very greatly in living a good life. For by the use of these the Bishops of the present day fashion and frame the chaste virgin¹ which Paul himself betrothed to Christ, and lead her on to spiritual beauty. By these they repel also the diseases which threaten her and preserve the good health she thus obtains. Such are the medicines and so powerful their efficacy, left us by him who was "rude of speech"; and they know their powers best who use them constantly. 433. It is clear from this that he devoted much diligence to this study.

CHAPTER VIII

St. Paul's advice to Timothy on preaching.

434. "HEAR also the charges which he gives to his disciple:—"Give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching."² And he adds the fruit which proceeds from this:—"For in doing this," he says, "thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee;" and again, "And the Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing."³ And further on he says, "But abide thou in the things which thou hast learnt and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learnt them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise;"⁴ and again, "Every scripture inspired of God," he says, "is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction,

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 2.

³ 2 Tim. ii. 24.

² 1 Tim. iv. 13.

⁴ 2 Tim. iii. 14-17.

for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete." 435. Hear also what he adds in his discourse to Titus as touching the appointment of Bishops:—"For the bishop," he says, "must hold to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able even to convict the gainsayers."¹ 436. How, then, if he is rude of speech, as these say, will he be able to convict the gainsayers and to stop their mouths? And what need is there to give heed to reading and to the Scriptures, if it be right to welcome such rudeness? This is all a mere pretence and excuse, and a pretext for indolence and sloth. 437. "Nay," says one, "he gives this charge to the Bishops." 438. Well, our argument just now was about Bishops. But to learn that he gives it also to those who are under authority,² hear how he again exhorts others in another epistle:—"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom;"³ and again, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one."⁴ And the command⁵ to be "ready to give an answer" was given to all alike. In his injunctions to the Thessalonians he says, "Build each other up, even as also ye do."⁶ 439. But when he speaks of Bishops, he says, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and in teaching."⁷ 440. For this is the perfection of teaching, when, by what they do and by what they say, they conduct their disciples to the blessed life which Christ ordained. For example alone is not sufficient to instruct others. 441. And the saying is not mine, but that of the

¹ Titus i. 7-9.² *i. e.* the inferior clergy and the laity.³ Col. iii. 16.⁴ Col. iv. 6.⁵ 1 Peter iii. 15.⁶ 1 Thess. v. 11.⁷ 1 Tim. v. 17.

Saviour Himself; for He says, "Whosoever shall do and teach, he shall be called great."¹ Now if to do were the same as to teach, the second term would be superfluous; it would have sufficed to say "Whosoever shall do." But, as it is, by distinguishing both he shows that example is one thing and instruction another, and that each requires the other for perfect edification. 442. Do you not hear what the chosen vessel² of Christ says to the elders of Ephesus? "Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one of you night and day with tears."³ For what need was there of tears, or of admonition by speech, when the Apostle's life shone out so bright?

CHAPTER IX

The Bishop must lead the Church against attack.

443. "HIS holy life might help us in no small degree to keep the commandments, and yet even in his case I would not state that example alone could accomplish everything; but when conflict arises on matter of doctrine, and all the combatants rely upon the same Scriptures, in such a case what force will his life be able to exert? 444. Of what profit to a man are his many labours, when after those toils he is led by his great inexperience into heresy and is cut off from the body of the Church? Yet I know many who have experienced this fate. What avails his endurance? 'Tis nought; neither is an uncorrupt faith if a man's life be corrupt. 445.

¹ Matt. v. 19.

² Acts ix. 15.

³ Acts xx. 31.

Wherefore he, whose lot it is to teach others, more than any man, needs experience in these conflicts. 446. For though he himself stand rooted in safety, and be not injured by the gainsayers, yet, when the multitude of simpler folk, who are set beneath him, see their leader worsted and unable to answer the gainsayers, they do not blame his feebleness for the defeat, but the weakness of the doctrine; and, by reason of the inexperience of one man, the great multitude is brought into utter ruin. Though they may not utterly join the enemy, yet they are driven to doubt in matters wherein they might have been confident; and those whom they were wont to approach with unwavering faith, they hear no more with the same security; on the contrary, such a storm enters their souls by reason of their teacher's defeat that the evil ends in utter shipwreck. 447. How awful is the ruin, and how fierce the fire which is heaped on his unhappy head for every one of these souls that perish I need not tell you, since you know all this perfectly. 448. Is my conduct then due to arrogance, is it due to vainglory, if I refused to be the cause of perdition to so many and to earn for myself a severer punishment than that which now awaits me in the world to come? Who could maintain this? No one, unless he wished to find fault idly and to speculate upon another man's misfortunes.

BOOK V

CHAPTER I

The danger of regarding the service as a performance.

449. "I HAVE given sufficient proof of the experience needed by the teacher in contending for the truth. I have one further matter to add to this which is a cause of untold dangers ; or rather I will not blame the thing itself so much as those who do not know how to use it aright ; for in itself it ministers to salvation and to many blessings, when it receives earnest and good men to dispense it. What then is this? It is the great toil which is expended upon the public discourses delivered to the people. 450. In the first place most of those who are under government will not regard the preacher as he would a master, but disdain the position of disciples and assume that of spectators who sit and watch the contests in the theatre. And as in the theatre the multitude is divided, and some side with one combatant and others side with his opponent ; so in church they divide and become partisans, some of this preacher, and some of that, and listen to their words in a favourable or hostile spirit. 451. This is not the only difficulty, but there is another no less serious. If it happen that a preacher should weave into his sermons a portion of the discourses of others, he undergoes greater disgrace than thieves of money ;

and often when he has borrowed nothing, on the bare suspicion, he suffers the fate of a convicted thief. And why do I mention the compositions of others? He is not allowed to deliver his own sermons without varying them. 452. Most men are not accustomed to listen to a preacher for profit but for pleasure, and act like critics of a play or a concert. And the force of eloquence which we rejected just now is more demanded in a church than in a school of rhetoric, where they are compelled to contend one against the other. 453. Here, too, a preacher requires a loftiness of mind far beyond my own littleness of spirit to correct this disorderly and unprofitable delight on the part of the people, and to divert their attention to something more useful; for it is right for the people to follow and be led by him and not for him to be influenced by their desires. 454. Now this power can only be gained by these two qualities, contempt of praise and power of eloquence.

CHAPTER II

The danger of either love of or contempt for praise.

455. "IF either quality be lacking the remaining one is rendered useless through separation from the other. If a preacher despise praise, yet do not produce doctrine which is "with grace,¹ seasoned with salt," he is despised by the people, and profits nothing by his nobleness of mind. If again he succeed as a preacher and be overcome by t

¹ Col. iv. 6.

X glory of applause^① equal injury is done to him and to the people, because through his passion for praise he essays to please and not to profit his hearers. 456. As he who is not affected by commendation nor skilled in preaching does not yield to the pleasure of the people but cannot confer any real benefit upon them, through having nothing to say ; so, too, he who is carried away with the desire for praise provides such fare as shall please his hearers when he might have been improving their character, and pays this price for the tumult of applause.

CHAPTER III

The need for fluent utterance.

457. "THE perfect ruler must then be strong in both points lest the one should be nullified by the other. If, when he stands in the midst of the congregation and utters words which might have stung the careless, he then stumbles and stops and is forced to blush through want of words, the good done by his words is at once wasted. They who are rebuked, being vexed by his words and unable to retaliate on him otherwise, assail him with jeers at his lack of skill, thinking thereby to hide their own reproach. 458. Wherefore, like a good charioteer^② he should have reached perfection in both these qualities, that he may be able to handle both aright as need requires. For when he is

¹ Applause in the course of a sermon was not considered out of place in the time of St. Chrysostom, and to this day there is trace of it in the Greek Church.

² who drives two horses and makes them do even work.

himself irreproachable in the eyes of all, then he will be able, with whatever authority he desires, to punish or pardon those set under his authority. Without this it is not easy to do so. 459. But this nobleness of soul is not only to be displayed in contempt for applause, but it goes further, that the profit thus won may not be in its turn annulled.

CHAPTER IV

The Bishop should be indifferent to slander.

“WHAT else then must he despise? Slander and envy. 460. Unseasonable abuse however (for the Bishop must needs endure groundless blame) should neither create in him excessive fear and dread, nor meet with entire indifference. Even if the charges are false, and are brought against us by people of no importance, we should try to extinguish them at once. 461. Nothing magnifies a good or evil report so much as an undisciplined multitude; accustomed to hear and speak without making inquiry, they give hasty utterance to whatever occurs to them, without any effort to attain the truth. 462. Therefore he must not disregard the multitude, but rather destroy their evil suspicions as they arise by persuading his accusers, however unreasonable they may be, and he should leave nothing untried that can destroy an evil report. But if, when we do everything, our critics will not be persuaded, then we must despise their tales; for if a person be easily cast down by such mishaps he will never be able to bring any noble or admirable scheme to birth. For despondency and constant cares have a terrible effect of numb

? for a witness

the soul, and reducing it to utter impotence. 463. The Bishop should be in the same relation towards those whom he rules as a father towards very young children; and as we are not disturbed by their insults or blows or tears, and do not think much of their laughter and approval, so with these, we should not be much uplifted by their praise nor much dejected by their censure, when these are uttered out of season. 464. This is not easy, my dear friend; perchance it is impossible. 465. I know not whether any man has ever succeeded in not rejoicing at praise; and if he rejoices at it, it is natural for him to desire to receive it; and if he desires to receive it, he must needs be vexed and be beside himself at losing it. 466. As they who delight in riches are grieved when they fall into poverty, and they who are accustomed to luxury cannot bear to live meanly; so, too, they who long for applause feel their soul famished not only when they are blamed without reason, but also when they are not constantly flattered, and this is especially the case when they have been brought up on praise, or even when they hear others praised. 467. What troubles and what vexations does he endure, who enters this contest of preaching with this desire for applause? As the sea cannot ever be free from waves, so his soul cannot be free from cares and sorrow.

CHAPTER V

More is expected of the gifted preacher.

468. "FOR though a man may have great gifts of language (and this you will rarely find) still he

is not excused perpetual effort. Since preaching is not a natural but acquired power, though a man reach a high standard, even then his power may forsake him unless he cultivate it by constant application and exercise. 469. Hence the gifted need to take greater pains than the unskilful. The penalty for neglect is not the same for both, but varies in extent according to their natural abilities. 470. No one would blame the unskilful for producing nothing worthy of esteem; but the gifted are pursued by numerous complaints from all, unless they are always exceeding the expectation which all have of them. Beside this the former can win great praise for a slight success; but as for the latter, unless their efforts be especially startling and marvellous, they not only lose all applause but meet many faultfinders. 471. For the congregation do not sit in judgment on the sermon so much as on the reputation of the preacher, so that when there be one who excels all others in power of speech, then especially he needs careful application. He is not allowed the excuse which avails the rest of humanity, that it is impossible to succeed always; on the contrary, unless his sermons always correspond to the greatness of the expectation formed of him, he will be the victim of countless jeers and complaints. 472. No one ever takes this into consideration, that a fit of depression, pain, anxiety, or often anger, may bedim the clearness of his vision, and prevent his productions from coming forth unsullied; and that, in short, being a man, he cannot always reach the same standard, and cannot under all circumstances attain success, but that he will naturally make mistakes and fail to rise to the standard of his usual ability. They will make none of these allowances, as I remarked, but bring

charges against him as if they were sitting in judgment over an angel. 473. Although a man is naturally prone to overlook the good performances of a neighbour, however many and great they be, yet if a defect be anywhere apparent, however commonplace it may be, however long the intervals at which it occur, it is at once noticed, it is immediately seized, and it is always remembered; and this trifling and unimportant occurrence has often impaired the glory of many illustrious deeds.

CHAPTER VI

Criticism by the unlearned should be ignored.

474. "YOU see, my excellent friend, that he who has the greatest powers of speech needs more careful study, and in addition to his study he needs greater forbearance, than any of those whom I have already mentioned. 475. For many men continually assail him without cause or sense, and they hate him without having any charge to bring against him except that all think highly of him; and he must needs endure their bitter envy with a noble spirit. 476. For without making any effort to veil this accursed hatred which they entertain without reason, they overwhelm him with abuse and complaints and secret slander and open opposition. And the soul which begins by feeling pain and annoyance on each of these occasions may as well die of sorrow without delay. 477. For they assail him not only by their own efforts, but they endeavour to do so through the aid of others; and they often choose one who has no power of eloquence, and extol him with praise and admiration

quite beyond his deserts ; some do this through sheer ignorance and others through ignorance and envy combined, with the intent that they may ruin such an one's¹ reputation, and not from any desire to win admiration for one who does not deserve it. 478. And that noble-hearted man has not to contend against these alone, but he often has to face the ignorance of a whole community. For it is impossible for the whole congregation to be made up of men of note, and it generally happens that the greater part of the assembly consists of ignorant people, and the rest are perhaps superior to these, but are more inferior to men of critical judgment than the ignorant are to themselves, while there are scarcely one or two present who have this power of criticism. It therefore must needs follow that the more capable speaker receives less applause and in some cases goes away without receiving any approval. 479. He must be prepared to face these anomalies in a noble spirit, to pardon those who assume this attitude through ignorance, to weep over those who are affected in this way through envy, as miserable and pitiable creatures ; yet neither of these should cause him to think less of his powers. 480. For if a painter of first rank, who excelled all in skill, had seen the picture which he had painted with great care scoffed at by men ignorant of art, he would have no need to be dejected and to regard his painting as poor by reason of the judgment of the ignorant ; so also he should not regard a truly inferior work as wonderful and charming because the unlearned admire it.

¹ Viz. "of the eloquent preacher."

CHAPTER VII

The preacher should aim at pleasing God.

481. "LET the best craftsman judge his own handiwork, and let us mark his productions as beautiful or inferior when the mind which conceived them votes them such. But as for the erratic and unskilful opinion of outsiders let us not so much as consider it. 482. Then he, too, who has undertaken the task of teaching should not give heed to the reports of strangers, nor be cast down in spirit by reason of them; he should rather compose his discourses so as to please God, and let this desire be his sole rule and plan for their best execution, and not applause or praise. Should he, after this, receive approval from men, let him not reject their praise; but if his hearers do not render this, let him neither seek it nor sorrow for it. 483. It will be a sufficient consolation for his toil, far exceeding all else, if his conscience tells him that he is modelling and ordering his teaching with a view to please God.

CHAPTER VIII

The dangers of seeking applause.

484. "IF he be unwittingly overtaken by the desire for unmerited praise, neither his careful study nor his readiness of speech avail him any more; for his soul, unable to bear the senseless criticisms of the multitude, grows feeble and casts aside all earnestness about preaching. Wherefore

a preacher should train himself beyond everything else to despise praise. Natural eloquence avails nothing for the preservation of the power of speech unless this indifference to praise be also added. 485. Now should any one wish to examine him also who lacks this gift of eloquence, he will find it as needful for him as for the other to despise praise. 486. For he will be forced to commit many errors if he subject himself to the bondage of popular opinion. Being unable to rival famous preachers, he will not disdain to plot against them, to envy them, to bring idle criticism against them, and to be guilty of much other such unseemly conduct; he will dare to do anything, if it cost him his very soul, to bring their reputation down to the level of his own insignificance. 487. Beside this he will abandon the labour of study, feeling a kind of numbness that has stolen over his spirit; for it is enough to dispirit a man who is not indifferent to praise, and to lull him into deep lethargy, when he toils hard and reaps no reward of eulogy. When the farmer labours over a stony field and is forced to till a rock, he soon desists from his toil unless he is filled with enthusiasm for his work, or is compelled thereto by the fear of hunger. 488. If those who are able to preach with great power need such constant practice to preserve their treasure, what difficulty, what confusion, what trouble must he undergo who has no store ready at hand, but is compelled to meditate his ideas in the very agony of preaching, if he would collect some few ideas at the cost of great toil? 489. And should any of the clergy who work with him and who are under him, be able to surpass him in this work, then he needs a divine spirit if he would not be seized with envy and be stricken by despond-

ency. It requires no ordinary mind nor such an one as mine but one of adamant, for a man holding a high position to be surpassed by his inferiors and to bear it with a noble spirit! 490. If the man who exceeds him in repute be forbearing and modest, the evil is just able to be borne; but should he be bold, and boastful, and vainglorious, he may well pray every day that he may die, so bitter will his rival make his life by spurning him to his face and ridiculing him behind his back, by detracting from his authority and striving to gain it all himself. And his rival has gained a great security in doing this by his fluency of speech, by the zeal of the people for him and the affection of those under his charge. 491. Do you not know what a passion for preaching has recently invaded Christians, and that the preachers who cultivate the art most are highly respected not only by outsiders but by those of the household of the faith? 492. How then can any one endure such a disgrace when his sermon is received with blank silence and feelings of annoyance, and his listeners wait for the end of the discourse as if it were a rest after fatigue, whereas they listen to the long sermon of another with eagerness, and are annoyed when he is about to finish, and are angry when he wishes to be silent? 493. This may perhaps seem to you now a trifling and unimportant matter because you have not tried it. Yet it is enough to quench zeal, to paralyze the powers of the mind, unless a man dispossess himself of all human passions and study to live like disembodied spirits which are not pursued by envy, or vainglory, or any other such plague. 494. If then there is any man able to subdue this elusive and invincible and savage monster—I mean popular praise—and to cut off its

many heads,¹ or rather to prevent their growth altogether, he will be able easily to repel these numerous attacks and enjoy a quiet haven of rest ; but if he be not freed from this enemy, he is suffering his soul to be overspread by manifold struggles, perpetual confusion, deep dejection, and a host of other passions. 495. Why need I collect the rest of the difficulties? No one can describe or realize them without personal experience.

¹ The many-headed monster is an allusion to the Hydra killed by Heracles.

BOOK VI

CHAPTER I

The Bishop is accountable for the sins of his flock.

496. "SO much then for the present world; but in the world to come how shall we endure our lot, when we are compelled to render account for what has been committed to our charge? Then the penalty is not merely disgrace, but eternal punishment awaits us. 497. I cannot now refrain from quoting the passage I have already mentioned:—"Obey them that have the rule over you and submit to them¹; for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account." The fear of this threat is ever disturbing my spirit. 498. If it be profitable for him who causeth even the least one to stumble,² that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea, and if all they who wound the conscience of the brethren³ sin against Christ Himself, what will be the fate and punishment of them who destroy, not one or two or three, but all these multitudes? 499. They cannot even plead inexperience, nor have recourse to the plea of ignorance, nor shelter themselves under force and constraint; nay it were even more possible for those under authority to use this excuse for their own sins, than for their rulers to use it for the sins

¹ Heb. xiii. 17.

² Matt. xviii. 6.

³ 1 Cor. viii. 12.

of others. 500. What shall we say then? He who is charged to cure the ignorance of the rest, and to give warning of the coming of the war with the devil, may not plead the excuse of ignorance, nor say "I heard not the trumpet," or "I had no foreknowledge of the war." 501. For this very purpose is he set, as Ezekiel says,¹ that he may sound the trumpet to the rest and give warning of the coming difficulties. For this reason the punishment is certain, even if there be but one who shall perish. "For if the watchman see the sword come," says Ezekiel,² "and blow not the trumpet nor warn the people, and the sword come and take any person; he indeed is taken away for his iniquity, but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand."

CHAPTER II

The dangers of sensual temptations.

502. "FORBEAR then to thrust me into such certain punishment. 503. For our argument deals not with a generalship or a kingdom, but with a task that requires angelic virtue. 504. For the soul of the Bishop must be purer than the sun's rays, that the Holy Spirit may not leave him desolate, and that he may be able to say "I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me."³ 505. Even they who dwell in the desert, far away from city and market-place and the tumults arising thence, though ever enjoying a calm haven, are not willing to trust

¹ Ezek. iii. 17.

² Ezek. xxxiii. 6.

³ Gal. ii. 20.

in the safety of that life, but add numberless other safeguards, and hedge themselves in on every side, eager to observe great exactness in all their speech and actions, to the end that they may be able to come nigh to God with freedom of speech and spotless purity, so far as is possible for man to do so ; then what power and strength do you suppose the Bishop needs to enable him to save his soul from all pollution, and preserve his spiritual beauty unimpaired? 506. He needs a far greater purity than they ; and he who has the greater need is subject to more temptations which can defile him, unless he use unceasing self-denial and much vigilance to keep his soul unsullied by those forces. 507. He finds enough to disturb his spirit unless it be hardened against them by great austerity of self-control, in beautiful faces, delicate movements, affected gait, voluptuous tones, pencilled eyebrows, painted cheeks, plaited tresses, dyed hair, costly raiment, varied ornaments of gold, rich stones, sweet-smelling perfumes and all else which woman-kind study. 508. It is nothing wonderful that a man should be disturbed by such things ; but it fills us with astonishment and perplexity that the devil should be able to smite and shoot down the souls of men by the qualities opposite to these.

CHAPTER III

These are of various kinds.

“BEFORE now some men who have escaped these nets have been caught in others far different from these. Even a neglected appearance, unkempt hair,

squalid raiment, an unadorned person, simple behaviour, unaffected language, unstudied gait, natural voice, a life of poverty, a despised, unprotected and lonely existence, have led the beholder first to pity and then to utter ruin. Many who have escaped the former snares, which are woven of golden ornaments and perfume and raiment and so forth, have fallen ready victims into these which differ from them so widely, and therefore have perished.

509. When then both by poverty and riches, both by adornment and indifference to appearance, both by artificial and natural manners, in short by all these means which I have enumerated, the war is enkindled in the soul of the beholder, and its devices encompass him on every side, where can he find breathing room while so many snares surround him? What retreat can he find, I say, not to avoid being taken by force, for this is not so very difficult, but to keep his own soul untroubled by defiling thoughts?

510. I pass by honours, which are the cause of numberless evils.

511. Those bestowed by women weaken the power of self-restraint and often overthrow it when a man does not know how to watch continually against such insidious temptations.

512. As for the honours bestowed by men, unless one receive them with much dignity he is ensnared by two contrary affections, by servile flattery, and senseless conceit. He is forced to kneel to those who patronize him, while he is puffed up against his lesser brethren, because of honours bestowed by others, and is driven into the whirlpool of arrogance.

513. I have mentioned these matters; but no one could learn without experience how great injury they inflict; for not only these pitfalls, but greater and more dangerous than these must needs befall

them who are concerned with this world. 514. He who lives a hermit's life has immunity from all this ; or if ever a depraved imagination should suggest some such idea, the picture is weak and able soon to be suppressed, because his eyes find no fuel from without to feed the flame. 515. The monk fears for himself alone ; or if he be compelled to have the care of others they are very few ; or should they be many, yet they are fewer than those in the Churches, and give him who is set over them far lighter cares, partly by reason of their fewness, and still more because all are free from worldly matters, and have neither child nor wife nor any such thing to care for. This makes them very obedient to their rulers, and causes them to share a common dwelling, so that they are able to watch their failings with care and to correct them ; and this fact is a great help towards progress in virtue.

CHAPTER IV

The need for purity in reference to the Eucharist.

516. " BUT most of those who are subject to the Bishop are enchained by worldly cares, and this makes them slower in the discharge of spiritual things. Wherefore the teacher must needs sow his seed well nigh every day, so that at least through constant hearing the Word may be holden by those who give ear to the teaching. For excessive wealth, and great power, and idleness, arising from luxury and many other things, choke the seeds

that are cast into the ground,¹ and often the thick growth of thorns does not allow that which is sown to fall even to the surface. Often too, on the other hand, exceeding sorrow, and the pinch of poverty, and continual insults, and other such afflictions abate men's zeal for the Word of God. And not even a fraction of their sins can be known to the Bishop. How could it be so when he does not know the greater number of his people by sight? 517. Such are the difficulties caused by his duty to the people. Yet these are nothing in comparison with those created by his duty towards God, since this requires a far greater and more minute attention. 518. What a man must he be who is an ambassador on behalf of the whole city, and indeed of the whole world, and begs God to be merciful to the sins of all men, not the living only but also the dead?² I think that the boldness of Moses and Elijah is not sufficient for this great intercession. He approaches God as if he were entrusted with the whole world, and were the father of all men, praying that wars

¹ Matt. xiii. 22.

² Biblical authority for Prayers for the Departed has been sought in St. Paul's prayer for Onesiphorus (2 Tim. i. 16). This is, however, slender foundation by itself, as the fact that Onesiphorus was dead, though suggested by the context, cannot be regarded as certain. However, at a very early time, the liturgies all included such prayers. Tertullian (in the second century) is the first of the Fathers definitely to comment on the practice (de Cor. iii.), where he admits the absence of Scriptural authority.

The habit is a natural expression of a devout belief in the "communion of saints," and although the Church of England has removed such prayers from her public Liturgy, owing to the corrupt conceptions of purgatory prevalent when the Liturgy was compiled,—yet she nowhere condemns the commemoration of the dead as well as of the living, "that both may find mercy in that day." For further references see Bingham's *Origins*. *Eccles.* xv.

everywhere may cease, that tumults may end, begging for peace and prosperity, and a speedy release from all ills, private or public, that threaten any man. He must so far surpass those for whom he intercedes in all qualities as is right for one in authority to surpass those beneath him. 519. But when he invokes the Holy Spirit, and offers that awful Sacrifice,² and keeps on touching the common Master of us all, tell me, where shall we rank him? What purity and what piety shall we demand of him? Consider how spotless should those hands be that are charged with these matters, how holy the lips which pour forth these words, from whom shall we look for a purer and holier soul than his who is to receive this great Spirit? 520. At that moment Angels³ surround the Bishop, and the whole of the sanctuary, and the place around the altar is filled with heavenly powers in honour of Him who lies there.

521. This may be proved by the nature of the rite which is performed at that moment. I myself, moreover, heard some one relate the following story:—"An old and venerable man, who was accustomed to see visions, told him that he had been held worthy of such a glimpse, and at the moment of the Sacrifice he had seen on a sudden, so far as was possible for him, an host of angels, clad in white raiment and encircling the altar, and bowing their heads toward the ground as though they were soldiers standing in the presence of a king. For my part, I believe the story." 522.

¹ Stephens quotes the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, "And we pray and beseech Thee, send down Thy Holy Ghost upon us and upon these gifts here outspread."

² "Sacrifice"; see note on s. 177.

³ This idea is found in our own Liturgy: "Therefore with Angels and Archangels, etc."

Another man told me, not from hearsay, but from an incident which he was permitted to witness and hear, that when men are about to pass away, if they chance to have partaken of the Mysteries with a pure conscience just before they breathe their last, for the sake of that which they have taken, an armed company of angels escort them hence. 523. Do you not now tremble to bring this feeble spirit of mine to so holy a rite, and to introduce to the office of a Bishop one clothed in foul raiment, whom Christ Himself excluded from the general company¹ of guests? 524. The soul of the Bishop should shine forth like a light shedding its beams over the world; but my soul has such a mist of darkness enveloping it, by reason of my evil conscience, that it is always hiding itself, and cannot with boldness gaze upon its Master. 525. Bishops are the salt of the earth;² yet my folly and my inexperience of the world is so utter that no one could tolerate it, save you who are wont to esteem me far beyond my deserts. 526. A Bishop must not only be pure, as beseems one chosen for so high a ministry, but also very discreet and experienced in many matters; he ought to know all things of the world as well as one who lives in the midst of them, and yet be more free from them than the monks who inhabit the mountains. 527. Since he must needs consort with men who have married wives, and are bringing up children, and possess slaves, and own large riches, and transact public business, and hold high office, he must be many-sided. 528. I say many-sided, not a dissembler,³ no flatterer or hypocrite, but open

¹ Matt. xxii. 11.

² Matt. v. 13.

³ The word so translated is used properly of a festering wound under a fair surface.

and bold of utterance, able to condescend with advantage when circumstances demand it, and to be alike courteous and severe. 529. It is impossible to treat all over whom he rules in one way, for it is not right for even the sons of physicians to deal with all their patients alike, nor for a pilot to know only one way of battling with the winds. For this ship of ours is surrounded by continual tempests; and these tempests do not only attack us from without but are engendered within; and there is need of great condescension and carefulness. 530. Now all these divers matters look to one end: the glory of God and the edification of the Church.

CHAPTER V

The difference between a Bishop and a recluse.

531. "GREAT is the conflict of the monks, and severe their labour. Yet if their toils were compared with the Bishop's office when well administered, the difference would be found to be as great as that between a private citizen and a king. 532. In their case, though their task be hard, the conflict is shared between the soul and body; or rather, it is chiefly sustained by their bodily exercises. If their body be not strong,¹ their zeal is confined and has no outlet in practice; for prolonged fasting, and couching on the ground, and vigils, and abstention from washing, and severe toil, and all other exercises which tend towards the mortification of the flesh

¹ Chrysostom suffered all his life from ill-health, due to his severities as a monk.

are impossible since he who would submit to discipline is not strong. 533. Yet, in this case, purity of the soul is the work in hand, and no bodily vigour is needed to show its excellence. How does strength of body help us not to be stubborn, or passionate, or headstrong, but sober, and prudent, and orderly, and possessors of all the qualities with which the blessed Paul¹ completed the picture of the perfect Bishop? 534. Yet no one would say this of the qualities needful for a monk.

CHAPTER VI

The Bishop is not so dependent on his surroundings.

“AS jugglers require many implements, and wheels, and ropes, and daggers, while the philosopher has the whole of his art residing in his soul, and has no need of external aid ; 535. so in our case, the monk needs good bodily condition, and a place suitable for his method of life, that he may not be too far removed from human habitation, and that he may enjoy the quiet of solitude, and that he may not be deprived of the most suitable climate ; for nothing is so hard to bear, for one worn with fasting, as an unequal climate. I need not now relate to you all the toils he must needs undergo to obtain clothing and food, since he is anxious to supply all his own needs. 536. But the Bishop will require none of these things for his own wants, but he lives artlessly, sharing in all things which are harmless, and keeping all his knowledge stored

¹ 1 Tim iii. 2 *sqq.*

up in the treasure-house of his soul. 537. Should any man think a solitary life and the avoidance of human intercourse a wonderful ideal, I myself will admit that this life is an example of patience, though I do not regard it as sufficient evidence of all the courage existing in the soul. He who is seated at the helm, while still in the harbour, can as yet give no sure test of his skill; but he who can guide his ship to safety in the midst of a stormy sea is, as all will admit, an excellent pilot.

CHAPTER VII

The life of the monk unfits him for government.

538. "WE need not then give undue or excessive admiration to the monk because, keeping to himself, he is not disturbed in spirit, and avoids committing many serious faults; for he has nothing to irritate and to excite his soul. Yet if a man has devoted himself to minister to the whole community, and has been constrained to endure the sins of the people, and after this remains firm and unwavering, guiding his soul through the tempest as in a calm, he deserves applause and admiration from all; for he gives sufficient proof of his innate courage. 539. Marvel not therefore that I, who avoid the market-place and human concourse, have not many to accuse me. 540. I should have no claim to admiration if I did not sin while sleeping, or if I did not get a fall because I did not wrestle, or if I was not wounded because I did not fight. 541. Tell me, who shall denounce and disclose my worthlessness? This roof of mine, or my cell?"

They cannot utter a sound. 542. Or my mother, who better than any one knows my character? Well, in the first place, we do not live together,¹ and we have never quarrelled. Yet, had this happened, no mother is so unnatural, and such an enemy to her children, that, without pretext or constraint, she should, in the presence of all, revile and slander the son of her travail, whom she bore and reared. 543. And yet, were any one to examine my soul carefully, he would find its many weaknesses, as you yourself know well, who are accustomed to praise me in the presence of all more highly than any one else. 544. I do not say this now from false modesty. Recollect how often, when such an argument arose between us, I told you that if any one had asked me to choose where I should prefer to attain fame, in the government of the Church or in the monastic life, I should have infinitely preferred the former. I never ceased in your presence to congratulate those who were able successfully to administer this office; and no one will deny that I should never have shunned a work which calls for congratulation, had I been competent to undertake it. 545. Yet what am I to do? Nothing is so fatal to Church government as this idleness and indolence which other people regard as a form of self-discipline, but which I use in order to veil my own weakness, and to dissemble and cloke most of my failings. 546. When a man is accustomed to enjoy so great a measure of freedom, and to live a life of complete leisure, however admirable his nature may be, he is disturbed by the want of

¹ From this it appears that (in spite of the entreaties of Anthusa in ss. 10-23) Chrysostom was not now living with his mother.

discipline, and is confused, and loses no small portion of his natural ability through not exercising it. If, however, he be a man of slow intellect, and inexperienced in such conflicts, as is the case with me, he will be no better than a mere figure-head if he accepts this ministry. 547. This is the reason why but few of those trained in that school attain distinction amid these conflicts; most of them prove hopeless failures, and suffer a hard and painful fate. And this is natural. Since the training is for a different kind of conflict, he who enters the fray is no better than if he were untrained.

548. He who approaches this arena should above all despise fame, should be superior to anger, should be filled with discretion. Yet the man content with the monastic life has no scope to exercise these qualities. He has but few to provoke him, that he may practise restraining the force of his anger; he has none to admire or applaud him, that he may be trained to scorn the praises of the people; and though in the Churches there is a demand for discretion, the monks make small account of it. When therefore they enter these conflicts for which they have never practised, they are perplexed, and dazed and helpless, and while they make no progress towards virtue, they generally lose the qualities which they brought with them.

CHAPTER VIII

Bishops trained as monks are liable to special temptations.

549. *Basil.* "What! Are we to take men of the world, whose minds are set on worldly business,

who are adepts in warfare and abuse, who are versed in countless artifices, and are accustomed to a life of luxury, and to set them over the government of the Church?"

550. *Chrysostom.* "Peace, my friend! These men must not even be considered when a search for Bishops takes place; but only those who, though having their life and conversation among men, yet can preserve their purity, their calm, their piety, and patience, and soberness, and all other good qualities of monks more unbroken and steadfast than those hermits do themselves. 551. For when one, who has many failings but can conceal them by his solitary life and render them harmless by never mingling with others, comes forth into the world, he will gain nothing except ridicule, and will increase the danger. 552. This had nearly been my fate had not God's care for me at once removed that fire from my head. 553. A man in this condition can no longer hide his defects when he comes forth into public life, but all his faults are exposed; and as the fire tries metals, so the test of the ministry distinguishes between men's souls, and if a man be passionate, or petty, or vainglorious, or boastful, or anything of the kind, it soon reveals and exposes all his shortcomings. 554. It not only exposes them, it also adds to their severity and power. When bodily wounds are chafed, their healing becomes difficult; so when the evils of the soul are roused and enkindled, they are wont to grow severer and constrain those who possess them to commit greater sin. 555. These excite a man, who is not on his guard, to love glory, and to become boastful, to covet riches; and the ills arising therefrom draw him on to be luxurious, and supine,

indolent, and by degrees to contract faults still worse. 556. There are many things in society able to upset the balance of the mind, and to check its onward course. 557. First of all comes intercourse with women. It is impossible for a prelate, who is concerned for the whole flock, to attend to the needs of men and to neglect the women, who require greater vigilance because of their tendency towards sin; nay, rather he whose duty is to administer the office of a Bishop must needs give as much thought, if not more, to women's safety. It is needful to visit them in sickness, to comfort them in sorrow, to chide them when indolent, and to help them when toiling. 558. When this is done an evil man can find many secret means of entry, unless he fortify himself with a strict guard. A look strikes him and fills his soul with tumult, and that from modest women and not only from the wanton, and their flatteries unman him, and their honours enslave him; and fervent love, which should be the cause of all good things, becomes the cause of numberless evils to those who do not use it aright. 559. It often happens that continual cares dull the keenness of his intellect, and when it might soar on high they bring it to the ground more heavily than lead, while anger often attacks him and smothers all within him as with smoke.

CHAPTER IX

The Bishop must be beyond suspicion.

560. "WHY mention the harm incurred by a Bishop through grief, the insults, the abuse, the criticism from high and low, from wise and foolish? 561. For this last class of people, deprived as they are of right judgment, are cavillers and will not readily make allowances. 562. But the wise ruler should not despise even these, but should refute their charges in the presence of all, with much gentleness and meekness, ever more prone to pardon their unreasonable complaints than to be indignant or angry. 563. For if the blessed Paul had not feared the suspicion of theft among the disciples, and on this account taken others also to aid in administering the money, "in order," he said, "that no one should blame us in the matter of this bounty which is ministered by us," must not we do everything we can to destroy evil suspicion,¹ however false it be, and however unreasonable and contrary to our character? 564. We are not so far removed from any fault as Paul was from theft; and yet, far though he was from this evil practice, still he did not disregard popular suspicion, although it was most unreasonable and insane. It was madness indeed to form any such suspicion about that blessed and wonderful soul; yet, despite this he removes far away all grounds of this suspicion though it was so absurd and no one in his sense would have suspected it. He did not spu

¹ Chrysostom himself suffered from a charge of this kind at the packed Synod of the Oak (403).

insane idea of the people nor did he say : " Whoever would have thought of suspecting us of such conduct, since we are revered and admired by all, both for our marvellous works and our forbearance all through our life ? " Yet, on the contrary, he foresaw and suspected this base suspicion, and plucked it out by the root, or rather did not suffer it to grow at all. Why so ? " We take thought for things honourable," he said, " not only in sight of the Lord but also in the sight of men." ¹ 565. We should show zeal like this, or rather a greater zeal than this, so as to remove evil reports at their birth, and to check their growth ; and also to foresee their source from afar, and to remove the pretexts from which they arise and not to wait for them to be formed and to be on every one's lips. Then it is no longer easy to destroy them ; the work is very hard and perchance impossible ; nor is it without damage, as they are only destroyed after the injury has been inflicted by the people. 566. Howbeit, how long am I to continue the pursuit of what may not be attained ? For to collect all the difficulties of the office is no less a task than to measure the sea. 567. For until any one is absolutely freed from human passion—and this is impossible—he must needs incur untold ills in order to rectify the errors of others. And when his own frailties are added, mark the abyss of his toils and cares, and the sufferings which he must needs undergo if he would overcome the faults of himself and others.

¹ 2 Cor. viii. 21.

CHAPTER X

It is better to avoid office than to fail in it.

568. *Basil.* "But as it is, have you no need of toil, and have you no anxieties, since you are living a private life?"

Chrysostom. "I have them even now. 569. How is it possible for a human being, who lives through this troublesome life, to be free from anxieties and conflict? But it is one thing to be plunged into a boundless sea, another to sail up a river. Such is the difference between the two kinds of anxiety.

570. As I am now, I should wish to be helpful to others, if only it were possible, and this is to me an object of much prayer; yet, if it be not mine to benefit another, it will suffice for me if I can at least save my own soul and rescue it from the deep."

571. *Basil.* "Then do you think that this is a great work? Do you think your soul will be saved if you are never of use to any other person?"

572. *Chrysostom.* "Your question is good and noble. I cannot myself believe it possible for him to be saved who never strives for the salvation of his neighbour. It was of no profit to that miserable man in the Gospel¹ that he did not diminish aught from his talent; nay, he was lost through not increasing it and restoring it twofold. 573. Howbeit, I think my punishment will be milder when I am charged with not saving others, than if I were accused of ruining the souls of others, and my own as well, by becoming far worse in character after receiving so great an honour. As it is now,

¹ Matt. xxv. 24.

I trust that my punishment will be fitted to the extent of my sins ; but after accepting this office I should receive not twofold or threefold but manifold punishment through causing many to stumble, and offending God after He has bestowed this great honour upon me.

CHAPTER XI

A Bishop is punished more severely than a layman.

574. "THIS was the reason why He accused the Israelites more severely, and showed that they were worthy of greater punishment, because they sinned after receiving the honour which He had bestowed on them, and He said : "You only have I known of all the families of the earth :¹ therefore I will visit upon you your iniquities ;" and again : "I raised up of your sons for prophets² and of your young men for Nazarites." 575. And before the time of the prophets, when he wished to show them that their sins received a far sorer penalty when they were committed by the priests than when they were committed by the people, He commanded as great a sacrifice to be offered for the priests as for all the people.³ This clearly shows that the priest's wounds required greater help, indeed as much as those of all the people together. They would not have required greater help unless they had been severer ; and their severity is increased not by the nature of the offence so much as because they are aggravated by the position of the priest who ventures to commit them. 576. Why do I

¹ Amos iii. 2.

² Amos ii. 11.

³ Lev. iv. 3. 14.

speaking of the men engaged in the ministry? The daughters¹ of the priests, who are of no account in the priestly office, still incur a far severer penalty than others for the same sins, by reason of their father's dignity; and though the offence is the same (it is fornication in both cases) when committed by them and the daughters of private citizens,² yet their punishment is far greater. You see the fulness with which God shows that He demands much more punishment of the ruler than of the subjects. It is clear that he, who for the sake of the priest, chastises the daughter of the priest more severely than others, will not demand of him to whom she owes the increased penalty the same punishment as he demands of others, but one far more severe. 577. This is only natural; for the loss is not borne by him alone, but it injures the souls of his weaker brethren who look to him. 578. Ezekiel³ wished to show us this when he separated the judgment of the rams and of the sheep.

CHAPTER XII

Two stories illustrate Chrysostom's withdrawal.

579. "Do you think that my fear is reasonable? In addition to all that I have said, if, in my present condition, I need great toil that I may not be utterly overthrown by my passions, yet I endure the toil and I shun not the conflict. 580. For even now I am overtaken by vainglory, but I often recover; I see that I have been overcome, and at times I rebuke my soul which was enslaved.

¹ Lev. xxi. 9. ² Deut. xxii. 21. ³ Ezek. xxxiv. 17.

581. I have evil desires even now ; but the flame they kindle is less violent inasmuch as my outward eyes cannot obtain fuel for the fire. 582. I am, however, utterly freed from slander or listening to slander, since there are none to converse with me ; for of a truth these walls cannot lift up their voice. 583. Howbeit, it is not so easy to avoid anger, although there be none to kindle it ; for often the memory of outrageous men and of their deeds falls upon me and inflames my heart, yet this evil is not permanent, for I quickly allay the fever and produce calm by saying that it is utterly profitless and extremely despicable to forget our own faults and meddle with those of our neighbours. But were I to come among the people and to be overcome by numberless distractions, I should not be able to have the benefit of this warning, nor to take myself to task in my meditations. 584. As men, driven down a precipice by some torrent, or some other force, are able to foresee the destruction which finally awaits them, but cannot devise any means of help, so I, when I have fallen into the great tumult of my passions, shall be able at a glance to see my punishment daily increasing ; yet it will no longer be equally easy for me, as before, to be master of myself and to rebuke my disorder as it rages on every side. 585. For my soul is weak and puny and falls a ready victim not only to these passions, but to envy, which is the bitterest of all. Neither does it know how to bear insults or honours with moderation, but is unduly exalted by the one and dejected by the other. 586. As then when savage wild beasts are vigorous and in good condition, they overcome all that contend with them, especially those that be feeble and inexperienced in combat, yet if they

be weakened by starvation, their spirit is crushed, the greater part of their strength is extinguished, so that a beast, not very valiant, can engage with them in battle and warfare. So it is with the passions of the soul; he who weakens them subjects them to right reason; but he who carefully fosters them makes his warfare with them harder, and renders them so formidable that he lives the whole of his life in slavery and terror. 587. What then is the food of these wild beasts? Of vainglory, it is honour and praise; of arrogance, it is excessive authority and power; of envy, it is a neighbour's reputation; of covetousness, it is the liberality of givers; of wantonness, it is luxury and the constant society of women; and so forth. 588. All these dangers will sore beset me if I come into the world; they will rend my soul in pieces and frighten me and make my warfare with them harder. Yet, if I remain here in retirement, they will be overcome, but even then only with great exertion; still they will be overcome by the Grace of God, and there will be nothing worse about them than their bark. 589. Wherefore I keep this cell; I never leave it, and have no intercourse or company with men. I endure to hear numberless other such complaints, and would gladly efface them, and suffer pain and sorrow because I cannot. For it is not easy for me to become sociable and at the same time to remain safe as I am now. Wherefore I beseech you, pity but do not rebuke one beset with this great difficulty.

590. Do I not yet persuade you? The time then is now come to utter the one secret which I had reserved. Perchance many will find it hard to believe; yet even so I shall not be ashamed to proclaim it. Although what I say is a proof of

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an evil conscience and of many sins, yet since God, Who is to be our Judge, knows all things perfectly, what gain can result to us from men's ignorance? 591. What then is this secret? From the day on which you informed me of this suspicion (as touching the bishopric) my whole system has been in danger of being utterly unhinged, such was the terror and such the gloom which overspread my soul. 592. When I thought on the glory of the Bride of Christ, her purity, her spiritual beauty, her wisdom, her comeliness, and when I reckoned up my own faults, I never ceased to lament for both her and myself, and amid continual distress and perplexity I reasoned thus with myself:— 593. "Who then gave them this counsel? Why did the Church of God make such an error? Why did she so provoke her Master as to suffer herself to be entrusted to me, the unworthiest of men, and to endure such great disgrace? 594. When I often considered these things by myself, and could not bear even the thought of so unheard-of a thing, I lay mute, like men stricken with madness, unable either to see or hear. When this condition of utter helplessness left me, for at times it was wont to abate, it was succeeded by tears and gloom; and after I had wept my fill, fear again entered in their stead, disturbing, and confounding, and agitating my mind. 595. Such was the tempest that abode with me during the time that is passed; and you knew it not, and thought that I was spending my time in perfect calm. But I will now try to reveal to you the tempest of my soul; perchance on hearing it you will pardon me and forget my misdeeds. How then, I pray you, how shall I reveal it? If you wished to see it truly, you could only do so by laying bare my heart. T this

may not be, I will try to show you as best I may, by some faint image, the gloom which smoulders within me; and from this image, do you please infer my misery.

596. Let us suppose that the daughter of the king, who rules the whole earth beneath the sun, is betrothed to a suitor, and that this maiden is so wonderfully beautiful as to transcend all human kind, and that thereby she far surpasses all the race of women; also that she has so virtuous a character that she greatly exceeds all men who have been and shall be; and that the charm of her disposition goes beyond all limits of training, and that the loveliness of her face eclipses all beauty of form. 597. Her suitor is enamoured of the maiden for these reasons, and is deeply in love with her as well, and therein casts into the shade the most ardent lovers that ever were. 598. Then while he is consumed with passion, he is told by some one that the wonderful maiden of his choice is about to be married to some vile outcast of low birth, crippled in body and utterly worthless in character. 599. Have I brought before your mind some dim idea of my sorrow? Does it suffice that my image should stop at this point? It is enough, I think, to describe my gloom; for this was the point of the comparison. Howbeit, to show you the measure of my abject terror, let me proceed now to another picture.

600. There is an army composed of infantry and cavalry and of marines; the number of its triremes covers the sea, while the hosts of infantry and cavalry cover the wide plains and the very mountain ridges. 601. The bronze of its armour reflects the sun, and the glitter of the helmet and shields sends back its rays; the clash

spears, and the neighing of horses reaches the very sky; neither sea nor land is visible, but everywhere bronze and steel. 602. Against this is arrayed the enemy, a wild and barbarous horde, and the hour of conflict is now at hand. 603. Some one suddenly seizes a raw lad, brought up amid the fields, and knowing nothing save the use of the shepherd's pipe and staff, and he invests him in brazen mail; 604. he leads him round the whole camp, and shows him companies and captains, archers, slingers, officers, generals, infantry, cavalry, spearmen, ships and their captains, the soldiers crowded on the ships, and the multitude of engines ready on board. 605. He shows him also the enemies' full array, their awful countenances, their strange weapons, their countless numbers, the ravines, the sheer cliffs and difficult mountain tracks. 606. He shows him also on the enemies' side horses flying by magic, soldiers borne through the air, and witchcraft of every power and form. 607. He tells him also all the disasters of warfare, the cloud of spears, the storms of arrows, the great mist and darkness, the black night caused by the multitude of weapons, hiding the sun by reason of their density, the dust which no less than the darkness blinds the eyes, the torrents of blood, the groans of those who fall, the battle cries of those who stand, the heaps of slain, chariot wheels dripping with blood, horses and riders thrown headlong down by the multitude of dead bodies, the ground in utter confusion, blood, arrows, darts, horses' hoofs and human heads lying in heaps, a man's arm and a chariot wheel, a helmet and a transfixed chest, swords with human brain cleaving to them, the broken head of an arrow with an eye pierced on it. 608. He tells him further of all the

perils of the fleet, some ships ablaze in mid-sea, others foundering with the soldiers on board, the roar of the waves, the cries of the sailors, the shouts of the soldiers, the sea-foam mingled with blood, and dashing over all the ships alike; the corpses on the decks, some sinking, others floating, others washed on the shore, some overwhelmed by the sea, others clogging the passage of the ships. 609. He informs this boy minutely of all the tragedies of war, he adds the terrors of captivity, and of slavery which is far worse than death. 610. At the end of this he bids him, "Go mount your horse right quickly and command the whole of that host." 611. Do you think that raw youth will suffice for this command? Don't you think he will faint at the very first glimpse?

CHAPTER XIII

The severity of the devil's warfare.

612. "DO not believe that I am exaggerating, nor think that, because we are shut up in this body as in some prison-house, and can see nothing of the invisible world, that what I say is overstated. You would have seen a far greater and more horrible conflict than that described above if you had been able to see with these eyes of yours the devil's league of darkness, and his mad onset. 613. He has no bronze and steel, no horses and chariots and wheels, no fire and shafts, none of these things that we see, but other engines of war, far more terrible than these. Against such foes we need neither breastplate nor shield, neither sword nor spear; yet

the very sight of that accursed host is enough to numb the soul, unless it be exceeding noble and enjoy the special providence of God as a guard of its own courage. 614. Had it been possible for you to strip yourself of this body, or even, while still clad in it, to see clearly and boldly with the naked eye the devil's whole battle array, and his methods of warfare against us, you would have seen no torrents of blood, no dead corpses, but so many fallen souls and such grievous wounds that you would think all that picture of warfare which I described to you just now was mere child's play, and not serious war, but sport; so many there be who are stricken down every day. 615. The wounds are not equally deadly in the two cases, but the difference between the two is measured by the difference between soul and body. When the soul receives a blow, and falls, it does not, like the body, lose all sensation, but there and then it is tormented by falling a prey to evil conscience; and after its departure from this world, at the hour of judgment, it is given over to eternal punishment. If any man feels no pain at the assaults of the devil, the danger is increased by his lack of sensation. He who feels no pain at the first blow will soon receive a second, and after that a third; for the evil spirit never ceases to strike until a man breathes his last, whenever he finds a soul supine, and ignoring his former assault. 616. Should you wish to examine the nature of his attack, you would find it far more severe and varied. No one knows so many forms of craft and guile as that evil spirit. By this means he has won his excessive power; and no one can feel such implacable hatred for his deadliest enemies as the evil one feels for the human race. 617. Should any man examine the

eagerness with which he fights, here again it would be absurd to compare him with human beings. If you chose the most violent and savage beasts and would compare them with his madness you would find them gentle and tame by comparison ; such fierceness doth he breathe forth when he assaults our souls. 618. Again, in the one case, the period of battle is short, but in that short period there is much respite ; the approach of night, weariness of slaughter, meal-times, and many other events intervene to give rest to the soldier, that so he may strip him of his armour and enjoy a brief respite, and refresh himself with food and drink, and revive his former strength by many other means. But in contending with the evil one you must never lay aside your arms, you must never take sleep if you wish always to remain unhurt. You must needs do one of two things—doff your armour and so fall and perish, or stand always armed and watchful. For he ever stands with his battle array, waiting for our forgetfulness ; and he devotes greater zeal to damning our souls than we devote to saving them. 619. This warfare then is far more difficult than the other, because he is unseen by us, and his attacks are very sudden, and these facts cause untold evils to those who are not always watching. 620. Would you then wish me to lead Christ's soldiers ? Truly this would be to lead them in the devil's service ; for whenever he who ought to array and order the rest is the most inexperienced and weakest of men, by his inexperience he betrays those entrusted to his charge, and thereby leads them in the service of the devil and not of Christ. 621. Why do you sigh ? Why weep ? For now my condition does not call for mourning, but gladness and joy."

Basil. "But not my condition; truly this calls for countless lamentations; now I can scarce understand to what depths of misfortune you have brought me. 622. I came to you desiring to learn what excuse I should make on your behalf to those who are accusing you; but you are sending me away with another care. I am not now concerned with the excuse that I shall make to them on your behalf, but the excuse that I shall make to God for myself and my own sins. 623. Nay, I pray and implore you, if you care for me at all, if there be any comfort in Christ,¹ if there be any consolation of love, if there be any pity and compassion, for you know that it was you yourself and no one else who brought me into this danger, stretch forth your hand, and say and do something that shall restore me, and do not be unkind enough to leave me alone for a moment, but, more than ever before, come and live with me."

624. I smiled and said:—"How shall I be able to help you? How can I avail to enable you to endure so heavy a work? Yet, since such is your will, take heart, dear friend, for whenever it may be possible for you to have any respite from the cares of your office, I will come to your side and comfort you, and nothing that I can do shall be wanting."

At this he wept the more, and rose to go. Then I embraced him and kissed his head, and led him forth, exhorting him to bear his fortune bravely. "For," I said, "I believe that, by the help of Christ Who called you and set you over His own sheep, you will obtain such boldness from this ministry that you may receive me on that Great Day into your everlasting habitation."²

¹ Phil. ii. 1.

² Luke xvi. 9.

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