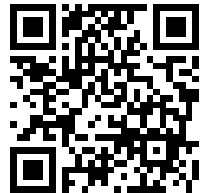

This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

<https://books.google.com>



THE WORKS OF
SAINT AUGUSTINE

*A Translation
for the 21st Century*

SERMONS



SERMONS

AUGUSTINIAN HERITAGE INSTITUTE

Board of Advisors:

**Gerald Bonner, Maria Boulding, O.S.B.
Gervase Corcoran, O.S.A., Robert Dodaro, O.S.A.
Allan D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A., Karl A. Gersbach, O.S.A.
Edmund Hill, O.P., John Page
Boniface Ramsey, O.P., Pierre-Patrick Verbraken, O.S.B.
Director: John E. Rotelle, O.S.A.**

THE WORKS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE

A translation for the 21st Century

Part III – Sermons

Volume II: Sermons 20-50

The English translation of the works of Saint Augustine has been made possible with contributions from the following:

Order of Saint Augustine

**Province of Saint Thomas of Villanova (East)
Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel (Midwest)
Province of Saint Augustine (California)
Province of Saint Joseph (Canada)
Vice Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel
Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel (Ireland)
Province of Saint John Stone (England and Scotland)
Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel (Australia)
The Augustinians of the Assumption (North America)
The Sisters of Saint Thomas of Villanova**

Order of Augustinian Recollects

Province of Saint Augustine

**Mr. and Mrs. James C. Crouse
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Henkels
Mr. and Mrs. Francis E. McGill, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Mariano J. Rotelle**

THE WORKS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE
A translation for the 21st Century

SERMONS

II
(20-50)
on the Old Testament

translation and notes
Edmund Hill, O.P.

editor
John E. Rotelle, O.S.A.

New City Press
Brooklyn, New York

grad
BR
65
.A92
E5
1990
pt. 3
v. 2

Published in the United States by New City Press
206 Skillman Avenue, Brooklyn, New York, 11211
©1990 Augustinian Heritage Institute

Cover design by Ben D'Angio

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Augustine, Saint, Bishop of Hippo.
The works of Saint Augustine.

Includes bibliographical references.

Contents: -- pt. 3. Sermons. v. 1. 1-19.

Introduction / Michele Pellegrino. v. 2. 20-50.
On the Old Testament

1. Theology -- Early Church, ca. 30-600. I. Hill,
Edmund. II. Rotelle, John E. III. Augustinian
Heritage Institute. IV. Title.

BR65.A5E53 1990 270.2

ISBN 0-911782-75-3 (pt. 3, v. 1)

ISBN 0-911782-78-8 (pt. 3, v. 2)

89-28878

Nihil Obstat: John E. Rotelle, O.S.A., S.T.L.

Delegated Censor

Imprimatur: Francis J. Mugavero, D.D.

Bishop of Brooklyn

Printed in the United States

af
1943030
Crede
6-13-46
LJL Jof

CONTENTS

- Sermon 20 — On the verse of psalm 51: *Create a clean heart in me, O God* 15**
For healing, look to the Lord — 15; Accuse yourself instead of looking for excuses — 15; A balance between desperation and excessive trust — 17; Don't put off conversion — 18
- Sermon 20A — On the response of psalm 57: *Have mercy on me, Lord, have mercy on me, for in you has my soul put its trust* . . . 22**
Temptation in the good and bad things of this world — 22; Don't put your trust in yourself — 22; Christ put on the clothes of a slave — 23; Long for that city which is eternal — 23; The sons of Zebedee — 24; All loftiness rises up from lowliness — 25; Where there's sharing there's comfort — 25; Put your trust in the Lord — 26
- Sermon 21 — On the verse of psalm 64: *The just one will take delight in the Lord and hope in him, and all the upright of heart shall be praised* 29**
To take delight in the Lord — 29; Don't let the Lord be far away — 30; Sin—bad use of things — 31; God is dearness — 32; Answer in faith to the words of faith — 32; Manumission of a faithful slave — 33; Render your master the same faith you demand from your slave — 34; Take cover under the hand that corrects you — 35; Job took pleasure in the Lord — 36; Use created things well — 36
- Sermon 22 — Sermon of Saint Augustine on psalm 68 41**
The prophet foresees what is going to happen — 41; God's providence — 42; Repentance is fruitful — 42; Wait for the judge without a qualm — 44; God's mercy — 44; Fruitful sorrow, not sterile repentance — 45; Melt in front of scripture — 45; The proud vanish like smoke — 46; God redeemed us with the blood of his Son — 47; Father God and mother Church — 47
- Sermon 22A — Sermon on the response from psalm 71: *My God, deliver me from the hand of the sinner* 51**
Love God gratis — 51; The example of Job — 52; First cling to him by faith, then you will cling to him by sight — 53; The enemy is the devil — 54
- Sermon 23 — A sermon preached in the Faustus Basilica on the vision of God 56**
Hearing the word is safer than uttering it — 56; In dread of slipping up — 56; We have no grounds for blaming scripture — 57; Carnal and spiritual listeners — 58; May God grant that the one who never wants to lie is not deceived — 58; Be a

temple yourself, and God will visit you – 59; Don't be afraid of God's arrival – 59; We have received the pledge of the Holy Spirit – 60; God will complete what he has given – 60; Splashed with the spray, on fire for the fountain – 61; Men and sons of men – 61; God is the fountain of life – 62; You love with love – 62; God can simultaneously be revealed and concealed – 63; Recognize the mystery in God – 63; As God's children we shall see him as he is – 64; Recognizable as God's children – 64; Lover of the good – 64

Sermon 23A – Sermon on the response from psalm 75: *We will confess to you, O God, we will confess and call upon your name* 68

Confessing to God means humbling oneself before God – 68; Such a splendid doctrine has come to us – 69; Christ showed us the way to humility – 69; It is rather shameless to call upon his name if you don't confess to him – 70

Sermon 24 – On the verse of psalm 83: *God, who is like you?* 72

Gratitude to God – 72; Living stones and dead stones – 72; Worshiping a senseless, insensible object – 73; Christians at peace with one another – 74; Each member of Christ's body must do his or her part – 75; If the Roman gods have disappeared from Rome, why do they still remain here? – 76; God gets angry and takes pity – 77

Sermon 25 – Sermon on the verse of psalm 94: *Blessed the one whom you instruct, Lord, and whom you teach from your law* 82

The testament is promised there, delivered here – 82; If you are hoping for the new inheritance, go beyond the earth – 82; From the moment we were thrown out of paradise we spend evil days – 83; A person takes his own war with him wherever he goes – 84; In evil days I learn to look for good days – 84; Lift up your heart – 85

Sermon 25A – A sermon of Saint Augustine preached in the Basilica of the Ancestors 88

Wicked people are like grass – 88; What to say to the rich of this world – 90; You who are poor, don't despise yourselves – 90; Supply the poor person's lack, and diminish your load – 91

Sermon 26 – A sermon preached in the Theodosian Basilica on a verse of psalm 95 93

It is God who made us, and not we ourselves – 93; The false doctrine of the Pelagians – 94; What free will is without God – 94; Nature is common to all of us, not grace – 95; God made us his people – 95; Christ, the mediator – 96; The Pelagian heresy – 97; The law does not give life – 97; The law is from God – 98; Elisha, symbol of Christ – 99; Creation is grace, justification is a great grace – 99; The potter has power from the same lump – 100; We receive everything from God – 101; Acknowledge the benefits you get from the shepherd – 101

Sermon 27 – On psalm 96, and on the words of the apostle: *On whom he will he has mercy, and whom he will he hardens. And so you say to me etc.* 104

The house of God – 104; Christ came to redeem the captives – 104; Who can blame a creditor for demanding payment of a debt? – 105; We were saved in hope – 106; What cannot be seen in the time of faith will be seen in the time of sight – 107; Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! – 108

Sermon 28 — On the verse of psalm 105: <i>Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice</i> ; during the fast of Pentecost ember week	111
Christ is the food which nourishes without perishing — 111; Light is the food of our eyes — 112; Sound remains in the ears, meaning goes down to the heart — 112; The Lord is Truth itself at the source — 113	
Sermon 28A — Fragment of a sermon on psalm 116:10-19 . . .	115
Sermon 29 — A sermon preached at Carthage in the restored Basilica during the vigil of Pentecost, on the verse of psalm 118: <i>Confess to the Lord since he is good</i>	116
God is good of himself — 116; Confession can mean either praising or repenting — 116; Confession of sins, not excuses — 117; Praise what makes you good — 118	
Sermon 29A — On the verse of the psalm 118: <i>Confess to the Lord since he is good</i>	120
Confession means the praise of our Lord — 120; The Lord is good and merciful — 120; If you confess to a man you are punished; if you confess to God you are set free — 121	
Sermon 30 — Sermon preached in the Bowery Basilica one Sunday, on a verse of psalm 119	123
The law's threats are fruitless when iniquity is the mistress — 123; By willing what is bad, he lost the power for what is good — 124; The struggle between the flesh and spirit — 124; Collapse and rebuilding — 125; Let not sin reign in our mortal bodies — 126; The doctor is calling us to himself — 127; For your sake God became man — 127; For one who loves it is easy — 128	
Sermon 31 — On the response of psalm 126: <i>Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy</i>	131
The martyrs spent themselves by confessing Christ — 131; Our head was sympathizing with his weaker members — 132; We all cry — 133; Exile doesn't long for home without tears — 133; The tears of saints and sinners — 134	
Sermon 32 — Goliath and David, and contempt of the world . .	137
The scriptures — 137; Listen attentively to the word of God — 137; David's courage — 138; The five pebbles were the law — 139; Allegory in scripture — 139; Symbolism of the stream — 140; Grace helps us to fulfill the law — 141; Do not rely on your own powers — 141; Through the doors of greed and fear the devil comes in — 142; The sign of the cross on our foreheads — 143; Do not let greed overcome you — 143; Do not be afraid of human threats — 144; Let us not love transitory things — 145; God knows when to give and when to take away — 145; Celestial and terrestrial happiness — 146; Exegesis of Psalm 144 — 148; Gospel and psalm disagree with temporal prosperity — 149	
Sermon 33 — On what is written in the psalm: <i>O God, I will sing you a new song</i>	154
Charity sings the new song — 154; The fullness of love is charity — 154; The first three commandments — 155; Seven commandments allotted to love of neighbor — 156; The Donatists do not sing the new song — 156	

Sermon 33A — Sermon preached at Utica on 11 September, on the words of psalm 146: *I will praise the Lord all my life, I will play music to my God as long as I live* 160

Faith and vision — 160; Life isn't long here — 161; The reason we become Christians is not to have it so good in this life — 162; Lazarus and the rich man — 163

Sermon 34 — Sermon preached in Carthage at the ancestors' . . . 166

We love because we are loved — 166; Let us love God with God — 167; Love is loved, though not seen — 167; Be yourselves what you sing — 168; If you want to acquire charity, look into yourself — 168; When you love, it is you who profit by it — 169

Sermon 35 — On the text in the proverbs of Solomon: *If you are wise, you will be so for yourself and for your neighbors: but if you turn out bad, you alone will drain the dregs of badness* . . . 171

Our neighbor's good life makes us happy — 171; True love of neighbor — 171; Hate evil, love good — 172

Sermon 36 — On the text in Proverbs: *There are those who affect to be rich though they have nothing, and there are those who humble themselves though they are rich. The redemption of a man's soul is his riches, but the poor man does not endure threats* 174

The value of riches in scripture — 174; Jesus took on poverty without losing riches — 175; All the faithful who are good are rich — 175; Do not set your hopes on the uncertainty of riches — 176; Who are the poor? The rich? — 178; Gold may glitter, but faith gleams more brightly — 178; Redeem your soul by giving alms — 179; Resisting threats — 180; The Pharisee and the publican — 181

Sermon 37 — Sermon preached on the birthday of the Scillitan Martyrs, in the new Marked Basilica, where it says: *A valiant woman, who shall find?* 184

The Church, mother of martyrs — 184; The Church redeemed by Christ — 185; Precious stones in the Church — 186; Spiritual and fleshly works — 188; The Church, zealous maidservant of the Lord — 188; A field that is worth eternity — 190; Light of hope — 190; The distaff and the spindle — 191; The Lord knows his own — 192; Christ, God and man — 193; The Son of Man will come in glory — 194; Buy yourself the living bread which came down from heaven — 195; Don't confuse what God has arranged in order — 196; True riches — 197; There are bad daughters, namely heresies — 198; The fruit of the Spirit is charity — 199; A wise woman will be blessed — 200; The haven of our labors, to see God and praise God — 200

Sermon 38 — On holding back and holding out: Or on restraint and endurance 208

Restraint and endurance — 208; The good and bad things mixed together — 208; Time for faith, time for sight — 209; Life shrinks, it doesn't grow — 210; Hate avarice, love wisdom — 210; If you wish to attain to life, keep the commandments — 211; He's the benefactor, and he's destitute — 212; I have made the poor your porters — 213; God is faithful and trustworthy — 214; Toil passes away, rest is coming — 215

Sermon 39 — On the text in Sirach: *Do not delay to turn to the Lord, nor put it off from day to day* 217

The last day is hidden from us — 217; The worm in the apple of riches is pride — 218; With death all riches are lost — 218; Christ wanted to be destitute for our sakes — 219

Sermon 40 — On the same text of Ecclesiasticus: *Do not be slow to turn to the Lord, nor put it off from day to day* 221

Wait patiently — 221; Put yourself right — 221; A little time left — 222; Don't put it off — 222; The uncertainty of tomorrow — 222; The need for vigilance — 223; Listening to the Lord — 224

Sermon 41 — On the text in Sirach: *Hold faith with a neighbor in his poverty, so that you may also enjoy his good times* 226

When a friend is poor, you shouldn't break faith with him — 226; Sirach 22:28 — 227; The poor man and rich man in Luke 16 — 228; The burden of Christ is a pair of wings — 229; Don't disdain and ignore the poor — 230; Take the word "neighbor" as meaning the name Christ — 231

Sermon 42 — On what the prophet Isaiah says: *What is the multitude of your sacrifices to me?* And on the section of the gospel where it says: *Forgive and you will be forgiven, give and it will be given to you* 234

Giving and forgiving — 234; God gives from heaven; he receives on earth — 235; Let God deliver you from yourself — 235

Sermon 43 — On what is written in Isaiah: *Unless you believe, you shall not understand* 238

The starting point of a good life, right faith — 238; Made to the image of God — 239; Believe in order to understand — 239; The prophetic word — 240; The fisherman — 241; Unless you believe, you shall not understand — 241; Help my unbelief — 242

Sermon 44 — On what is written in Isaiah: *He will come up like a sapling, etc. (Is 53:2)* 244

Like a root — 244; The growth of the Church — 244; The interior beauty of Christ — 245; The more deformed, the more lovely — 245; Blindness of the Jews about Christ — 245; Human and divine in Christ — 246; At the tomb — 247

Sermon 45 — On what is written in Isaiah: *But those who have given themselves to me shall possess the land and inhabit my holy mountain;* and from the apostle: *Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting our sanctification in the fear of God* . . . 250

Cleansing flesh and spirit — 250; Showing consideration — 251; The scriptures speak obscurely — 252; Land of the living — 253; The mountain of God is Christ — 254; The Church itself is a mountain — 255; Those who have formed a party are not on this mountain — 256; Every defilement of flesh and spirit — 257; The fear of God sanctifies us — 258; People becoming angels — 259

Sermon 46 – On the shepherds 263

Being Christians is for our sake – 263; Being in charge is for yours – 264; The apostle managed for himself – 265; Receive from the milk of the sheep – 265; Paul wasn't seeking his own advantage – 266; Shepherds feeding ourselves – 267; The pastor kills a strong sheep – 267; Christians are meant to imitate Christ's sufferings – 268; Participants in Christ's cross – 269; Strengthen the feeble – 270; Put up with what is bad – 271; Calling back – 272; Outward gains and inner losses – 272; Good and bad mountains – 273; The useless twigs – 274; God's oath – 275; Bishops cannot keep silent – 276; The blind leading the blind – 276; Do what they say, not what they do – 277; Christ's flock listens to his voice – 278; Mountains of Israel, authors of the divine scriptures – 279; Christ feeds with judgment – 280; The devil wants everyone going astray – 281; The astuteness of the heretics – 282; Good shepherds are not lacking – 282; Your voice must be Christ's – 283; Listen to scripture – 285; Hold fast to the open texts – 286; Song 1:6-7 – 286; Rebaptizers in Africa – 288; Exegesis of Habakkuk – 289; Origin of the Donatists – 290; Error is convicted by the plainness of the truth – 291

Sermon 47 – On the sheep 298

God made himself sheep to feed – 298; Pastors are also sheep with you – 298; Waiting for judgment – 299; Warning us, not yet judging – 300; Weeds and the good crop – 301; We have a judge – 303; The Lord is speaking by way of admonition – 303; God judges between sheep and sheep – 304; God dissolves stupidity and grants truth – 305; Your conscience is open to God; your conduct is open to your neighbor – 305; At times nothing is left to us except the testimony of our conscience – 306; The testimony of our conscience is our glory and our boast – 307; Goats and sheep – 308; The time of harvest – 309; The pride of the Donatists – 309; Where is the true Church? – 312; The Church scattered throughout the world – 313; Christ, prefigured by David, is the true pastor – 313; Christ is the shepherd; the Father too is the shepherd – 315; God's testament – 316; Ask if there is charity in the heart – 318; The fruit of the trees – 319; They disagree among themselves; but they all agree against unity – 320; They reproach Christians with the divisions of Christians – 321; We are God's possession – 322

Sermon 48 – Sermon preached on a Sunday in the Celerina Basilica, on the words of the prophet Micah, where it says: *What shall I fittingly offer the Lord, bending the knee to god most high, etc.* 327

Straight and right judgment – 327; The testimony of the saints – 329; Let yourself be checked by divine authority – 329; Be sure to have the good things that do make you good – 330

Sermon 49 – Sermon preached at the shrine of Saint Cyprian on a Sunday 333

Preface – 333; Justice and faith – 333; We are light and darkness – 334; Impossible to read the heart – 335; Judge yourself, don't spare yourself – 336; Love the person, hate the vice – 336; A speck and beam in the eye – 337; Forgive with all your heart – 338; Cast your eye on Stephen – 339

Sermon 49A – Fragment from a sermon on the prophet's words: *That a man should love justice and mercy and judgment, and be prepared to walk with the Lord his God* 342

**Sermon 50 — Sermon against the Manichees, on what is written
in the prophet Haggai: *Mine is the gold and mine is the silver* . . . 344**

Contentious comparisons by the Manichees — 344; God distributes riches wisely — 345; Good use of created things — 345; The mammon of iniquity in the gospel — 346; No person is per se bad — 347; True and false riches — 348; The treasure hidden in the field — 349; There shall come the one desired by all the nations — 349; The glory of God's house — 350; The error of the Manichees — 351

Chronological Table 353

Index of Scripture 356

Index 364

Sermons

SERMON 20

ON THE VERSE OF PSALM 51:
CREATE A CLEAN HEART IN ME, O GOD

Date: 419¹

For healing, look to the Lord

1. With voices in harmony and hearts in concord we have begged the Lord for our own hearts by saying, *Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew an upright spirit in my bowels* (Ps 51:10). On this text, then, I shall serve up to you by the grace of the Lord² whatever he may provide me with.

It's a psalm of someone repenting, someone wishing to retrieve the hope he had lost, lying where he had fallen, begging the Lord to give him a hand to raise him up again; like someone quite capable of injuring himself but not of healing himself. After all, we can stab and wound our own flesh whenever we want, but to heal it we look for a doctor; well, in the same way the soul is perfectly able to sin all by itself, but to heal the hurt it has caused by sinning, it implores the helping hand of God.

That's why he says in another psalm, *I myself have said it, Lord. Have mercy on me, heal my soul since I have sinned against you* (Ps 41:4).³ The reason he says *I myself have said it, Lord*, is to thrust before our eyes the fact that the will and decision to sin arises from the soul and that we are fully capable of destroying ourselves, while it takes God to seek that which was lost and to save that which had wounded itself. *For the Son of man has come to seek and save that which was lost* (Lk 19:10). It is to him that we pour out our prayers and say *Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew an upright spirit in my bowels* (Ps 51:10). Let the soul that has sinned say this, or it may perish twice over through despair, having lost itself once already by its delinquency.

Accuse yourself instead of looking for excuses

2. Of course, what we have to set our minds to first and foremost is not to sin, in case we get on fairly familiar and friendly terms with sin, as with a serpent.⁴ In fact, of course, it slays the sinner with its poisonous

fangs, and is not at all the sort of thing to make friends with. But if it should happen to catch you in its coils when you are weak, or creep up on you when you are getting careless, or grab you when you have lost your way, or trick you into losing it again,⁵ then you mustn't let it irk you to confess, and to accuse yourself instead of looking for excuses. That is what he prayed about in some psalm or other when he said, *Lord, set a guard upon my mouth and a door of self-restraint around my lips, and do not turn aside my thoughts to ill-natured words, to excuse upon excuse for sins* (Ps 141:3-4).

Is anyone trying to get you to sin? Well, you must simply refuse to. But have they succeeded? In that case you must rather accuse than excuse yourself. For, you see, this man who was saying *Create a clean heart in me, O God*, had begun in this way: *Have mercy on me, Lord, according to your great mercy* (Ps 51:1). Great mercy is implored by a great sinner. It is a serious wound that requires serious treatment. He continues, *Turn your face away from my sins and blot out all my iniquities. Create a clean heart in me, O God* (Ps 51:9-10). So God turns his face away from the sins of one who confesses and accuses himself and begs for God's help and mercy. He turns his face away from his sins by not turning away from him. Here you say to him *Turn your face away from my sins*, while in another place you say to him *Do not turn your face away from me* (Ps 27:9). He turns away because he doesn't turn toward; if he does turn toward something he turns it upside down. That is why judges in passing sentence on convicted criminals are said "to turn their attention to them."⁶ In order that God should not do that, that is, should not turn his attention to us in that sense, we say to him *Turn your face away from my sins*.

In order not to look at them closely, may he overlook them.⁷ However, if you want *him* to overlook them, *you* must look at them closely. Sin cannot go unpunished; it is not seemly for it to go unpunished, it's not proper, it's not fair. So then, because sin ought not to go unpunished, let it be punished by you, or you will be punished by him. Let your sin have you as its judge, not as its defending counsel. Take your seat upon the bench of your mind against yourself, and put yourself in the dock before yourself. Don't place yourself behind you,⁸ or God will hale you into the dock before him. That's why it says in the same psalm, as the easiest way of obtaining pardon, *Since I acknowledge my iniquity, and my sin is always before me* (Ps 51:3). As much as to say, "Since it is before me, don't let it come before you; and because I acknowledge it and look it squarely in the face, do you overlook it." So your sin is punished either by yourself or by God; if by you, then on its own without you, but if by God, then it is punished together with you.⁹ Let it have you as its punisher then, in order that you may have God as your defender.

Say "*I have done it. I myself have said it, Lord. Have mercy on me; heal my soul since I have sinned against you* (Ps 41:4). "I myself," he says, "have said it. You won't find me looking, as an excuse for my sin,

for someone who used me to sin with,¹⁰ or someone who forced me to sin. I don't say 'Luck did it.' I don't say 'Fate willed it like that.' And I certainly don't say 'The devil did it.' Yes, the devil indeed has powers to persuade and in the last resort to terrify, and even to cause serious annoyance, if God permits it. We have to beg the Lord for the virtue which will stop the devil's smooth tongue from trapping us or his rough tongue from breaking us. May he give us two virtues against both the charm and the threats of the enemy: the virtue to hold in and the virtue to hold out¹¹—to hold in our lusts from being trapped by prosperity, to hold out against our terrors from being broken by adversity. It says somewhere, *And since I knew that no one can be self-controlled and hold himself in unless God grants it* (Wis 8:21)—that's why the psalmist here went on to say to him *A clean heart create in me, O God* (Ps 51:10). And again it says, *Woe to those who have lost the endurance to hold out* (Sir 2:14).

So don't try to find someone else to accuse, or you may find an accuser you cannot defend yourself from.¹² After all, our very enemy the devil himself rubs his hands with glee when he is accused and blamed. It's precisely what he wants, you to accuse him, he wants to take whatever blame you care to put on him, because it means you are throwing away the chance of confessing. It's against this enemy's wiles that that man cries out "*I myself have said it Lord* (Ps 41:4). The enemy is wasting his time laying traps for me; I know his tricks, he's after my tongue, he wants me to say 'The devil did it.' No; *I myself have said it, Lord.*"

So these are the stratagems with which he leads souls astray and turns them away from the remedy of confession. He either persuades them to make excuses and look for others to blame; or else he persuades them, because they have already sinned, to despair and not even to consider the possibility that they may be able to obtain pardon; or else again he persuades them that God is quick to forgive everything even if we fail to correct ourselves.

A balance between desperation and excessive trust

3. So notice how many are the dangers that the heart of the repentant person has to be on its guard against. To avoid excusing itself and accusing someone else it should call to mind the verse *I myself have said it, Lord. Have mercy on me; heal my soul for I have sinned against you* (Ps 41:4). In order not to perish by giving up hope, so that because it has sinned and sinned very gravely it thinks it cannot now be healed and gives itself up to its lusts, to be dragged around by desires of all kinds to do whatever it pleases, though it is not permitted.¹³ Even if it doesn't do it, it is only fear of other people that stops it doing it. It's quite simply the gladiator mentality; because he has no hope of living, he does whatever he can do in order to sate his lusts and slake his desires, being like a victim already devoted to the sacrifice.¹⁴ Such people perish out of

despair. Against them and for them,¹⁵ that is to say against such thoughts of theirs, scripture was on its guard and said, *The very day the iniquitous is converted and does justice, I will forget all his iniquities* (Ez 18:21).

Again—the soul being cured of the sickness of desperation if it trusts these words, it finds another pitfall, and being unable now to perish from despair it perishes from hope. And who's the sort of person who perishes from hope? I'll sketch you his portrait: the kind of person who says to himself “Now God has promised to pardon all who turn away from their sins—the very day they are converted he will forget all their iniquities. So I will do whatever I want, and whenever I want to I will have a conversion, and what I have done will be blotted out.” What are we to say to that? That God does *not* heal the repentant whenever they turn back to him? God does forgive everything that has gone before. If we deny it, we contradict the divine indulgence, we clash head on with the words of the prophets, and we are struggling against the utterances of God. This is not the way of a faithful steward.¹⁶

Don't put off conversion

4. Someone comes straight back at me and says, “So you will give the green light to sins, and let people do whatever they like, promising them pardon, promising impunity when they turn back to God? Then it's all systems go for sinning; they will be carried away headlong, no one calling them back, desperate cases because of their hope.” But you don't imagine, do you, that scripture would be alert against despair and not be alert against a bad kind of hope? Listen to its alert against a bad and perverse kind of hope: *Do not be slow to turn back to the Lord, nor put it off from day to day. For suddenly his wrath will come and destroy you utterly in the time of vengeance* (Sir 5:7).

So where are you, evil-minded hopper? If you despair you perish, if you hope you perish. Where will you find a safe place to snatch yourself back from the brink of either pitfall and set yourself on the right road, serving God, taking pity on your soul, pleasing God? You were wrongly desperate, and you heard *On whatever day he is converted I will forget all his iniquities* (Ez 18:21). You were beginning to hope in the wrong way, and you heard *Do not be slow to turn back to the Lord, nor put it off from day to day* (Sir 5:7). On every side God's providence mercifully hedges you in.

But what's that you are saying? “God promised me indulgence: when I turn back to him he will give it to me.” Of course he will give it to you when you turn back to him, but why not turn back now? “Because whenever I turn back he will give it.” Yes, yes, whenever you turn back to him he will give it, but just when is that “whenever”? Why isn't it today? Why not as you listen to me? Why not when you cry out?¹⁷ Why not when you applaud? Let my shouting be a spokesman on your behalf,

let your shouting be a witness against you. Why not today? Why not now?

“Tomorrow,” he says. God promised you indulgence, it’s you who are promising yourself tomorrow. Or perhaps, just as you read to me out of the holy book about leniency being promised you on conversion, in the same way you are promised that you can put tomorrow off till tomorrow? Didn’t he put this there to give you a healthy fright at the start, didn’t he rebuke you sharply when he said, *Do not put it off from day to day, for suddenly his wrath will come* (Sir 5:7)?

But of course, as a wise man you are afraid you may not any longer have two days of a good life. If tomorrow is one of them let today be the other, let that be your two days. If there isn’t a tomorrow, then at least today will find you safe; and if there is a tomorrow for you, then it is added to today.

But you want to have a long life and you are not afraid of having a bad life. You want to live long and live badly. You are looking for a long evil – why not rather for a long good? Is there anything you want to have, and to have it not good? Is it only to be your life that is to go badly for you? If I ask you what sort of clothes you want, you answer good ones; what sort of farm, a good one; what sort of wife, a good one; what sort of children, good ones; what sort of house, a good one; only your life, a bad one. Above all your good things you value your life, and among all your good things it’s the only thing you want bad. All those things, you see, which you were wanting to be good, clothes, house, farm etc., you are ready to give up for your life. If someone says to you “Give me all your goods or I will take your life,” you are ready to give up all your goods and keep that even if it’s bad. Why don’t you want that to be good for which, even when it’s bad, you will give up all other goods?

So there you are—no more excuses. Begin the accusation or you will face condemnation.

After the sermon

5. We exhort you of your charity not to be reluctant to listen readily and carefully to the word of God which the presbyters will serve you with. For the Lord our God is the very truth, which you hear whoever he may speak through. And no one is greater among us unless it is the one who has been least. I had to speak to you first as custom requires. Now you do what I ask as love requires.¹⁸

NOTES

1. This sermon clearly has a number of points in common with the previous one, sometimes even the very same turns of phrase. One could infer, as a likely probability, that

one was preached very soon after the other, to different congregations, and as they are on practically the same theme it would have been natural for the preacher to repeat himself. This sermon is clearly preached in Hippo, as we can gather from the curious little appendix or "notice" at the end. So I would suggest as a pleasant possibility that Augustine preached Sermon 20 about a week at most after Sermon 19, when he got back home from Carthage.

The paragraph "after the sermon" is indeed very curious. The editor of the Latin text says that there are about ten such pieces among Augustine's sermons, but he does not say where they are to be found. A quick flip through the pages of Migne's reprint of the Maurist edition of Augustine's 363 genuine and 33 dubious sermons has turned up only one other "after the sermon" notice, attached to Sermon 111, in which Augustine urges the congregation to come on the next day to celebrate the anniversary of Bishop Aurelius' ordination. Aurelius was bishop of Carthage, the quasi-patriarchal see of Africa, and Augustine's slightly older contemporary.

Now for presbyters (or priests) to preach had been rare, if not indeed altogether unknown. Preaching was the bishop's responsibility. But this had led, at least in Africa, to an almost scandalous situation of practically no preaching at all. Augustine himself had been ordained by a conscientious bishop who keenly felt his own inadequacy as a preacher, to do his preaching for him. And Augustine threw himself into the "reform" movement of getting presbyters to preach, supported by Bishop Aurelius. So clearly it was a regular feature of church life in Hippo.

What is not easy to grasp is the precise situation conjured up by this little notice or admonition. The mind boggles at the thought that sometimes the bishop and clergy of Hippo put on a marathon preaching session, in which the faithful were expected to stand (they did not sit in church in those days) through three or four sermons, one after the other, non-stop. What they may have had from time to time is something like weekend retreats, or two or three days given to courses of sermon/lectures on some theme, with the bishop opening the session.

2. *In eius gratia*. The preposition is rather strange, and suggests rather more, perhaps, than my banal translation; it suggests that God's grace is the context, the atmosphere as it were, in which Augustine preaches and the congregation listens. An alternative reading, prompted perhaps by the unusualness of the phrase, is *in eius gratiam*. This would mean that Augustine was regarding his preaching as an instrument of divine grace for his listeners.

3. This is another case of Augustine adopting a very idiosyncratic reading of a psalm. The normal, and proper way of taking it is: "I myself have said, 'Lord, have mercy on me.'" But it is perfectly clear from all his comments throughout the sermon that he does not read it like that. So it would seem that the sin he has in mind is a sin of speech, saying something wicked. He never specifies what.

4. There is, clearly, an allusion here to Gn 3, and one could translate "as with the serpent." But there the serpent is the tempter, while here Augustine is comparing sin itself to a snake or serpent.

5. *Aut in errore secundo deceperit*. The editor of this Latin text and his predecessors feel doubtful about this phrase; the older ones emended it, while this editor feels he lacks any manuscripts' authority to do so. The meaning does not seem to me to be as obscure as they thought. My translation does assume that *in errore secundo* means practically the same as *in errorem secundum*. My guess is that even in Augustine's time, and on his lips, the sound of the ablative and of the accusative would have been almost identical. So even if he had said *in errorem secundum*—and I am inclined to think he did—the stenographer could have heard it as *in errore secundo*.

6. The technical word was *animadvertere*. In the Acts of the martyrdom of St Cyprian, sentence is passed on him by the proconsul with the words *Placuit Thascium Cyprianum animadvertisse gladio*: It is our will that Thascius Cyprianus should be "noticed" by the sword.

7. Here again, as in Sermon 19, we have play on the words *agnosco* and *ignosco*. Here I have felt it necessary to try to reproduce it as far as possible in the translation. Augustine goes on to explain *ignosco* in the following sentence: *Quomodo autem "nobilem" dicimus,*

"non" autem "nobilem" dicimus "ignobilem," sic "noscentem," "non" autem "noscentem" "ignoscentem": Just as we say "noble," and for "not noble" we say "ignoble," so we say "knowing" and for "not knowing" we say "ignorant." As the reader will observe, it doesn't work in English, because the peculiarity to be explained doesn't occur in English. So I thought it best to omit the sentence from the text altogether, and confine it to this footnote.

8. The place, perhaps, for a man's followers, clients and supporters in a Roman court.

9. A very difficult sentence, which also occurs almost word for word in Sermon 19, 2: *Ergo peccatum aut a te punitur aut a Deo, sed a te sine te, a Deo autem tecum*. In Sermon 19, *Punitur ergo aut a te sine te aut a Deo tecum*. On a normal reading—or listening—*sine te* and *tecum* would naturally qualify the agents *a te* and *a Deo*, so that, in this sermon's text, it would mean "So sin is punished either by you or by God, but by you without you, by God however with you." If Augustine's audience found that clear and simple at first hearing, then I take my hat off to their quickness of intelligence. My first impulse was simply to omit these phrases, but then I was shown that *a te* and *tecum* could be taken as going with the subject of the passive verb, which is "sin," and therefore I have so translated it.

10. *Quis de me peccaverit*; I take *de* here in the sense of "by means of."—I am just the material by means of which someone else sins.

11. *Continere* and *sustinere*: the two virtues being those of continence or self-control on the one hand, and endurance or patience on the other.

12. That is, God.

13. An unfinished sentence. It could be regarded as a complete sentence by treating the first phrase, *Ne desperando pereat*, as an exhortation, "Let it not perish by giving up hope." But as the previous sentence began with exactly the same form, *Ne . . . accuset alterum*, which had to be taken as a negative final clause to allow for the exhortation which follows, *veniat ei in mentem*, it is right, I think, to translate here as I have done, and find Augustine forgetting how he began his sentence.

14. *Tanquam devotus ad victimam*. The "devotion" of a victim, or of an animal to be a sacrificial victim, was part of the ritual of sacrifice—vaguely analogous to the offertory in the Mass. The most famous instance of the ritual of *devotio* in Latin legend and literature is that of the consul Decius Mus, I think in the fourth century before Christ. Seeing that his army was on the verge of defeat, he "devoted" himself to the *dii manes*, the ancestral spirits, and rushed into the thick of the battle to get himself killed. He was, and the Romans were victorious.

15. A glaring paradox, which he goes on immediately to explain: against their thoughts and for their salvation.

16. See 1 Cor 4:2. The bishop is the steward of Christ, who must be found faithful.

17. Shouting their approval of his oratory.

18. See note 1 above. The sentence about none of them being greater than the others except the one who had been the least alludes of course to the words of Jesus to his disciples on several occasions (Mk 9:34-35), when they had been arguing about who should be the greatest. More immediately its context is that Augustine lived in a religious community with his clergy, in which they tried to make this a principle of their brotherhood and common life together. His being the bishop should make no difference to that.

SERMON 20A

ON THE RESPONSE OF PSALM 57: *HAVE MERCY ON ME, LORD, HAVE MERCY ON ME, FOR IN YOU HAS MY SOUL PUT ITS TRUST*

Date: 420¹

Temptation in the good and bad things of this world

1. In both the good things and the bad things of this world, in all of them temptation is to be met. The good things are liable to deceive us with their blandishments, the bad things to break us with their menace. So because temptation is to be met in both sorts, that is in the good things and bad things of this present age, the Christian is never wholly safe. He must say and do with his whole heart what we have just been singing to God: *Have mercy on me, Lord, have mercy on me, for in you has my soul put its trust* (Ps 57:1). These words produce neither discouragement in the poor nor overconfidence in the rich; on the contrary, they bring hope to those who are feeling discouraged, and do not allow those who are standing on their own feet to get swollen-headed. No one at all, you see, whose soul has put its trust in God, is either made overconfident by good fortune or broken by bad. Such people know that all these things pass like a shadow,² but that he doesn't pass to whom they have said *In you has my soul put its trust*.

Don't put your trust in yourself

2. *In you*: it's slave speaking to master, creature to creator, thing made to maker, captive to redeemer, prisoner to liberator, and, to cut it short, man to God. Two things are proposed for man's acknowledgment, God and himself: God to put his trust in, himself not to put his trust in. It's all for nothing that people who give themselves a great deal of credit, it's all for nothing that they say, "I would never put my trust in that fellow; God forbid I should rely on him." Sometimes it is humility that says this, sometimes it's pride. It's good that you shouldn't put your trust in man—provided you don't put your trust in yourself. Whoever puts his trust in himself is either putting his trust in man, or else is not a man.

So there remains only one thing we are really free to say: "*Have*

mercy on me. As for any merit of mine to oblige you to have mercy on me, what can I put on the list? Not my just deeds, not my riches, not my strength. Not then because of my merits, but *because in you my soul puts its trust.*" He obtained a reward because he offered a sacrifice. And what did he offer? Not a bull, not a goat, not a ram, not incense from Arabia, not golden ornaments, not anything dearly bought and very precious, but what is dearer than anything else—himself.³ Nothing, you see, is dearer to God than the image of God.

Christ put on the clothes of a slave

3. So God puts everything under man, man under himself. You want everything God has made to be under you, see to it you yourself are under God. It's the last word in impudence for you to require the lower creation to be beneath you, when you won't even acknowledge him who created you to be your superior. God, then, so arranged what he created that he placed his image beneath himself and everything else under that. Accept him, and you will trample on man.⁴ Don't despise him, and then let anyone who likes to despise you; what harm can he do you, after all, by despising you, since God does not despise you? He laughs at the fellow who despises you, because he himself honors you with a crown.

"But he despises me." Christ was despised. He to whom you have said *In you has my soul put its trust* came here to be despised for your sake, and as one despised he redeemed you.⁵ You wouldn't have been redeemed if he hadn't been despised. And how did he come to be despised? By putting on the clothes of a slave, your form.⁶ As one thing he was hidden, as another he showed up. He was hidden as God, he showed up as man. He was despised as man, and glorified by God.⁷

4. Nothing therefore that people value so highly here below, nothing did he who made himself the way for us⁸ wish to have, though in fact he had everything. His were heaven and earth, by him heaven and earth were made, in heaven and above the heavens he was served by angels, he put demons to flight, he drove out fevers, he opened the ears of the deaf and the eyes of the blind, he controlled the sea, the winds and the storms, he raised the dead.⁹ He had the power to do so much, and so much was the one he made able to do against him.¹⁰ The creator of man was subject to man because he showed himself as a man, the liberator of man. He was subject to man, but in the form of man,¹¹ hidden as God, showing himself as man, despised as man, discovered as God, only discovered, however, because previously despised.¹² For you see, he wasn't prepared to give you glory until he had first taught you humility.

Long for that city which is eternal

5. Everyone has lofty desires. But what is there lofty on earth? So if

you have lofty desires, desire heaven, desire heavenly things, desire things higher than the heavens. Long to be a fellow citizen of the angels, set your sights on that city, yearn for that society where you will never lose a friend or endure an enemy, where you will find nobody who has been ransomed there, because no one will be able to kidnap anybody from there. That city, you see, is eternal, so no one is born there and no one dies, there is perpetual and genuine health there, because this health is called immortality. If you long to be there, you really have been seeking lofty things.

So you see where you want to go, you must now see what the way is. After all, there isn't anyone who doesn't want to be a fellow citizen of the angels, or to rejoice in God, over God, under God, to abide for ever, to suffer no change for the worse, not to be cut short by old age or weakened by weariness or finished off by sickness or death. What a great, what a lofty, what a desirable reality! You long to get there, you must look at the way to get there.

The sons of Zebedee

6. Just consider those two disciples of our Lord, the great and holy brothers James and John, sons of Zebedee; we read in the gospel how they desired of the Lord our God that one of them should sit on his right in the kingdom, the other on his left.¹³ These two weren't wishing to be kings on earth, they weren't desiring perishable honors from the Lord, like being loaded with riches, escorted by ostentatious retinues, saluted by clients, deceived by flatterers, but they clearly wanted a great and solid good, to have thrones in the kingdom of God on which no one would succeed them.

It's a great thing they have set their hearts on, and yet he doesn't pour cold water on their desires, but reminds them of the right order. The Lord observed their desire for sublimity, and very kindly taught them the way of humility, as though he had said, "You can see what you are aiming at, you can see who I am for you,¹⁴ and yet I who made you have come down to you, I have humbled myself on your account." These words I have just spoken, of course, are not read in the gospel, but I am giving the meaning of what the gospel says. Let me remind you of the words that are read in the gospel, so that you can see that what I have said springs from them, those words being the root, mine the branches.

So when the Lord had heard this request of theirs, he said to them, *Can you drink the cup which I am going to drink?* (Mt 20:22). Your desire is to sit on either side of me; tell me first what I am asking you: *Can you drink the cup which I am going to drink?* You are looking for thrones of sublimity; won't you find too bitter the cup of humility?

All loftiness rises up from lowliness

7. And yet where the requirement is hard, the consolation is great. The cup of suffering, the cup of humiliation, people will not drink it, they just will not. They seek high things, do they? Let them love lowly things. It is from the low that one rises to the high. No one erects a tall building unless they have first put down a deep foundation. Think of all these things, my brothers, be constructed, be built up by them to a strong faith, and see the only way along which you can reach what you desire. I know, I'm well aware of it: there's not one of you who does not desire immortality, to enjoy eternal sublimity in God's company. These are all things that we all desire. Let's see the way to get there, because we all love where we want to get.

So this is what I say: someone intends to put up a hut of straw, a temporary thing; he certainly doesn't dig a foundation. But if he's thinking of building a tall structure, of heavy materials, to last a long time, he doesn't first raise his eyes to where the top of the building is going to be, but directs his attention downward to how much he must dig out. And the higher the rooftop of the building is going to be, the lower down will go the ditch for the foundation. Who doesn't like to see tall standing crops? Before the tall standing crops of the future, you work at lowliness for the seed with the plough. The ploughman cuts low into the soil. The ploughman goes down with his ploughshare, in order that the crop may go up. The taller trees are, the deeper go their roots, because all loftiness rises up from lowliness.

Where there's sharing there's comfort

8. But you, O man, were afraid, I suppose, of suffering the insults humility endures. But to drink the cup, the bitter, bitter cup of suffering is good for you! Your intestines are swollen, you are inflated with wind and heartburn. Drink the bitter medicine, and hold on to health. The doctor drinks it, and he's in good health. Won't the feeble invalid drink it too? That's what he asked the sons of Zebedee: *Can you drink the cup?* He didn't ask them, "Can you drink the cup of insults, the cup of gall, the cup of vinegar, the bitter, bitter cup, the cup full of poison, the cup of all suffering?" If he had said that, he would have terrified, not encouraged them. But where there's sharing there's comfort. Why are you refusing it, slave? The master drank that cup. Why are you refusing, invalid? The doctor drank it. Why are you refusing, feeble fellow? The man in good health drank it. *Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink?*

Then they were so eager for the heights that, ignorant of what they could do, ready to promise what they didn't yet have, they said, *We can*. He answered, "*My cup you shall indeed drink*, because I grant you the power to drink it, because from being weak I will make you strong, because I grant you the grace of endurance so that you may drink the

cup of humility; *but to sit on my right hand or my left is not mine to give you, but it has been prepared by my Father for others* (Mt 20:22-23).¹⁵

If not for them, for what others? If apostles don't deserve it, who do? But who are the others? Among these two was that man John. Which John? The one, brothers, whom the Lord loved more than the rest, who reclined on his breast,¹⁶ who drank from his breast what he himself belched forth¹⁷ in the gospel. It's the very John who said, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was made nothing* (Jn 1:1-3). A great belching—but first there had been a great drinking! Do you enjoy what he belches out? See where he drank from. He was reclining on the Lord's breast. At that banquet he had drunk everything that he was to belch forth so felicitously in the gospel. So that's how great this man was, who reclined on the Lord's breast, and yet he too was told what you, beloved, have just heard: *It is not mine to give you; it has been prepared by my Father for others.*

What others, O Lord? If John didn't get it who reclined on the Lord's breast, if the one who reclined on the Lord's breast didn't get it, if he didn't get it who passed far beyond sea, air, sky and reached up to the Word, who passed beyond all these vastnesses and came to you as you are in your equality with the Father, if he didn't get this thing he asked for, who will get it? Well, the Lord knows, who said *it has been prepared for others*. What does that mean, for others? For the humble, not the proud, so for you too if you become "others," if you take off your pride, and put on humility.

Put your trust in the Lord

9. So finally, my brothers, we have learned something, we are learning; we sing, let us do it: *Have mercy on me, Lord, have mercy on me, since in you my soul has put its trust* (Ps 57:1). O lucky soul! Are you poor? Put your trust in him, because you won't find anything greater to put your trust in. Are you rich? Put your trust in him, because *all flesh is grass, and the glory of the flesh like the flowers in the grass. The grass has withered, the flowers have fallen, but the word of the Lord abides for ever* (Is 40:6.8).

Are you poor? Like Lazarus covered with sores, put your trust in him. Lazarus was poor, Abrahim was rich. When we hear in the gospel that that poor man with his sores died and was carried up by angels to Abraham's bosom, all the beggars, the sore-infested, the cripples, the rejects—when they hear that reading, what do they say? "He was talking about us." Perhaps a poor man in want, scarcely able to support himself, or a beggar perhaps, notices some rich man standing in God's house clothed appropriately to his station. When he hears that reading he says, "He was talking about me; I too, when I die, am going to be carried up by angels to Abraham's bosom." He hears the gospel say in the same

place about the rich man, that when he died he began to be tormented in hell.¹⁸ When the poor man hears this he says to himself, "He said that about me, this about him over there."

Don't get it wrong, poor man. Don't be afraid, rich man. He doesn't say it about you, poor man, if you are a drunkard. He doesn't say it about you, rich man, if you are full of loving kindness. He rewards loving kindness with a crown, not poverty. Sure, God is not going to say in his judgment, "Let the nobleman approach me, let the commoner depart from me." But neither is he going to say, "Let the commoner approach me, let the nobleman depart from me." What he is going to say is "Let the just approach, let the unjust depart."

So, poor man, hold onto loving kindness if you want to arrive. If you really want to know that what the Lord chose is loving kindness, and it's not riches that he condemned — *The poor man was carried up* — but where to? — *to Abraham's bosom*. Read what Abraham was, and you will find he was rich. The rich man went ahead and prepared hospitality and a home for the poor man. That's just what you have in the psalm, *all together, rich and poor* (Ps 49:2).

10. Let us glorify God and our Lord Jesus Christ in our good works, and say from the bottom of our hearts, *Have mercy on me, Lord, have mercy on me, because* — not in gold, not in silver, not in honor, not in wealth, not in a powerful friend, not in a crowd of supporters, not in a retinue of servants, but — *in you my soul has put its trust*.

NOTES

1. This sermon survives in a single manuscript, which is a liturgical collection of homilies for different feasts. It was assigned to the feast of Saints James and John, which the French Church of the eleventh century (the date of the manuscript) celebrated on 27 December, the day on which the rest of the Church celebrates John the apostle himself, without his brother. Augustine's African Church did not follow the French custom, so he did not preach the sermon for such an occasion.

It was first published in 1950 by the editor of this text in a periodical. He makes no suggestion about the date. The insistence on grace alone in section 2 may suggest a date after Augustine's controversy with Pelagius had begun in about 410 but the doctrine is not discussed in any polemical way. The reference to redeeming captives in section 5 (the translation talks of kidnapping) may indicate a rather late date, when law and order was beginning to break down, around the year 420 (see note 31 on sermon 21).

2. See Wis 5:9.

3. He is presumably talking about the psalmist, but in such a way that we can see Christ through the psalmist, which is very characteristic of Augustine. What he says does not seem quite consistent with what he has said a moment before about no merits. To offer oneself, particularly as Christ offered himself, is presumably very meritorious.

4. Not very happily put, because he doesn't want to encourage us to trample on, that is, despise, other people. But what he really means is that if you accept God as above you, you can snap your fingers at contempt and insults and so forth from other people.

5. See Is 53:3.

6. See Phil 2:7.

7. See Acts 3:13.

8. See Jn 14:6.

9. See Mk 1:23-27; 30-31; 7:32-35; 8:22-25; 4:39; 6:48; 5:41-42.

10. This is by far the most likely meaning, but the sentence could be translated, "He who could do so much, could do as much against the one whom he made." That would, however, make very little sense. Even if instead of "against the one" it were translated "for the one" (the Latin is *in illum*), it wouldn't fit into the sequence of thought.

11. See Phil 2:7.

12. I presume he means, discovered as God at the resurrection, but only because he had been previously despised as man in his passion.

13. See Mk 10:37; see Mt 20:21.

14. That is, presumably, for you I am God and your reward, in this precise context.

15. I think it is unlikely that Augustine's text really read "for others" (*aliis*) instead of "for whom" (*quibus*—both at the beginning of the phrase in the Latin). But that is clearly how he remembers it on this occasion; he remains consistent for the rest of the sermon.

16. See Jn 13:23.

17. In English "belching" is not a nice word, and metaphorically only used of such things as chimneys belching forth smoke. But in the Latin of Augustine's time it *was* a nice word, possibly because belching after a meal was correct etiquette, as still today in certain oriental cultures. I have to keep it here (though otherwise I would have translated it by something like "gushed forth"), because of his comment immediately after the quotation, where he quite obviously is presenting us with the image of a doughty pot-man belching.

18. See Lk 16:22-23.

SERMON 21

ON THE VERSE OF PSALM 64:
*THE JUST ONE WILL TAKE DELIGHT IN THE LORD AND HOPE IN HIM,
AND ALL THE UPRIGHT OF HEART SHALL BE PRAISED*

Date: 400-420¹

To take delight in the Lord

1. *The just man will take delight in the Lord and hope in him, and all the upright of heart shall be praised (Ps 64:10).*² We have certainly sung this with voice and heart. Christian consciences and tongues have spoken these words to God: *The just one will take delight*, not in the world, but *in the Lord*. *Light has dawned for the just*, it says somewhere else, *and for the upright of heart delight (Ps 97:11)*. You may ask where delight is to be found. Here you have it: *The just one will take delight in the Lord*. And somewhere else: *Delight in the Lord and he will give you the aims of your heart (Ps 37:4)*. What are we being shown? What's being granted us? What are we being told? To take delight in the Lord. But can you take delight in what you don't see? Or perhaps we do see the Lord? We have that safely promised us; but now *we walk by faith, as long as we are in the body we are away from the Lord (2 Cor 5:7.6)*. By faith, not by sight. When will it be by sight? When another thing John says is fulfilled: *Beloved, we are children of God, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be. But we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is (1 Jn 3:2)*. Then there will be great and perfect delight, then joy will be full, when it is no longer hope suckling us with milk, but the real thing³ providing us with solid food.

Yet even now, before the real thing comes to us, before we come to the real thing, let us take delight in the Lord. It's no trifling delight that is to be had in hope of the real thing that is coming later. Even in these temporal things, in the delights of the world, not the Lord, many people love all sorts of things and haven't yet got the things they love. Enthusiasm runs in hope, doesn't yet possess the real thing. For example, you love money, you wouldn't love it if you didn't hope for it. You love a wife—not married yet but still only engaged to be, and perhaps you love her while you are still only engaged and will hate her when you are married. How

could that be? Because when you have married her you find she is not really like what your imagination had pictured her to be before.

But God doesn't cheapen when present and grow more precious when absent. However much the human mind may pile on the superlatives for the good that God is, it falls far short of the reality, and it must be that you will find far more when you get there than you had been able to think or imagine. So we shall love him all the more when we see him, if we have been able to love him even before we have seen him. So now we love in hope. That's why he says *The just one takes delight in the Lord*. And straightaway, because he does not yet see him, he adds, *and will hope in him* (Ps 64:10).

Don't let the Lord be far away

2. However, we have the first fruits of the Spirit,⁴ and in another way, perhaps, we are near to the one we love, and now already, even if only slightly, we have a first lick and foretaste of what we are avidly going to eat and drink. How can we show this? Well, God whom we are commanded to love, in whom we are commanded to take delight, isn't gold, or silver, or earth or sky, or this light of the sun or anything that shines in the sky, or anything that glitters when bathed in light on earth. He is no kind of body at all. *God is spirit*. Therefore, he goes on, *those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth* (Jn 4:22.24). Not in some place for a body because he isn't a body: you shouldn't imagine, for example, that you can get nearer to God on a high mountain or by the height of a mountain. *The Lord is indeed high, but he looks on the lowly, while high things he knows from afar* (Ps 138:6), low things not from afar. Certainly he is high, and of course if he knows high things from afar, he ought to notice low things from even further. "If he is far from high things in his highness," someone says, "so that he knows them from afar, how much more is his highness withdrawn a long way away from low things." But it isn't like that. *For the Lord is high but he looks on the lowly*. How does he look on them? *The Lord is near to those who have broken their hearts* (Ps 34:18). So don't look for a high mountain, where you may kid yourself that you are nearer to God. If you lift yourself high up, he withdraws far away from you; if you humble yourself low, he bends down to you. The tax collector stood a long way off, and that made it all the easier for God to draw near to him; he didn't even dare to raise his eyes to heaven, and he already had with him the one who made heaven.⁵ So how are we to take delight in the Lord if the Lord is so far away from us? But don't let him be far away! It's you who make him be far away. Love and he will draw near; love and he will live with you. *The Lord is very near, do not be anxious at all* (Phil 4:5-6).

Do you want to see how he is with you if you love? *God is love* (1 Jn 4:8.16). Why let your thoughts and fancies fly far and wide, as you say to yourself "Can you imagine what God is? Can you imagine what God

is like?" Whatever you suppose, he isn't that: whatever you grasp with your thoughts, he isn't that. If it were what he is, it could not be grasped by thought. But so that you may have a taste of him, *God is love*. You are going to say to me, "Can you imagine what love is?" Love is what we love with. What do we love? A good beyond words, a good that does good, a good that is the creator of all goods.⁶ Let *him* delight you from whom you have whatever else delights you. I don't mean sin, because sin alone you do not have from him. Apart from sin, it is from him that you have whatever else you have.

Sin—bad use of things

3. So because I said "Let *him* delight you from whom you have whatever else delights you," don't immediately think of sin and start saying "Well, sin delights me, do I have sin from God?" Just see first that it may not be sin that delights you, but something else delights you when you commit sin. It is by loving irregularly something created or loving it out of turn, by loving created things against honest and lawful use, against the law and will of the creator himself, that you sin. It isn't the sin you love: but by loving badly what you love you are snared by sin. You desire the bait in the net, and unwittingly are draped in sin.⁷

At all events, this is how you defend yourself: "If it is a sin to drink a lot, why did God institute wine? If it's a sin to love gold—I'm a lover of gold, not its creator, God is the creator of gold—why did he create what it's wrong to love?" And so for all the other things you love badly, in which is to be found all self-indulgence, through which all sorts of outrageous acts are committed. Now attend closely, observe carefully, reflect and see that *every creation of God is good* (1 Tm 4:4). And there is no sin there, apart from your bad use of things.

So just listen to this, O man. You say, "Why did God set up what he forbids me to love? Had he not set it up, there wouldn't have been anything for me to love. Had he not set up a created thing which he tells me not to love, then there would not be anything for me to love, and I would not be damned for loving it." If the creature could have a voice, the creature which you love badly because you don't even love yourself,⁸ it would answer you, "You would rather God hadn't made me, so that there wouldn't be anything for you to love. Perhaps he shouldn't have made you either, so that there wouldn't be any you to do the loving?"

So now see how unfair you are, and how in your iniquitous unfairness you are caught out by your own words. You would like God to make you, he being above you, and you would rather he didn't make any good thing below you. Whatever God has made is good. Some are great goods, some are small goods, but all are good. Some are celestial good things, some are earthly good things; some are spiritual goods, some are bodily goods; some are eternal goods, some are temporal goods. But they are all good, because the one who is good made them good. And so it says

somewhere in the divine scriptures, *Set love in order toward me* (Sg 2:4).⁹ God made you as something good under him, and he made something lower on the scale, under you as well. You are under one, you are over another. Don't give up the higher good and bow yourself down to the lower good. Be upright, and so be praised, because *all the upright of heart shall be praised* (Ps 64:10). How is it that you sin, after all, but by treating the things you have received for your use in a disordered way, or out of turn? Be a good user of lower things, and you will be an upright enjoyer of the higher good.¹⁰

God is dearness

4. Now listen, and examine your own judgments, and question the things you deal with and yourself as dealing with them. There you are, engaged in business; if you start preferring silver to gold, lead to silver, dust to lead, won't you be judged by your colleagues, if you are a business man, to be clean off your head, and won't you be dismissed from their company, and called a dead loss, perhaps even in need of the drastic cure of having your head shrunk?¹¹ After all, what else will all your colleagues say, when you say "Silver is dearer than gold, or silver is better than gold"? Won't they all exclaim, "Crazy fellow, you're out of your wits, what's wrong with you?" Everyone in your family cries out "What's wrong with you?" when you prefer silver to gold. And nobody says to you "What's wrong with you?" when you prefer gold to God.

"How," I hear you say, "am I preferring gold to God? You see, if through some mental derangement I prefer silver to gold, the reason I am said to be deranged is that of two kinds of metal, both of which I can see, both of which I can look at, both of which I can handle, I prefer the cheaper to the more precious. But how can I prefer gold to God? I can see gold, I can't see God."¹² No, you won't get off the hook even this way. Why do you love silver? Because it's valuable, because it's worth a lot, because it is dear. Why do you love gold more? Because it is dearer. Silver is dear, gold dearer — *God is dearness* (that is, love) itself.¹³

Answer in faith to the words of faith

5. Look, I shall say something about God's gift to convince you more thoroughly how you can prefer gold to God, even though you can see gold and can't see God: and of course that's why you think you can't prefer it, because, well nobody prefers things they can see to things they can't see. Here you are, I'm telling you something. What do you think? Is faith silver? Is it gold? Is it money? Is it cattle? Is it earth? Is it sky? It's none of these things, and yet it's something. Not only something, but a great something. For the moment I am not talking about that higher faith, because of which you are called "the faithful" as you approach the table of the Lord your God, and answer in faith to the words of

faith.¹⁴ This I leave aside for the time being; I shall speak of that kind of faith which is also called faith (or trust) in ordinary matters—not the great faith which your Lord enjoins on you, but the faith you demand from your slave. About this kind, of course I say too that your Lord enjoins it on you: not to cheat anyone, to keep faith in your business dealings, to keep faith with your wife in your bed. This faith too your Lord enjoins on you.

Now what is this faith? You certainly don't see it; if you don't see it, why do you make such a fuss when it's broken with you? By the very fuss you make I prove that you do see it. You were saying, "How can I prefer gold to God? I can see gold, I can't see God." So here, you can see gold, you can't see faith, or, truth to tell, you do see faith. When you require it of someone else you see it all right: when it is required of you, you are not so keen on seeing it, eh? The eyes of your mind wide open, you shout, "Keep faith as you promised." The eyes of your mind tight shut, you shout, "I didn't promise you anything." In each case, open your eyes. You fraud, eliminate your crookedness, not your faith.¹⁵ Render yourself what you demand from others.

Manumission of a faithful slave

6. You bring your slave to church for manumission. Silence falls. Your certificate is read, or your wishes are executed.¹⁶ You say you are manumitting your slave because he has kept faith with you in all matters. That is what you love, that is what you honor, that's what you reward with freedom. You do what you can. You make him free, though you are not able to make him everlasting. Your God cries out to you, and uses your slave to show you are in the wrong. He says to you in your heart, "You brought your slave from your house to my house. You want to take him back, a free man, from my house to your house. So why are you a bad slave in my house? You are giving him what you can. I am promising you what I can. You make him free for keeping faith. I am making you everlasting if you keep faith with me. Why do you still go on arguing against me in your arrogance?"¹⁷ Render to your master what you praise in your slave. Or do you perhaps claim so much for yourself that you assume you have the right to have a faithful slave of whom you say 'I bought him,' and am I not to have the right to have a faithful slave, whom I *created*?" That's what the Lord your God is saying to you inside, where only you can hear, and the one who is speaking there is the one who speaks the truth. What, after all, could be truer than that speech? Don't turn a deaf ear.

Look, you love faithfulness in your slave. You certainly can't see faithfulness. Why just love it in someone else, and everything I've said in someone else, and in a slave whom you bought with money, but whom, all the same, you didn't create? Your master is dealing with you under a double relationship. "I both created you and bought you. Before you

existed," he says, "I made you. When you had been sold under sin by your own fault,¹⁸ I redeemed you." When you manumit your slave you tear up his indentures.¹⁹ God won't tear up your indentures. Your indentures are the gospel, in which is recorded the blood you were bought with. They remain, they are recited every day, you are being admonished about your status, reminded of your price.

*Render your master the same faith you demand
from your slave*

7. If the slave you are manumitting didn't render you faithful service, and didn't make himself worthy of your manumission by keeping faith with you, and you found him out cheating you in your own household, what a fuss you would make! "You bad slave, can't you keep faith with me? Don't you know I bought you? Don't you know I counted out my blood for you?" You make all the fuss you can, you hammer on heaven's door with your invidious gripes and grievances: "I gave my blood for you, you rotten slave." "It's true," they will all say when they hear you. But suppose that slave of yours has the guts to answer you as you carry on and shout at him, won't you blush if he says to you, "What blood, may I ask, did you give for me? When you bought me you didn't even prick yourself." But of course by your blood you mean your money. You are so fond of your money, you even call it your blood.²⁰

Your master will convict you out of your own mouth.²¹ "You call your money your blood, and that's why you exact faithfulness from the slave you bought, because you paid for him, not blood in fact, but coins or gold. You recall what I gave, don't you? If you don't recall it, I can read your indentures." If you don't recall it, read, read about the savior's death for you, about the lance that pierced him, the price of your redemption. A living person can give his blood, by pricking a vein, as I said,²² and still live. What your master says to you is something much more: "It was not while I was alive that my blood was shed. I bought you with my blood, yes. I can add, I bought you with my death."²³ What have you got to say for yourself? Render your master the same faith you demand from your slave. You can see gold, you can see faith too. You wouldn't demand it if you didn't see it; you wouldn't praise it if you couldn't see it; you wouldn't give him his freedom if you couldn't see it. But gold you can see with the eyes in your head, faith you can see with the eyes of your mind. Since the eyes of your mind are of greater worth, equally of greater worth is what you can see with the eyes of your mind.

But you prefer gold to this faith which your master enjoins on you. You don't pay back a sum entrusted to you, and you say "You didn't give me anything." Or to someone whom you gave nothing in trust you say, "Pay me back what I entrusted to you." You don't give back what you have received, you demand back what you haven't given. Carry on, gather it in. Pick it up like that, heap up round yourself the mud you are

being smothered with, by saying "Give" what you haven't entrusted, and by refusing what you have received in trust. Pick it all up, collect your loss-making profits. There you are, you have filled your strongbox, you have acquired much gold. Now inspect the strongbox of your heart — you have lost faith.

Take cover under the hand that corrects you

8. Come back then, if you have been sensitive to anything I have said, if you have blushed, if you have straightened out what was warped and crooked; come back, delight in the Lord, take pleasure in the Lord. In order to take pleasure in the Lord, take pleasure in what the Lord has commanded. Take pleasure in faith, take pleasure in hope, take pleasure in charity,²⁴ take pleasure in hospitality, take pleasure in chastity. These are all good, they are inner treasures, jewels of your conscience not your strongbox. Love being rich with these, because these are riches you cannot lose even in a shipwreck;²⁵ if you emerge from one stripped of everything, you emerge in fact with coffers full. In this way you will be upright of heart, and so you will be praised, not being the sort that blames your Lord if anything unfortunate happens to you in this world, and you will praise the rod of your Father, whose inheritance you are waiting for.

Take cover under the hand that corrects you. Don't avoid discipline, because the one who corrects you cannot make a mistake. The one who made you knows what to make of you, what to do with you. Or do you, perhaps, imagine that your designer and maker is so unskilled that he knew how to make you and then forgets what to make of you? Before you were he thought about you, because if he hadn't thought of you before you were, you wouldn't be. And now that you exist, continuing, living, serving him, will he despise you, look down on you? "He did despise me," you say, "because I prayed and he didn't listen to me." What if you were asking for something that you would have obtained to your hurt if you had obtained it? "I cried before him and he didn't give it to me." Silly child, what were you crying for? To get some material happiness, temporal happiness, earthly happiness. What if this kind of happiness you were longing for and asking for and crying for should be your ruin?

Just now I was talking about your slave: now learn a lesson from your son. Your little son is crying before you to lift him onto a horse. Do you listen, do you let him have his way? Are you being cruel, or in fact kind? Tell me, what is it, what's your reason for refusing? Can anyone doubt that the reason of course is love? You are saving up your whole estate for him when he is big, and while he is a little boy crying you won't lift him up on a single horse. Everything you have, house and whatever's in it, piece of land and whatever's in it, you are saving for him. And yet this little boy's crying and you won't lift him up on a horse. Let him cry all he wants, let him cry all day, and you don't listen to him, and it's out

of kindness you don't listen to him, and you would be cruel if you did.

So think now and ask yourself if your Lord is not perhaps dealing with you in the same way when you ask for unsuitable things and don't get them. Perhaps, you see, want may instruct you, plenty corrupt you. You are asking for the plenty of corruption, when what you need, maybe, is the want, the neediness, of instruction. Leave it to your God, who knows what to give you and what to take away from you. Because if he does give you what you are asking for badly, perhaps he gives it to you out of anger. Here's an example from the law. To the Israelites lusting the lusts of belly and gullet he listened in anger;²⁶ to Paul saying "Take from me the sting of the flesh" he did not listen, out of favor.²⁷

Job took pleasure in the Lord

9. Therefore, delight in the Lord, take pleasure in the Lord, not in the world. That man used to take pleasure in the Lord who, after losing all the pleasure of the world, still had the Lord with him to take pleasure in.²⁸ He kept a wonderful, simple, perfect, unutterable pleasure in his heart. He possessed what he used to have, wasn't possessed by it, but he was possessed by the Lord. He trod down all that, he depended on him. When everything he trod down was taken from him, he clung to the one on whom he depended. Here is what it means to take pleasure in the Lord. *The Lord has given*—notice him taking pleasure—*The Lord has taken away* (Jb 1:21). Did he take himself away? What he gave he took away, he who gave offered himself.²⁹ So he takes pleasure in the Lord. *The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away: as it pleased the Lord so it has come to pass; blessed be the name of the Lord.* Why should the slave be displeased with what has pleased the Lord? "I've lost my gold," he says, "I've lost my family, I've lost my herds, I've lost everything I owned. The one I am owned by I have not lost. I have lost my belongings, I have not lost the one I belong to. He is my delight, he is my riches." Why? because he isn't perverse, he isn't upside down, he hasn't thought lightly of the one who is above him and highly of the things that are below him. That, you see, is the perversity of using created things badly.

Use created things well

10. Why blame the one who gave you gold, when you are rightly to be blamed for wrongly loving gold. Have your gold, God says to you, I have given it to you, use it well. You want to adorn yourself with gold, think rather of adorning the gold; you want to be honored, you want to be graced by gold, think rather of gracing the gold, and not being yourself a disgrace to gold. He's got gold: he goes whoring, fornicating, leching, he puts on flashy shows, he gives outrageous presents to actors,³⁰ he gives nothing to the starving poor, he is no credit to gold. Won't anyone say, who assesses the matter rightly, "I'm sorry for the gold that comes his

way"? And what about you, if you have got gold? Now you are saying, "I'm sorry for the gold that comes his way. Oh, if only I had it!" What would you do with it? "I would take in strangers, I would feed the needy, clothe the naked, redeem captives."³¹ Fine talk before you have it; how will you talk when you do have it? If you are really like that, gold will be an adornment to you.³² If you really use gold like that, because you love him more who created gold, then you will be upright, loving higher things more, rightly using lower things. And you will delight in the Lord, as a just person you will take delight in the Lord. You will not be accusing your creator, you will be thanking your redeemer.³³ Amen.

NOTES

1. This sermon touches on several themes dear to Saint Augustine's heart that are formally developed in some of his more important writings: notably the relationship of God the ultimate good to all other goods, which comes into the argument of Book VIII of *The Trinity*, and the connected idea of things to be used and things to be enjoyed (*uti* and *frui*), which he develops at some length in his *Christian Doctrine*.

Such echoes from other works can sometimes justify a rough estimate of the date of a sermon, though never of course with any rigorous certainty. But in this case it is even more difficult than usual to attempt such a calculation, because both the works mentioned were composed at intervals over a period of twenty years or so, from about 400 to 420. So we can hardly infer any more precise date for the sermon than that period.

It is a thoroughly characteristic sermon, giving excellent examples of the vivid, down-to-earth quality of Augustine's imagination in his illustrations: here, the manumission of a faithful slave, and the treatment of a little boy wanting a ride on a horse. Another point worth noting is that, as usual, Augustine addresses himself to the socially superior members of his congregation almost exclusively, that is, to the well-to-do men. But this is not at all because he is a snob. What we have to realize in our imagination is that he is telling them about their typical "bourgeois," "male chauvinist" failings, greed and dishonesty and infidelity, in the presence of a congregation consisting largely of their social inferiors, their womenfolk and their slaves. Quite an effective form of social criticism, even though it never overtly questions the social structures of the time.

2. I read the last phrase as *et laudabuntur omnes recti corde*, as in the title, instead of *et gloriabuntur*, etc. as in the text. That Augustine's text read *laudabuntur* is clear not only from the title, but also from the last paragraph of section 3 and the first paragraph of section 8 below, the one point in the sermon where he alludes to this phrase of the psalm. It is true that the Vulgate has *laudabuntur*, so it is not easy to see where *gloriabuntur* comes from if it wasn't in Augustine's psalter. But in my view the evidence of section 3 and 8 is decisive.

3. A favorite little jingle of his, which cannot be reproduced in English, is the contrast between *spes* and *res*, hope and the "real thing" hoped for. See 1 Cor 3:2.

4. See Rom 8:23. It is a little obscure what he means by adding "and in another way, perhaps," *et aliunde fortasse*. I think his point is that as well as already being able to take delight in the Lord *in hope*, we can also have him really present to us, and therefore delight in him *in re* (in a hidden way) through *humility*. And perhaps it is this virtue that he is identifying with the firstfruits of the Spirit.

5. See Lk 18:10-14.

6. A theme developed at some length in *The Trinity*, Book VIII.

7. Reading *vestiris* with most of the manuscripts, instead of *vesceris* with the CCL edition, following the Maurists. In fact it makes for better sense. Sin is being compared to the net, the thing that snares, not to the bait. The fish swallows the bait, but doesn't then go on to eat the net, which is what the editors' emendation implies; it is "clothed," that is, caught, in the net (sin). Augustine is very carefully making the point that we don't delight in *sin* as such: we delight in some good thing or other (food, the bait), in a disordered way. So he wouldn't say we eat sin by eating the bait: the bait (the good thing desired badly) is not sin.

8. You love yourself truly when you love yourself as God loves you and "in order" to loving God, and to achieving your final happiness with him. He is already assuming the principle of an order in love or charity which will become explicit shortly. It is because you love yourself independently of God, so to speak, and not as ordered to God but as an end in yourself, as an absolute, (and hence don't truly love yourself), that you love other things wrongly, abusively.

9. The Hebrew does not yield this convenient sense for conveying the doctrine of the "order of charity." This basically follows the "order of being"—God the uncreated being at the top, so that he must be loved above all else; then intelligent creatures made in his image (human and angelic beings, but we don't have to worry about loving angels in any practical way), who are to be loved as "ordered to God," that is, as having their final destiny in him, and as so ordered can be loved in themselves, for their own sake—and must be loved equally with ourselves (love your neighbor as yourself); lastly other material creatures, which are not to be loved for their own sake, or as ends in themselves, but—shall we say—to be appreciated and used in an ordered way.

10. That is, of God. Augustine rather oversimplifies things by saying that only the higher goods, God and ourselves (and each other), are to be *enjoyed*, while the lower goods are only to be *used*; you enjoy ends, you use means. So it is disordered (hence sinful) to *use* God and people as means to ends, or to *enjoy* material things as ends in themselves. He doesn't in fact rule out such things as enjoying good food, or fine weather or music, though at first sight he seems to; but of course enjoying such things in proportion is a way, as we rightly put it in English, of "enjoying ourselves," which is what we are meant to do. It is making such material pleasures ends in themselves that he rules out: it almost invariably involves making other people, and even God, into means toward those ends. The theme is worked out at length in *Christian Doctrine*.

11. *Capite foto sanandus*. My translation is perhaps just a little malicious, since "head shrinking" and psychiatry were unknown in his day. I frankly do not know what *capite foto* means. *Foto* is the passive participle of *foveo* which means to cherish, hence to warm, like a hen hatching chickens. Perhaps there was a popular remedy for some kinds of lunacy, of wrapping the sufferer's head in hot towels.

12. The argument is a little more sophisticated than it sounds. The objector is arguing that it doesn't make sense to accuse him of preferring gold to God, since the two are not comparable, even less so than chalk and cheese. You can prefer cheese to apples, but hardly to red socks—or chalk. *A fortiori* you can scarcely prefer gold, a visible (i.e. material) thing, to God, an invisible (i.e. spiritual) thing. Augustine's answer, implicitly, is that the avaricious man treats gold as an end, or at most as a means to equally invalid ends, instead of seeing God as his only true end.

13. Much better in Latin: *Argentum carum, aurum carius, Deus ipsa caritas est*. The primary meaning of *caritas* is indeed dearness or value.

14. The faithful here are distinguished from the catechumens, who were not admitted to the eucharist. Answering in faith to the words of faith means either saying "Amen" to the words of consecration (the acclamations of our revised liturgy) or saying "Amen" to the words of administering the sacrament at communion, "The body of Christ," "The blood of Christ."

15. We do use "faith" to some extent in this kind of sense in English, but not nearly so easily as the Latin *fides*. Our more usual word is "trust" in this kind of context.

16. Manumission was the legal form by which a master, or mistress, gave a slave freedom. It literally means "sending by hand," and presumably involved, originally at any rate, some gesture of the hand. Constantine authorized the performance of the formality in the presence of a bishop, as well as of a civil magistrate, and no doubt Christians always did it in church before the bishop, who would be the official witness. The certificate or *libellus* would be the important part of the ceremony. A specimen of such a certificate survives among the works of a certain Ennodius, bishop of Pavia from 510 to 521. He composed it for an eminent parishioner called Agapitus who wished to set free his slave Gerontius. It is an exceedingly flowery document, too long to give here in full, which after a brief reflection on the ways of divine providence goes on to say they must be imitated by Agapitus rewarding his faithful slave, whose virtues are then recited, and are such that he showed he never really had a servile or slave-like character. Predominant among them is, of course, *fides*. An interesting point is that his master, in giving him his freedom, says he is giving him "the freedom of the city of Rome," that is, Roman citizenship. The same would have been the case in Augustine's time, indeed ever since a decree of the Emperor Caracalla about the year 220. The text may be found in PL 63, 257-258.

But Augustine's alternative to the reading of the certificate is interesting. No doubt there were some masters who were scarcely literate—certainly not as literary as Ennodius or Agapitus. So perhaps the *libellus* or certificate was not strictly necessary, and the manumission could be performed simply by a symbolic gesture and statement of intention, duly recorded of course in the diocesan register.

17. *In animo tuo*. If he had meant "in your mind," he would almost certainly have said *in corde tuo*. Here *animus* has a much stronger meaning as a particular trait of character, its nature to be derived from the context.

18. See Rom 7:14.

19. *Tabulas ejus*. Presumably something like the bill of sale, showing the master's ownership of the slave.

20. Don't let us forget all the slaves in the congregation, listening to the bishop with intense satisfaction, not unmixed with a certain amount of malicious glee.

21. See Lk 19:22.

22. In fact, through the mouth of the bold or "cheeky" slave brought into the conversation above.

23. He here quietly disposes of any magical conception of the redeeming power of Christ's blood. His blood simply stands for his death, and his death has redemptive power as the supreme expression of his love.

24. *Misericordia*; charity in the common or conventional sense of charitable works.

25. Hippo, where this sermon was probably preached, and of course Carthage where many of his sermons were preached, were both important seaports. So there would be quite a number of merchants and shipowners in his congregation, not to mention people like himself who had occasion to take a ship overseas to Italy and elsewhere.

26. See Ex 16.

27. See 2 Cor 12:7.

28. He is alluding to Job. Job, naturally enough figures in several of his sermons—but very rarely the Job of chapters 3 and the following; just the Job of the little moral legend with which the book opens and ends. I cannot help feeling this is cheating a bit. It means Augustine does not deal with the religious/moral problem the author wrestles with in the main body of his work.

29. The wordplay of *Quod dedit abstulit, qui dedit se obtulit* I have been unable to reproduce.

30. Acting was then regarded as a dishonorable profession, especially by the Church.

31. One wonders what captives needed redeeming. Those taken in raids by the barbarians of the desert, perhaps, or by pirates or even by the Vandals who began to enter Africa around the year 420. If the latter, that would give us a very late date for the sermon.

32. To be consistent with the rather bold figure of speech he used a little earlier on, he

ought to have said "you will be an ornament to gold," *eris tu in auri ornatu* instead of *erit aurum in tuo ornatu*.

33. Two genitives could be taken as subjective, where I have taken them as objective. So it could mean "You will not be accused by your creator, but thanked by your redeemer."

SERMON 22

SERMON OF SAINT AUGUSTINE ON PSALM 68

Date: 400¹

The prophet foresees what is going to happen

1. We have heard what was foretold in the words of the psalm—and we trembled. It says, *As smoke fades away, let them fade away; as wax melts from the face of the fire, so let sinners perish from the face of God* (Ps 68:2). I don't doubt, dearest brothers, that the hearts of all of you were shaken, and no one's conscience stood firm and fearless under the shock of these words. Who, after all, can boast that he has a chaste heart? Or who can boast that he is clean of sins? And therefore when scripture says, *As wax melts from the face of the fire, so let sinners perish from the face of God*, is there anyone who won't start quaking, who won't jump with fright? So what are we to do, and what hope have we got? These things, you see, are not sung for nothing.

Now when the prophet says all this, is he wishing it on people, or is he not rather foreseeing what is going to happen? The words, certainly, suggest a character who is wishing, but we should take it as just the foreknowledge of someone who is declaring. Just as some things in the prophetic writings are told as though they had happened in the past while in fact they are foretelling the future, so too some things are said as if expressing the speaker's wishes. But those who correctly understand what they hear will recognize the vision of a prophetic forecast. These psalms were spoken or written long before our Lord's birth at the incarnation—not before Christ as God, but before Christ born of the virgin Mary. Our father Abraham, of course, lived long before King David, in whose time these psalms were sung.² But the Lord said, *Before Abraham was, I am* (Jn 8:58). He is, after all, the Word of God through whom all things were made.³ The Word filling the minds of the prophets foretold that he would come himself in the flesh. Now to his incarnation belongs his passion. For he would be unable to suffer all that is described in the gospel except in the mortal flesh, liable to suffering, which he bore. There, as you know, we read how when the Lord was crucified his garments were divided among those who crucified him, and when they found that one of them

was a tunic woven from the top in one piece, they didn't want to tear it but cast lots for it, so that it would come whole to the one it fell to, because it stood for charity which cannot be divided.⁴ So the gospel tells the story of these events when they happened but many, many years before, while they were still in the future, they were foretold in a psalm and described as having already been carried out. *They dug my hands and my feet, they counted all my bones. They indeed peered and stared at me; they divided, he says, my garments among themselves, and for my vesture they cast lots* (Ps 22:16-18). It is all put in the past tense, and yet future events are being foretold.

Just as future events, then, are signified by words in the past tense, so in the form of someone wishing is to be understood the mind of someone foretelling. Thus the prophet foretells what is going to happen to Judas who betrayed the Lord as though he were wishing it on him.⁵ And about the Jews he says *Let their table become a snare, and a trap and a scandal* (Ps 19:22). The apostle explains that this is a prophetic forecast about them,⁶ just as the apostle Peter recalls what had been foretold about Judas under the same figure of speech.⁷

God's providence

2. It is not without reason that future events are described as though they had already happened. To God they are so certain that they can be taken as already having occurred, and when the prophet seems to be wishing what he foresees as certainly going to happen, this simply shows, in my view, that we ought not to be displeased by the known judgment of God which he has established as fixed and immovable.

That's why in the Acts of the Apostles, when a prophet called Agabus foretold that the apostle Paul would suffer many things from the Jews in Jerusalem and would end up in chains, and when the brethren on hearing this wanted to keep him back from going there, he said *What do you mean by upsetting my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound but even to die for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Acts 21:10-13). And so when the brethren saw the man's immovable constancy ready to endure everything, they said, *God's will be done* (Acts 21:14). So by saying *God's will be done*, were they wishing such sufferings on the apostle, do you suppose, or were they not rather with real devotion submitting their minds to what had been divinely determined on high? In the same way too, when the prophet says, *As wax melts from the face of the fire, so let sinners perish from the face of God* (Ps 68:2), he sees that this fate is hanging over sinners with absolute certainty, and he approves of what God has decreed, in case God should disapprove of him.

Repentance is fruitful

3. So what are we to do, brothers, but change our lives while there is

still time, and correct our behavior wherever it is bad? This, to stop what is undoubtedly going to come upon sinners, from finding us to come upon — not that we shan't be there, but I mean to stop it finding us to be such as those whom it was foretold it would come upon. The reason the judge threatens he is going to come is in order not to find anyone to punish when he does come. The reason the prophets sing about his coming is so that we should correct ourselves. If he wanted to condemn, he would keep silent. Nobody intending to strike says "Watch out!" Everything we have heard in the scriptures, brothers, is the voice of God saying "Watch out!" And everything we suffer, the troubles of this life, is the whip of God wishing to correct us now and not to condemn us at the end. They seem so hard, so grievous, so horrifying when they are described, the harsh things endured by anyone in this life; but compared with everlasting fire they are not even trifles — they are nothing at all. So whether it is we being beaten or others being beaten, let us take it as a warning. Everything, brothers, inflicted on us in this life by the Lord is a warning, prodding us to correct our faults.

But the eternal fire is coming, of which those set on the left hand will be told, *Go into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels* (Mt 25:41). Then indeed they will repent. It's written in one of the Wisdom books, *They will say to each other, repenting and groaning in anguish of spirit: What use has pride been to us, and what advantage has the boastfulness of wealth conferred upon us? It has all passed away like a shadow* (Wis 5:3.8-9). There will be repentance there, but it'll be fruitless. There will be repentance there, but it will bring grief, it will not bring healing. Now repentance is fruitful, when amendment is free. Repent at the voice of scripture, for at the voice of the judge when he is here you will repent in vain. Then he will already be about to pass sentence. And you will have nothing to find fault with when he passes sentence, because he hasn't kept quiet before sentence. He never denied you the chance of correcting yourself, seeing that he allowed the thief hanging on the cross to change. The thief hanging up there with the Lord believed in Christ at the very moment when the disciples were wavering about him. The Jews scorned him when he raised the dead; the robber did not scorn him as he hung on the cross at his side. There will be no saying to the Lord at the end, therefore, "You never let me live a good life," or "You never gave me time to correct myself," or "You never showed me what to seek and what to avoid." Notice how he doesn't keep quiet, notice how he gives you time, notice how he wheedles, urges, threatens. He has set up his word on high; throughout the world it is recited to the whole human race. Nobody can say any longer "I didn't know, I never heard."⁸ What is written in the psalm is being fulfilled, *Nor is there anyone who can hide from his heat* (Ps 19:6). So now his heat is in his word. Change now from his heat, and you won't melt like wax from his fire.

Wait for the judge without a qualm

4. It's certainly going to happen sometime, my brothers, though the wicked laugh at the idea now, and mockers pour scorn on it now because they think what is sung is untrue. It is going to happen some time.⁹ If so many things that were foretold haven't happened, then let us stop expecting that this will happen. But if we see everything that was foretold of the future Church already brought about so that it strikes even the eyes of the blind, then why do we doubt that this will happen too? When it was said that the Church of Christ would be found throughout the whole wide world, it was said by a few and laughed at by many. Now, what was foretold so long before has already been fulfilled. Thousands of years before, Abraham was promised, *In your seed shall all the nations be blessed* (Gn 22:18).¹⁰ Christ came from the seed of Abraham, now all the nations have been blessed in Christ. It was foretold that there would be schisms and heresies. We see them. Persecutions were foretold. They were carried out by kings who worshiped idols. For the sake of idols and against the name of Christ the earth was filled with martyrs. The seed of their blood was scattered, the crop of the Church sprang up.¹¹ Nor has the Church prayed in vain for its enemies. Those also who used to persecute came to believe. It was proclaimed that idols were to be overthrown by the name of Christ—this too we find in the scriptures.¹² Not so many years ago Christians were reading these things and not seeing them. They were still waiting for them in the future, and in that state they departed this life. They didn't see them, but still they believed they would happen as they departed in faith to the Lord.

In our times this can all be perceived. Everything that was foretold about the Church we see fulfilled. Is the day of judgment alone not going to come? Is it the only thing foretold that won't come about? Are we still of such hard and stony hearts that we can read the scriptures and see all this that was written happening to the very letter, and have no hopes about what yet remains? How much, after all, does remain compared with what we see has already been shown us? God has shown us so many things. Is he going to cheat us of the rest? The judgment will come, paying back our deserts, good things for the good, bad things for the bad. Let us be good, and wait for the judge without a qualm.

God's mercy

5. My brothers, now especially listen to what I have to say. I don't want to haggle with you about what's over and done with. Change from today, let tomorrow find you another person. We, though, in our perversity want God to be merciful without also being just. There are others, too, so confident about their own justice that they want him just and don't want him merciful. God shows himself to be both, he practices both. His mercy doesn't object to his justice nor does his justice eliminate his mercy. He is merciful and he is just. How can we tell he is merciful?

He spares sinners now, and pardons those who confess. How can we tell he is just? Because the day of judgment is coming, which he puts off for the time being but does not cancel. And when he comes he is going to pay back what we deserve. Or do you want him to give back the same to those who have turned away from him¹³ as he gives to those who have turned back to him? Brothers, does it seem just to us that Judas should be put in the same place as Peter? Yes, he too would be put there if he corrected himself. But he despaired of pardon, and preferred to put a rope round his neck rather than beg for the king's clemency.

Fruitful sorrow, not sterile repentance

6. So brothers, as I had begun to say, we have no grounds for finding fault with God. There will be nothing for us to say against him when he comes to judge. Let all of us think about our own sins, and amend them now while there is still time. Let us have fruitful sorrow, not sterile repentance. It's as if God were saying, "Look, I have indicated the sentence, but I have not yet passed it. I have named it provisionally, not fixed it finally . . . Why be afraid, seeing that I have said if you change, it changes?" It's written, you see, that God can repent. But surely God doesn't repent like a man, does he? Well, it says, *If you repent of your sins, I too will repent of all the evils I was going to do to you* (Jer 18:8). Does God repent as if he were wrong? No, repentance for God means a change of sentence. This change of sentence is not unfair but just.

Why is it just? The defendant changes, the judge changes the sentence. Don't worry; it's the sentence that changes, not justice. Justice remains unimpaired, because one who is just ought to spare the person who has changed his attitude. Just as he does not spare the obstinate, so he does spare the one who changes. The king of pardons is the same as the giver of the law. He sent the law, he came with pardon.¹⁴ The law had made you guilty, the lawgiver absolved you. Well no, he didn't absolve you, because absolving means finding not guilty.¹⁵ Rather, those who turn back to him he pardons their sins. We are all guilty, being all tangled up in our sins. None of us should hope to be found not guilty. All of us should pray for forgiveness. But forgiveness is granted to a change of heart. And so we shall have no qualms when we hear *As wax melts from the face of the fire, so let sinners perish from the face of God* (Ps 68:2).

Melt in front of scripture

7. In fact, brothers, let sinners perish from the face of God now. Now let sinners perish and let sinners not perish. If they begin to live justly, the sinners will certainly perish, but the persons will not perish. "Sinner," "man" are two nouns. "Man" is a noun and "sinner" is a noun. In these two nouns we can perceive that God made one of them and man made the other. God, you see, made man, man made sin. So why start

trembling when God says to you "Let sinners perish from my face"? What God is saying to you is: "Let that perish in you which you made, and I will preserve what I made."

Even now the fire is burning, the heat of the word is on, the fierce glow of the Holy Spirit, as I said just now that it is written in another psalm, *Nor is there anyone who can hide from his heat* (Ps 19:6). That heat belongs to the Holy Spirit we are told by the apostle: *Aglow with the Spirit* (Rom 12:11). So for the time being treat the scripture of God as the face of God. Melt in front of it. Repent when you hear all this about your sins. And when you repent, when you torment yourself under the heat of the word, when the tears also begin to flow, don't you find yourself rather like wax beginning to drip and flow down as if in tears? So then, do now what you are afraid of happening later on, and you won't have anything to be afraid of later on.

The proud vanish like smoke

8. Only don't let them fade away like smoke.¹⁶ You have both things in the text, not without reason perhaps, since there is also a difference among sinners. The psalm put both sorts in one sentence: *As smoke fades away, let them fade away*; and, *as wax melts from the face of the fire, so let sinners perish from the face of God*. Who are the ones who fade away like smoke? Who can they be but the proud, who do not confess their sins but justify them? Why are they compared to smoke? Because smoke heaves itself up, exalts itself to the skies. But the higher it gets, the more easily it disintegrates and vanishes. Think a little more about what I have just said. Smoke is denser when it is nearest the fire and nearest the ground. It hasn't yet thinned out like that, hasn't yet been scattered to the winds. So, when does it thin out and disintegrate and vanish? When it has exalted itself very much. So because the proud man heaves himself up against God like smoke against the sky, it remains for him to fade away likewise, to be scattered to the winds, so to say, by his ballooning vanity and thus to perish, just as smoke disintegrates as it billows upward, blown up in a great turgid, but not solid, mass. That's what smoke is like, after all. You see a great mass. There is something you can see, there is nothing you can lay hands on.

So, brothers, shun such a punishment more than anything, and don't try to justify your sins. Even if you go on committing them, don't justify them. Submit yourselves to God. And beat your breasts¹⁷ in such a way that the sins which are still there aren't committed any more. Try not to do these things, and if possible don't do any of them. But if it isn't possible for you to do none of them, at least keep that habit of pious confession. His mercy, you see, will then take notice of you, and because you are trying to root them all out, and succeeding insofar as he helps you, it will easily overlook what you are left with when you are overtaken on the journey and snatched away as you struggle on. Only aim at going forward,

not backward. If your last day does not find you victorious, let it find you at least still fighting, not captured and tied up.¹⁸

God redeemed us with the blood of his Son

9. Surely his mercy must be unlimited and his good will must know no bounds if he redeemed us with the blood of his Son, when our sins had reduced us to nothing. He certainly made something great, when he created man to his own image and likeness.¹⁹ But we wanted to become nothing by sinning, and we derived mortality from our first parents, and became a lump of sin, a lump of wrath,²⁰ and yet he decided in his mercy to redeem us at such a great price. For us he gave the blood of his only Son, who was born in innocence, lived in innocence, died in innocence. After redeeming us at such a price, he will scarcely wish those he has bought to perish. He did not buy us to destroy us; he bought us to give us life. If our sins are too much for us, God does not disregard the price he paid. It was a very great price he paid.

We, however, should not kid and cozen ourselves so much about his mercy if we make no effort at all against our sins. Nor should we hope, especially if we have committed capital sins,²¹ that mercy will be happily harnessed to iniquity. Do you imagine that people who have done nothing to correct themselves and to live accordingly, but have persisted in their hard and obstinate temper, have even accused God by justifying their own sins—do you imagine he is going to establish such people where he has established his holy apostles, prophets, patriarchs, and his faithful ones who have deserved well of him by serving him, walking in chastity, modesty, humility, giving alms, forgiving whatever they have suffered at anyone's hands? That's the way of the just, that's the way of the saints, who hold fast to God as their father, hold fast to the Church as their mother. They offend neither this parent nor that, but live in the love of both parents and hasten to their eternal inheritance without hurting their father, without hurting their mother, and so every single one of them is given the inheritance.

Father God and mother Church

10. Because two parents got us unto death, two parents have gotten us unto life. The parents who got us unto death are Adam and Eve. The parents who have gotten us unto life are Christ and the Church. My own father who begot me was Adam for me, and my own mother was Eve for me. We were born into this successive lineage of the flesh, by God's gift, to be sure—this too is the gift of none else but God—and yet, brothers, in what way were we born? Certainly, to die. Ancestors begot themselves descendants. Did they get themselves descendants with whom they would live for ever here below? No, but as bound to pass away they begot children to succeed them. But father God and mother Church do

not engender for this end. They engender for eternal life, because they themselves are eternal. And we have eternal life as the inheritance promised us by Christ.

Inasmuch as *the Word became flesh and dwelt among us* (Jn 1:14), he was reared and grew up. After suffering, dying and rising again, he received as his inheritance the kingdom of heaven. It was in being man that he received resurrection and eternal life. In being man he received it. In being the Word he did not receive it, because the Word abides unchangingly from everlasting to everlasting. So because it was that flesh, which rose again and being quickened ascended into heaven, that received resurrection and eternal life, this too is promised to us.²² We are waiting for that very inheritance, eternal life.

The whole body has not yet received it, because the head is in heaven, the members still on earth. Nor is the head going to receive the inheritance alone, leaving the body behind. The whole Christ²³ is going to receive the inheritance, the whole as man, that is to say, head and body. So we are members of Christ, we must be hoping for the inheritance. Because, when all this has passed away, we are going to receive that good which will not pass away, and going to escape that evil which will not pass away. Each is eternal. He didn't promise something eternal to his own, and threaten the wicked with something temporal. Just as he promised life, bliss, the kingdom, an eternal inheritance without end to the saints, so with eternal fire he threatened the wicked. If we don't yet love what he promised, let us at least dread what he has threatened.²⁴

NOTES

1. This sermon only comes to us in the rather thoroughly edited collection of Augustine's sermons made by Saint Caesarius of Arles, about which see Sermon 11, note 1. It comes in two quite distinct versions. I translate the version followed by the editor, with only very occasional references to the other.

Coming to us through Saint Caesarius it only remotely gives us Augustine's actual words. But it certainly gives us his doctrine and some of his favorite ideas, though perhaps the reader will agree that they are rather shorn of that vividness of illustration we have come to expect of him.

One scholar suggests some time between 400 and 405 for its date, but I do not know on what grounds. I have no reason to dispute it.

2. Augustine, like all his contemporaries, took it for granted that David was the author of all the psalms (except possibly where a psalm title indicates another author). We can no longer do that; we see, rather, the psalms being ascribed to David by the rabbinic tradition as to their patron saint, so to speak.

3. See Jn 1:3.

4. This was a very conventional symbolic interpretation. A variant of it is to see the "seamless robe" as representing the Church. Augustine would not object, since he regarded the Church as what one might call the concrete expression of charity.

5. See Ps 109:8.

6. Rom 11:9.

7. See Acts 1:20. Treating the so-called curses in the psalms as prophetic utterances was Augustine's way of dealing with the moral problem they present to Christians. It is hardly a way that will satisfy people nowadays. The curses were to a large extent a kind of legal procedure. The enemy, or sinners, on whom the psalmist wished these fearful pains, were usually people who were bringing false charges (as he saw it) against him in court. The only way he had of establishing his innocence was to establish their guilt—and that is what he is usually asking God to do. The case of Ps 109, the one quoted by Peter and applied to Judas, is rather more complex. Here the curses are almost certainly ones that the psalmist says his enemies are calling down upon him. Careful attention to the way the third person pronouns shift from the plural to the singular and back will bear out this view.

8. With our more extensive and accurate knowledge of both geography and history, we can no longer share Augustine's assurance on this point. But at least it was true of his congregation.

9. He means the last judgment, of course, as he will say explicitly in a few moments.

10. See Gn 12:3. See also Ps 22:27, another of his favorite texts foretelling the universal spread of the gospel and the Church.

11. For these further predictions, see Mk 13 and parallels in the other gospels, our Lord's eschatological sayings; also texts like 1 Jn 2:18 and 1 Cor 11:18.19. The idea of the blood of the martyrs being the seed of the Church is Tertullian's, another African, who lived about 200 years before Augustine.

12. I hardly think we do. There may be a vague reference to some stories in Daniel; for example, Dn 2 and 3. More likely he (Augustine or Caesarius?) is remembering some story from an apocryphal gospel, and attributing it to scripture—a rather dangerous encouragement to Christian fanaticism, of which Saint Paul would not approve (see Rom 2:22).

13. *Aversis*. Here Augustine incidentally gives us what sin essentially is: it is *aversio a Deo*, turning away from God.

14. He sent the law, according to the rabbinic tradition in which the law was given by angels (messengers) to Moses, and not directly by God: see Gal 3:19. This is a piece of Pauline rabbinics that Augustine is very keen on, because it highlights the difference between the Old and the New Testaments. He will use it to great effect in his *Trinity*, Books III and IV.

15. His usage was clearly different from that of the later Church, in which "absolution" means release from guilt by pardon.

16. See Ps 68:2, the first half of the verse. Round about here the second recension or version of the sermon (see note 1) has a very long alternative reading. It may, as the editor suggests, carry echoes of Augustine's own words, but it certainly lacks in clarity what it makes up in prolixity.

17. Here, no doubt, the congregation had already started to beat their breasts (their audience participation was very high), and the preacher is asking them to make it a really meaningful gesture.

18. *Addictum*. "Tied up" does not quite cover the meaning of the Latin. An *addictus* was a person "bound over" to the service of another because of debt. He is tied to service. So here, once captured by sin one is tied to its service. One is indeed a "sin addict," and this is what Augustine is warning us against becoming.

19. See Gn 1:27.

20. The metaphors are not perhaps quite so vivid in English as in the Latin. "Derived mortality": *traducem mortalitatis duximus*—the *tradux* is the vine tendrils which the vinedresser trains or draws along the trellis. Perhaps "drew the sap of mortality" would be closer to the original. The "lump of sin and wrath" is of course the baker's lump of dough, the lump that has gone wrong and is only fit to be thrown away. In his controversy with the Pelagians Augustine will often call the human race a *massa damnata*—a lump condemned by the divine baker (not yet turned redeemer) to rejection.

21. Capital crimes are, of course, those punishable by death. In transferring the notion

from criminal law to Christian morals, Augustine does not mean quite the same as what have come to be called mortal sins. The meaning is more restricted. In fact, in the early and patristic Church there were only three capital sins: apostasy, murder and adultery. The last is the one the preacher would have had principally in mind.

22. Because Christ's humanity is our humanity. His humanity is the model of ours—and not the other way round, as many of those who nowadays so rightly stress the true humanity of Christ are sometimes tempted to assume. So what Christ was, is and has become as man (and it is as man that he was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father), we too are able to be, ought to be and can become. It is from him that we learn fully what it is to be human.

23. A favorite expression of Augustine's for Christ together with his body, the Church. He goes on to say "the whole as man," *totus secundum hominem*, because "the whole Christ" could mean "Jesus Christ, true God and true man." But that is not what he wants it to mean here. Our oneness with Christ is through his humanity. Perhaps Augustine does not make quite enough of the truth that through our incorporation into the body of Christ we are given a participation in his *divine* sonship (see Gal 4:4-7; see also 2 Pet 1:4).

24. The second version or recension of the sermon has a completely different and somewhat irrelevant ending, from almost the beginning of section 10.

SERMON 22A

SERMON ON THE RESPONSE FROM PSALM 71:
MY GOD, DELIVER ME FROM THE HAND OF THE SINNER

Date: uncertain¹

Love God gratis

1. Every soul that attentively sings to God with the voice of the psalm, must surely begin to think of its own dangers, and be touched by a certain feeling of familiarity, if it happens at that time to be suffering from any trouble from without or difficulty from within, and if it refers what it sings to what it suffers. We have been singing the response: *Lord, deliver me from the hand of the sinner and from the hand of the wrongdoer and the bully* (Ps 71:4).² Perhaps each one of you, when he hears these words from the reader, or makes the response himself, only thinks of some enemy of his own who is telling stories about him, or scheming to have him thrown into jail, or forging against him a false mortgage deed;³ this is the one he is calling a sinner, this is the wrongdoer, this is the one he longs to be delivered from. You see him singing, and singing with deep feeling, even fitting his expression to the words of the psalm, sometimes also watering his cheeks with tears, and sighing between the words of the tune. Anyone without experience of assessing expressions of feeling will now praise that man and say, "He listens to the reading with such great feeling; oh, how he groans, how he sighs!" But he is thinking of that enemy of his, from whom he is dreading some slander, some violence, some fraudulent skulduggery, and with all his heart and soul, with voice, expression, sighs, he says *Lord, deliver me from the hand of the sinner and from the hand of the wrongdoer and the bully*.

Anyone singing like that, it's the old man singing, and trying with his materialist, literal-minded⁴ understanding to sing the new song even while he is old.⁵ If he sings the new song, let him sing as the new man. What does that mean, singing as the new man? Let him be renewed with the desire for a new life, let him yearn for something else, let him sigh to God for something else, let him be a lover of the kingdom of heaven. Let me put it more succinctly still: let him be a lover of God, let him love God, let him love freely, gratis and for nothing.

You see, it's on this point that the devil wanted to object to the holy man Job, and convict him, in a way, of being old in order to prevent him from attaining to what was promised him, the new man, when he said *Does Job worship God for nothing?* (Jb 1:9). So if he worships for nothing, he beats the devil; if he doesn't worship for nothing, he is beaten by the devil. The accuser's objection would be valid if Job did not worship the Lord for nothing. "The reason he worships you," he says, "is because you have given him so much." That's why God allowed Job to be tempted; he knew he was worshiped by Job freely and for nothing, but he wanted to give us the example of someone to imitate. His true character was known to God, but hidden from us. So now, see what happened to the devil's twisted cunning: he wanted to show up one man as a time-server, and he turned many people into imitators of a saint. He didn't subdue him to himself, instead he showed him to us. So how did this happen? How was Job perceived to be worshipping freely and for nothing? Because he didn't give thanks when he had things and blaspheme when he didn't have them, but he put God's pleasure before all his own riches, as though he were saying, "I have the one who did the giving, why should I set my heart on what he gave?"

2. So what I say, brothers, is this: anyone who worships God in order to get rich, in order to get the honors of the world, and asks him for these things, is manifestly not worshipping for nothing. He is worshipping for profit. If God doesn't give him these things, he should be given up, like a bad investment. One who gives is reckoned to be more worth worshipping. And the only one who does give is God. However, if some other being had given such things, they would all have given up God and rushed off to this other one, these lovers of such things. Aim at God, let God be your whole good, let God be your true good.

So when Job had been stripped of everything—but the devil had not managed to strip him of the one he loved freely and for nothing—he gave the devil a knockout punch with the words: *The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away; as it pleased the Lord, so has it come to pass* (Jb 1:21). He didn't continue, "And what can I do against the Lord? I will bewail my lot, because I cannot beat him."⁶ He said, *Blessed be the name of the Lord* (Jb 1:21). It was only for his children, whose sins he was worried about, that he tore his garments,⁷ praying for them, surely, with a father's affection. But that God should take them away he freely accepted, because he cherished God himself more freely still.

The example of Job

3. Someone stands up and says, "I don't worship God for riches, and he knows it, nor for fleeting and temporal honors." So what for, then? Let's be quite clear about the man who worships for nothing, who loves for nothing. So what for, then? "I don't want riches," he says, "I just

want enough. Let there be nothing lacking in my house, let me live safe and sound with my wife and my children. That's all I want." You're still not worshiping God freely and for nothing. He showed us this in the case of Job. The devil, with God's permission of course, stripped him of his riches, but it was the devil, not he, who took a toss, because he trampled on riches in order to depend on God. He stripped him of his health, God permitted that too. And it was proved that Job worshiped God absolutely freely and for nothing, not even worshiping and loving him for the health of his own body. And it wasn't just in one organ or limb that the devil struck him; from head to foot he made him rotten with sores. And this for his own greater undoing, to have him led captive in a more splendid triumph, in that he who had seduced Adam in his immortal state would be conquered by a man who was rotten with disease. So he struck him with grievous sores from head to foot, and as he was rotting away with worms he had to endure the nagging of his wife, who had been left to him as the agent of the devil. She played a real Eve, but he didn't play a real Adam. She threw in a suggestion of blasphemy, so that by losing patience he might also lose the one he worshiped for nothing. But when could he ever lose one he stuck to so loyally? How did he answer his wife's suggestion? *You have spoken like the silly woman you are. If we have received good things from the hand of the Lord, should we not endure evil?* (Jb 2:10). There you have someone worshiping for nothing, not even worshiping for the sake of bodily health, something we have in common with animals.

*First cling to him by faith,
then you will cling to him by sight*

4. So there is something else which God is keeping for us. That is what he should be worshiped for, that is what he should be loved for. He is keeping himself for those who love him. He wants to show his face to those who have purified, not their eyes of flesh but the eyes of their hearts. *Blessed, you see, are the clean of heart, for they shall see God* (Mt 5:8). Love in order to see, because what you will see is neither trash nor triviality. You will see him who made whatever else you love. And if these are lovely, what must he be like who made them? God doesn't want you loving the earth, he doesn't want you loving the sky, that is things you can see, but himself whom you can't see. But you won't always not be able to see him, provided you are not always not loving him. Love him absent, to enjoy him present. Long to hold him, to embrace him. First cling to him by faith, then afterward you will cling to him by sight.

Now, as a traveler, you are walking by faith and by hope. When you arrive, you will enjoy him whom you have loved as you traveled on your journey. It's he who founded the native country to which you should be hurrying to come. He has sent you a letter from there, not to put off returning from your travels. So if you are on your way to your native

country, where you are to enjoy its founder, now in the desert among many temptations, you should be on the lookout for the enemy. Learn who it is against whom you should be singing, *My God, deliver me from the hand of the sinner and from the hand of the wrongdoer and the bully* (Ps 71:4). The sinner is the devil, brothers, the wrongdoer is the devil, and so is the bully. It's from his hand you must wish to be delivered, so that on completing the trail along which he makes bold to set his ambushes, you may reach the country where he cannot gain entry.

The enemy is the devil

5. Listen to this to prove the devil is a sinner. It is written, *From the beginning the devil is sinning* (1 Jn 3:8). And will anyone deny that he is a wrongdoer and a bully? There is no greater wrongdoing than murder, is there? And who was the first to kill a man, but the one who led Adam astray?⁸ And he's a bully too, seeing that he acts against justice, because he has never remained in the truth. It is against this wrongdoer and bully that we sing *Lord, deliver me from the hand of the wrongdoer and the bully*. Don't sing it against your neighbor who tells stories about you, or against the strong man who moves your boundary mark, or against the mugger ready to murder you. These are all human beings, lying in wait for you. They are flesh, they are blood, they pass away. Listen to the apostle saying *Your wrestling is not against flesh and blood*. So who is the wrestling against? Against whom do we have to say *Deliver me, Lord, from the hand of the sinner and from the hand of the wrongdoer and the bully*? *Your wrestling*, he says, *is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities and the powers and the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places* (Eph 6:12). You guard against a man by avoiding him, against the devil by praying. A visible enemy can be avoided, can't he—wherever he is, you can take care not to be. You are avoiding someone you can see. How are you going to avoid someone you can't see? By praying. Pray against him; your weapons are those of prayer. You keep silent, that's why he waylays you; you pray, and he is on fire. But pray from your sincere and free love of God, that your prayer may reach him whom you love freely and for nothing.

NOTES

1. There is really no clue to suggest any particular date for this sermon. It survives in only one collection of manuscripts, preserved in the North Italian abbey of Bobbio, and now in the Vatican library. But see 23A, note 1.

2. The slight difference from the text in the title is almost certainly due to Augustine's

free, or careless quotation. Neither is exactly the same as the text of the Vulgate, so we cannot talk of "contamination" from that source in either case. But the very fact that he begins here "Lord," indicates he is quoting loosely. Toward the end of section 4 he begins the quotation "My God," as in the title, and toward the end of section 5 he quotes "Deliver me, Lord" instead of "Lord, deliver me."

3. *Chirographum*, the word used in Col 2:14.

4. *Carnaliter*. "Carnal" has far too narrow a meaning in English.

5. A favorite theme of Augustine's is this contrasting of the new with the old. It centers on Paul's contrast between the old man and the new man, Eph 4:22-24, Col 3:9-10, and then spreads out to embrace new wine, the new covenant, or as here the new song, which is a common concept in the psalms; see Pss 33:3, 40:3, 96:1, 98:1, 144:9, 149:1.

6. But as a matter of fact he does, for most of the book from chapter 3 onward. There is a certain lack of candor in the way Augustine simply ignores the main body of the book of Job.

7. See Jb 1:20.

8. Because he brought death to the whole human race, death being, according to the intention of the writer of Gn 2 and 3 and Augustine's correct interpretation of him, the consequence of Adam's sin.

SERMON 23

A SERMON PREACHED IN THE FAUSTUS BASILICA ON THE VISION OF GOD

Date: 413¹

Hearing the word is safer than uttering it

1. Let us take it that what we have been singing to the Lord has been proposed to us as a subject to talk about. Let my sermon to you be on this point. And may the one to whom we have said *You have held my right hand,² and led me along according to your will, and taken me up with glory* (Ps 73:23), may he take our³ minds up to a clear understanding, and assist us with his mercy and grace: me as I talk, you as you judge. For although to all appearances I am standing in a higher place than you,⁴ this is merely for the convenience of carrying my voice better, and in fact it is you who are in the higher place to pass judgment, and I who am being judged. We bishops are called teachers, but in many matters we seek a teacher ourselves, and we certainly don't want to be regarded as masters. That is dangerous, and forbidden by the Lord himself, who says *Do not wish to be called masters; you have one master, the Christ* (Mt 23:10). So the office of master⁵ is dangerous, the state of disciple safe. That's why the psalm says, *To my hearing you will give joy and exultation* (Ps 51:8). Hearing the word is safer than uttering it. That's why that man feels quite safe as *he stands and hears him, and rejoices with joy at the bridegroom's voice* (Jn 3:29).

In dread of slipping up

2. The apostle had taken on the part of teacher because his stewardship obliged him to, and just see what he says about it: *With fear and much trembling was I among you* (1 Cor 2:3). So it is much safer that both we who speak and you who listen should realize that we are fellow disciples under one master. Yes, it's unquestionably safer, and it helps enormously if you listen to us not as your masters but as your fellow pupils. Just see how anxiety is drummed into us by this text: *Brothers, let not most of you become masters, for all of us slip up in many ways*. Who wouldn't

shudder at the apostle saying “all of us”? And he goes on, *Whoever does not slip up in speech, this is a perfect man* (Jas 3:1-2). And who would ever dare to call himself perfect?

Well at any rate, the one who stands and hears does not slip up in speech. As for the one who is speaking, even if he does not slip up, which is difficult enough, imagine what he suffers from his dread of slipping up! So what you have to do is not only listen to us speaking, but also feel for us dreading; in this way for whatever we say that is true (since everything true is from Truth⁶) you will praise not us but him, and wherever being human we slip up, you will pray to the same him for us.⁷

We have no grounds for blaming scripture

3. The scriptures are holy, they are truthful, they are blameless. *Every divinely inspired scripture is useful for teaching, for reprovng, for exhortation, for doctrine* (2 Tm 3:16). So we have no grounds at all for blaming scripture if we happen to deviate in any way, because we haven't understood it. When we do understand it, we are right. But when we are wrong because we haven't understood it, we leave it in the right. When we have gone wrong, we don't make scripture wrong, but it continues to stand up straight and right, so that we may return to it for correction. And yet the self-same scripture, in order to give us some mental exercise, appears to speak in a crude, materialistic way in many places, though the law is always spiritual. *For the law, as the apostle says, is spiritual, but I am carnal* (Rom 7:14) or materialistic. So while scripture is spiritual in itself, nonetheless it often, so to say, goes along with carnal, materialistic people in a carnal, materialistic way. But it doesn't want them to remain carnal and materialistic.

A mother too loves to suckle her infant, but she doesn't love it to remain an infant. She holds it in her bosom, she cuddles it with her hands, she comforts it with caresses, she feeds it with her milk. She does all this for the baby, but she wants it to grow, so that she won't be doing this sort of thing for ever. Now look at the apostle. We can fix our eyes on him all the more suitably because he wasn't above calling himself a mother, where he says, *I became like a baby in your midst, like a nurse fondling her children* (1 Thes 2:7). There are of course nurses who fondle babies that are not their own children. And on the other hand there are mothers who give their children to nurses and don't fondle them themselves. The apostle, however, full of genuine, juicy⁸ feelings of love, takes on the role both of nurse when he says “fondling,” and of mother when he completes it with “her children.” It is this same nurse and fonder who says in another place, as I mentioned a moment ago, *With fear and much trembling was I among you* (1 Cor 2:3).

Carnal and spiritual listeners

4. "Well, what sort of people were they," you ask, "that he should have come to them with fear and much trembling?" *As though to babies in Christ*, he says, *I gave you milk to drink, not solid food. For you were not capable of it, and indeed are not capable of it even now; for you are still of the flesh* (1 Cor 3:1-2). He says they are of the flesh, or carnal and materialistic, and yet he calls them babies in Christ. He is reproofing them in such a way as not to give them up altogether as a bad job. As well as being of the flesh, they are little ones in Christ. He doesn't want them to be carnal and materialistic, though, as he shows by calling them babies in Christ. He wants them to become spiritual, assessing all things, themselves assessed by no one. *For the unspiritual^P person does not accept anything of the Spirit of God, as Paul himself says; for it is all folly to him and he is incapable of any knowledge of it, because it is spiritually assessed. The spiritual person assesses all things, but is assessed by no one himself* (1 Cor 2:14-15).

It's the same Paul who says, *We speak wisdom among the perfect* (1 Cor 2:6). Why speak then, if it's among the perfect? What need has a perfect man of your speaking? But you must ask yourself what he is perfect in. Perhaps, you see, I don't find him a perfect knower, but I already find him a perfect listener. So there is such a thing as a perfect listener, with a mind already open, who won't be upset in any way, won't get any indigestion from eating solid food. *Who is this, and we shall praise him* (Sir 31:9)? Yet I don't doubt there are some spiritual people, good at listening, good at assessment. With them I am in no difficulties. For either I am found to be carnal or materialistic, and he deals with me gently; or else he grasps what I am saying and rejoices with me.

*May God grant that the one
who never wants to lie is not deceived*

5. Here I am then, taking on the words we have just sung from the psalm, *You have held my right hand* (Ps 73:23). Give me a materialistic hearer and what will he suppose but that God has appeared in human shape, grasped that man by the right hand, not the left one, and led him along to his will,¹⁰ taken him up where he wanted? If that is what he understands, or rather if that is what he supposes, does he understand at all? Whoever understands, understands what is true; whoever supposes what is false, doesn't understand. So if the materialist supposes that the nature and substance of God has distinct parts and limbs, a definite shape, a finite quantity, a place to stay in—what am I to do with him? If I say "God isn't like that," he doesn't take it in. If I say "He is like that," he takes it in apparently, but I am deceiving him. I can't say "He is like that," or I would be lying—and not about anything at all but about my God, about my savior and redeemer, about my hope, about the one to whom I am stretching out my desire. It is no light thing to lie about one

such as that. To be deceived about such a one is grievous and dangerous. But to lie about such a one is destructive and ruinous.

And not everyone who lies is deceived. If he knows the truth and speaks what is false, he lies, he is not deceived. If on the other hand he thinks what is not true is true, he is deceived; and if he says what he thinks is the truth, he doesn't lie, but he is still deceived. May God grant that the one who never wants to lie is not deceived.

*Be a temple yourself,
and God will visit you*

6. So if, as I was saying, this little one of ours thinks that God is something like that, with limbs in their proper places in the body, of a particular shape and definite form, staying in one place, moving about from place to place, what about the psalm, *Where shall I go from your spirit,¹¹ and from your face where shall I flee? If I climb up to heaven you are there; if I go down to hell, there you are* (Ps 139:7-8). If he is in heaven, if on earth, if in hell, what is this little one going to do now? If he listens, let him not¹² join the Samaritan woman in looking for mountains and temples where he would like to go and visit God, from Jerusalem to the mountain of Samaria. Don't let him hurry off to some visible temple, don't let him look for any temple to visit God in. Let him be a temple himself, and God will visit him.

God isn't too grand to come, he isn't too fussy or shy, he isn't too proud—on the contrary he is pleased to come if you don't displease him. Listen to the promise he makes, listen to him indeed promising with pleasure, not threatening in displeasure: *We shall come to him*, he says, *I and the Father* (Jn 14:23). To the one he had earlier called his friend, the obeyer of his precepts, the keeper of his commandment, the lover of God, the lover of his neighbor, *We shall come to him*, he says, *and make our abode with him* (Jn 14:23).

Don't be afraid of God's arrival

7. The heart of the believer is not too small for him, though the temple of Solomon was. Solomon said so himself when he was building it: *If the heaven of heavens does not suffice you . . .* (2 Chr 6:18). And yet *the temple of God is holy, which is what you are* (1 Cor 3:17). For we, he says somewhere else, *are the temple of the living God*. And as though someone said to him "How do you prove that?" *As it is written*, says he, *I will dwell in them* (2 Cor 6:16). If some big man, a patron of yours, were to tell you "I'm going to live with you," what would you do? Since your house is rather small, you would undoubtedly be alarmed, in fact you would be terrified, you would hope it wouldn't happen. You wouldn't want to be caught receiving a big man in cramped quarters; your poor little house would be unable to cope with his arrival. Well, don't be afraid

of your God's arrival, don't be afraid of your God's feelings. He doesn't squeeze you out when he comes; on the contrary, he will give you more room by coming. To show you that he will give you more room, he didn't only promise his arrival, *I will dwell in them*, but also this plenty of room, by adding, *and I will walk about* (2 Cor 6:16). You can enjoy this plenty of room if you love. *Fear has to do with punishment* (1 Jn 4:18), so it means being squeezed; by the same token love means having plenty of room. Notice how much room love has: *Since the love of God*, he says, *has been spread out in our hearts* (Rom 5:5).

We have received the pledge of the Holy Spirit

8. But why were you trying to make plenty of room for him? Let the lodger himself make more room: *For the love of Christ has been spread out in our hearts*—not our own doing though, but—*through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us* (Rom 5:5). If love has been spread out in our hearts, and *God is love* (1 Jn 4:8,16), there you have a pledge, however slight, that God is walking about in us. You see, we have indeed received a pledge.¹³ And what must that thing be that is guaranteed by a pledge like that?

Though as a matter of fact the versions which have “earnest” are better than those which have “pledge.” The translators, of course, intended to say the same thing. But there is a difference between earnest and pledge in the ordinary way of speaking. When a pledge is given, when the thing for which the pledge was given is given back, the pledge will be taken back.¹⁴ I am sure many of you have caught on straightaway. I can see, from the conversations you are having with each other I can tell that those who have caught on are trying to explain it to those who haven't yet caught on. So let me put it a little more plainly in order to get home to all of you. Suppose you get a book from a friend of yours; to make him part with it you give him some pledge or other.¹⁵ When you give him back what you got, for which you deposited the pledge with him, he will have what you give back to him, and you will get back the pledge. He won't keep both things.

God will complete what he has given

9. So what then, brothers? If God now has given us love as a pledge through his Spirit, when he gives back the very thing he promised for which he gave us the pledge, is the pledge to be taken back from us? Surely not. No, instead he will complete what he has given. That's why it is better called an earnest than a pledge. Sometimes, for example, you are ready to pay a price for something you have received with your word as bond, and you pay a first installment of the price. Well, that is an earnest, not a pledge, because it has to be completed, not taken back.

So get it right now, then. Find me a lover; he has an earnest, a first

installment, and this earnest makes him desire its completion. Let him consider the earnest, because full payment will be made in the same coin as the earnest was given in. He must think about it, talk to himself about it, look at it, question it about that full payment which he cannot see yet, in case he starts desiring something else in full payment, other than what he has got an earnest of. Perhaps God is going to give him gold, is going to make full payment in gold, has already given an earnest in gold. What I'm afraid of is that you may desire lead instead of gold. So look at the earnest. If I may persuade you where to look — *God is love* (1 Jn 4:8.16).

*Splashed with the spray,
on fire for the fountain*

10. We have already received something from there, we have been splashed from there, sprinkled from there. Spray like this, what's it from, what kind of fountain? Splashed with this spray, but on fire for the fountain, say to your God, *For with you is the fountain of life* (Ps 36:9). This spray breeds desire, in the fountain you will take your fill. What is to be found there is enough for all of us. *But the sons of men will hope in the shelter of your wings* (Ps 36:7). Why do we set such great store on those benefits of God which he also bestows on the animals? That they are of course his benefits, who doubts? Who else ensures the safety of the tiniest of living things, but he of whom it is said *From the Lord comes safety* (Ps 3:9)?¹⁶

Men and sons of men

11. But the same psalm says, *Men and cattle you will save, O Lord, according as your mercy is multiplied, O God* (Ps 36:6-7). Oh how merciful, God, you are! You have such multiple mercy that it does not only reach people, but cattle as well. You are so strong on mercy that you make your sun rise on the good and the bad and you send rain on the just and the unjust.¹⁷ Have you nothing special for your saints, nothing of his own for the godly to get which the ungodly may not get?

Certainly he gets something special. Listen to what comes next. He had already said, *Men and cattle you will save, O Lord, according as your mercy is multiplied, O God*: and he went on straightaway, *But the sons of men*. So what, then? The ones you have just called men, weren't they sons of men? *Men*, he says, *and cattle you will save, O Lord, but the sons of men* — what about them, then? — *the sons of men will hope in the shelter of your wings* (Ps 36:6-7). This won't be together with cattle.

So why are both this lot and that lot men? Or aren't the sons of men also men? For sure the sons of men are also men. So where does this distinction come from, except that there is a man who wasn't a son of man? The man who was not a son of man was Adam; the man who is a son of man is Christ. *As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made*

alive (1 Cor 15:22). Those who die look for the same safety as the cattle, those who die with no further life in store for them. The ones who look for safety with the sons of men are those who die in such a way that they may never die again. The distinction has been clarified. That lot belong to the man, they are men; this lot, the sons of men, belong to the Son of man.

God is the fountain of life

12. So how does it go on? *But the sons of men will hope in the shelter of your wings.* O.K., I'm hoping, O.K., there's hope. *But hope that is seen is not hope* (Rom 8:24). So there are things to come that are promised, and they will make us drunk: *They will get drunk on the abundance of your house* (Ps 36:8). Now I am afraid that just as a little while ago he was looking for the limbs of a body in God, so now he may possibly think of his drunkenness as the sottishness of carnal drinking bouts, not as the lavish enjoyment of good things beyond telling. Still, we have to talk like this. He must think what he can, if he can't think in a more grown up way. While he is growing up, don't let him leave the bosom.¹⁸

Let's carry on, and those of us who can, as much as we can, enjoy spiritual delights. *They will get drunk*, he says, *on the abundance of your house, and from the torrent of your pleasure you will give them to drink.* What wine will that be, what juice of the vine, what crystal stream, what honey, what nectar? You ask what it will be? *For with you is the fountain of life.* Drink, if you can, life. Get your conscience ready, not your gullet, your mind, not your guts. If you have been listening, if you have understood, if you have loved as much as you have been able to, then you have already been drinking it.

You love with love

13. Notice what you have been drinking, though. You have been drinking love. If you recognize it, *God is love* (1 Jn 4:8.16). So if you have been drinking love, tell me what place you have drunk it in. If you recognize it, if you have seen it, if you love it, what do you love it with? After all, whatever you love rightly, you love with love. And how can you love anything with love if you don't love? So if you love it, what do you love it with? It comes to you, and you recognize it, and you see it. And it isn't seen in a place, nor looked for with the eyes in your head in order to be loved more intensely. You don't hear it talking to you, and when it has come to you you didn't perceive it coming in. Have you ever felt the feet of love walking about in your heart?¹⁹ So what is it? Whose is this thing which is already in you, and is not grasped by you? That's how you must learn to love God.

God can simultaneously be revealed and concealed

14. But he walked about in paradise;²⁰ but he was seen at the oak of Mambre;²¹ but he spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai face to face.²² And what do you get from that? Here is one who is seen in a place—and his entry is not perceived.²³ Do you want to hear Moses himself on the subject, in case, though I'm trying to feed you, you weary me like a fretful baby? So do you want to hear Moses himself? Sure, he was talking to God face to face. So to who else did he say *If I have found favor in your sight, show yourself to me* (Ex 33:13), if not to the one he was talking to? He speaks to him face to face, *as someone speaks to his friend* (Ex 33:11), and he says to him, *If I have found favor in your sight, show yourself to me openly*. What was he seeing, then, and what was he thirsting for? If it wasn't God himself, how could he say "Show yourself to me"? We cannot possibly say it wasn't God. If it hadn't been him, he would have said "Show me God." So when he says "Show yourself to me," he makes it clear that it was the same one whom he wanted to be shown. *And he was talking to him face to face, as someone speaks to his friend.*

So do you want to hear the answer? If you can grasp it, God appeared to Moses while remaining hidden. If he hadn't appeared, it wouldn't have been to the one he was speaking to face to face that he said "Show yourself to me." But if he hadn't been hidden, he wouldn't still have wanted to see him. So if you can grasp it, if you can understand, God can simultaneously be revealed and be concealed: be revealed in outward appearance, be concealed in his inner nature.

Recognize the mystery in God

15. If you have managed to understand this as best you can, take care the idea doesn't creep into your head that God changes his nature in order to be revealed in whatever appearance he chooses. God is unchanging and unalterable, not only the Father, but Father, Son and Holy Spirit.²⁴ *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* (Jn 1:1). The Word itself is the unchanging God, just like God with whom he is God. You shouldn't think about any kind of loss, any kind of change in connection with any of the divine persons. For God is *the Father of lights, with whom there is no change nor shadow of alteration* (Jas 1:17).

"So if he is unchangeable," you say, "what is that outward appearance in which he was revealed as he chose to whom he chose, walking about, making a sound,²⁵ or even showing himself to material eyes?" You ask me what means God uses to present himself, as though I could explain what he made the world from, what he made the sky from, what he made the earth from, what he made *you* from.

"I know that one," you answer; "from clay."²⁶

So much for you, made from clay. What was clay made from?

"From the earth," you answer.

But not, I suppose, from an earth someone else made, but from the earth which he made, *who made heaven and earth* (Ps 115:15). So where did this earth come from, what were heaven and earth made of?

“*He spoke, and they were made* (Ps 148:5).”

Excellent, a splendid answer. You declare, *He spoke and they were made*; I’ve nothing more to ask you. But just as I’ve nothing more to ask you, when you say “He spoke and they were made,” so you shouldn’t have anything more to ask me when I say, “He chose, and he revealed himself.” He revealed himself as he judged suitable; he remained concealed as he was.

As God’s children we shall see him as he is

16. Our true longing, our passion, our love should be inflamed by this earnest²⁷ with desire for what Moses was on fire for when he said to the one he already saw, *Show yourself to me*. If that’s what we are searching for, we are his children. *For we are God’s children, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is* (1 Jn 3:2). Not as he was seen at the oak of Mambre,²⁸ not as he was seen by Moses, so that we will still be saying “Show us yourself,” but *we shall see him as he is*.

By what right? Because we are children of God. And this not as a result of our own merits but by favor of his loving kindness. You see, it says *Set apart, O God, a willing rain for your inheritance. And it was weakened*, not presuming on its own powers to see what it doesn’t see, but believing what it longs to see. *But you perfected it* (Ps 68:9). So as his perfected inheritance, as his children, we shall see him as he is. But what did the Lord say about the children? *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God* (Mt 5:9).²⁹

Recognizable as God’s children

17. So if we don’t understand very much about these extremely difficult and impenetrable questions, let us be peaceable as we try to find answers. *No one should be puffed up in favor of one against another* (1 Cor 4:6). *For if you have a bitter zeal and there are disputes among you, this is not the wisdom coming down from above, but is earthbound, unspiritual, diabolical* (Jas 3:14-15). So we are God’s children, and we should be recognizable as his children, and we won’t be recognizable as such unless we are peacemakers. You see, we shall have nothing to see God with if by quarreling we put out the necessary eye in us.

Lover of the good

18. Notice what he says, which is why I speak with fear and trembling:³⁰ *Pursue peace with everyone and sanctification, without which no one can*

see God (Heb 12:14). How he does terrify his lovers! Here he doesn't terrify anyone except his lovers. Did he say "Pursue peace with everyone and sanctification, because whoever doesn't have it will be thrown in the fire, will be tormented with eternal fire, will be handed over to tireless torturers"? It's all true, but he didn't say it. He wanted you to be a lover of the good not a dreader of the bad, and so he terrified you by means precisely of what you were longing for.

You will see God. Is that a reason for showing contempt, a reason for wrangling, a reason for raising a hubbub? *Pursue peace with everyone and sanctification, without which no one can see God.* Two people want to see the sun rise; how stupid they would be if they started arguing about which side it would rise on and how it could be seen, and the argument turned into a quarrel, and in the quarrel they struck each other, and in striking each other they put out one another's eyes, so that they couldn't see it rise after all! So in order to be able to see God, let us cleanse our hearts with faith,³¹ let us heal them with love, let us strengthen them with peace, because this thing with which we love each other has already come from him whom we are longing to see.

NOTES

1. The Faustus Basilica was the church in the cemetery of Faustus at Carthage, a place where several martyrs were buried and honored. This sermon seems to have been preached the day before sermon 53, in which Augustine remarks that he had preached the day before at some length against any idea of God having a body, which fits this sermon, section 5 and 6, very well. Some of the same texts, not very common ones, are also quoted, which tends to confirm this conclusion.

The editor of the CCL text goes further and says that 53 was preached on the feast of Saint Agnes, that is, on 21 January. There is, no doubt, some manuscript evidence for this, though nothing explicit in the text of that sermon. This would mean that 23 was preached on 20 January. Now the first paragraphs of this sermon, dealing with the relations between bishops and their congregations, would be very well suited to a liturgical function announced by Augustine for the next day at the end of sermon 111. There he invites the people to assemble the next day at the Faustus Basilica to celebrate the anniversary of the ordination of their bishop, Aurelius. So we would have three sermons preached on three successive days, 111 on 19 January, 23 on 20 January and 53 on 21 January. Any one of four sermons preached on the feast of Saint Vincent, 22 January, could have followed on that day, but the editor favors sermon 277, which was also preached at Carthage in the Restored Basilica. One scholar suggests the year 413, another 415 or 416.

2. *Manum dexteræ meæ*, a very peculiar reading, literally "the hand of my right." It may just be a rather ignorant rendering of the Greek, in which all three words are in the genitive, because that is the case taken by the verb in that language.

3. Reading *corda nostra* with some manuscripts and the Maurists instead of *corda vestra* with others. He is not yet contrasting "you" and "us." For the moment "us" includes everyone, and is divided at the end of the sentence into "me" and "you."

4. In the *ambo* or pulpit from which the scriptures were read. He is not here preaching, as he would do in his own church, from the *cathedra* or bishop's throne.

5. *Magisterium*. Augustine has a humane, indeed a truly evangelical notion of *magisterium*. He knows that because we have only one master, Christ, all Christians, bishops and people together, are fellow-disciples under one master, and therefore they are helping each other to learn, as he goes on to say in the next section. He knows that the very teaching process is a kind of dialogue between teacher and pupil, in which the pupil is not merely passive, but is required all the time to exercise a critical judgment. So he explicitly asks his audience to exercise their critical judgment on his teaching. In the previous paragraph he called them his judges.

6. That is, from Christ (see Jn 14:6).

7. Augustine's "stage fright" is theological rather than neurological. But he knows that in teaching he may make a mistake, being human; and he is implicitly asking the faithful to judge the truth of what he says, in the light of their common faith. He does not put in a pre-emptive demand for their assent because he is exercising "the sacred magisterium."

8. *Pingui caritatis affectu*. I think Augustine's Latin is as crude and surprising as my English.

9. *Animalis*, a literal rendering of the Greek *psychikos*. Translating *carnalis* has been difficult enough, but this Latin/Greek pair defy translation. Paul, we must however realize, treats *psychikos* ("soulish") and *sarkikos* (carnal) as practically synonymous, and contrasts them both with *pneumatikos* (spiritual). The last thing he does, therefore, is to treat "soul" and "spirit" as practically synonymous, or consider that being spiritual means having soul. As Christians, in effect, we have to get our souls and our flesh both replaced by spirit.

10. He changes the case from the ablative of the text of the psalm to the accusative.

11. There is an evident lacuna in the manuscripts here, running from "place to place" to "and from your face." One manuscript indeed leaves a blank space. The old editors supplied "according to what is said, *Where shall I go from your spirit*": *iuxta id quod dicitur*, etc. But this clearly will not do, since the crude materialism Augustine is castigating is clearly not according to the sense of this psalm, as he goes on to show. So I suggest instead, and translate, *quid de psalmo*.

12. This "not" is also missing from the manuscripts, and reasonably supplied by an editor.

13. See 2 Cor 1:22.

14. Not the most lucid of sentences, as in fact he admits.

15. A very sensible practice for modern book lenders to follow too. But of course a *codex* such as he was talking about was even more expensive than hardback books are nowadays.

16. "Safety" translates *salus*, which has a much wider range, from "health," "well-being" to "salvation" and "deliverance."

17. See Mt 5:45.

18. The little one or baby of sections 4, 5 and 6 above. Augustine's listeners needed to have vigilant memories.

19. Again we must remember, God was walking about there in section 7 above.

20. See Gn 3:8.

21. See Gn 18:1.

22. See Nm 12:8, Ex 33:11.

23. Is he here thinking of the resurrection appearances of Jesus, for example, Lk 24:36? Or only of the entry of love (= God) into the heart as in the previous paragraph?

24. He has not been talking about the Trinity, so why should he bring the subject up now? He may, of course, have had it on his mind because he was engaged in writing Books II and III of *The Trinity*, which deal with this particular point (see II, 7-9; II, 17; and III, 2-4—in particular). If this is so, it would probably mean an earlier date than those suggested in note 1, since Augustine began his *Trinity* about 399, and had reached halfway through

Book XII by 316. So Books II and III would certainly have been composed before 410, probably before 405. But of course this is a rather weak kind of argument.

The point for us to realize is that there had been theories proposed by Christian writers that only the Father is truly invisible and unchangeable (the two concepts go together) and that the Son in particular was, so to say, the visible and changeable member of the divine triad. And it is very likely that such ideas were still current among less sophisticated Christians.

25. See Gn 3:8.

26. See Gn 2:7.

27. Either the love poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, which he was talking about in sec. 8 above, or these visible manifestations of the divine, such as was vouchsafed to Moses.

28. See Gn 18:1.

29. The Latin of this text and of the one just quoted from 1 Jn 3:2 has *fili Dei*, sons of God. But the Greek in 1 Jn is *tekna*, children, while that in Mt is *hyioi*, sons. I translate here "children" by way of exception, because the context calls for the same phrase in both cases.

30. See Phil 2:12.

31. See Acts 15:9.

SERMON 23A

SERMON ON THE RESPONSE FROM PSALM 75: *WE WILL CONFESS TO YOU,
O GOD, WE WILL CONFESS AND CALL UPON YOUR NAME*

Date: 415¹

Confessing to God means humbling oneself before God

1. We are indeed fortunate if we also actually do what we hear and sing. Our hearing, you see, is the sowing, our doing is the fruit of the seed. A field which produces thistles after wheat is sown in it should look forward to the bonfire, not the barn. So too those people who hear good things and do bad things should not expect for themselves the barn of the kingdom of heaven, but that fire of which it is said, *Go into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels* (Mt 25:41). With these few opening words I wish to warn you, dearly beloved,² not to come fruitlessly to church by hearing so many good things and yet not acting well. Instead, following the goodness of the sower and of the seed which is the word of God,³ let a wonderfully abundant crop of good works spring up in your characters and your lives as in good soil, and so you may look forward to the coming of the farmer, who is now preparing a barn to put you in.

Here we have just been singing *We will confess to you, O God, we will confess and call upon your name* (Ps 75:1). What does confessing to God mean, but humbling oneself before God, not arrogating to oneself any merits? For *we have been saved by his grace*, as the apostle says, *not by works, lest anyone should exalt himself; for it is by his grace that we have been saved* (Eph 2:8-9).⁴ You see, there wasn't any pre-existent good life, which he could look down at from up above and admire and love and say, "Come on, let's go down and help these people, because they are leading good lives." He was displeased with our lives, he was displeased with everything we were making of ourselves, but he was not displeased with what he had made in us. So he will condemn what we have made, and what he has made he will save. He will condemn the evil deeds of men and women and save the men and women themselves. People didn't make themselves, but they made bad deeds. What God made in them is good, because God made man to his image and likeness.⁵ But the evil

that man worked by free choice, turning away from his author and creator and turning to wickedness, this God condemns in order to set man free; that is, God condemns what man has done, and God sets free what God himself has done.

Such a splendid doctrine has come to us

2. So it's not true that we were good. And he had mercy on us, and sent his Son to die, not for the good but for the bad, not for the just but for the ungodly. Yes indeed, *Christ died for the ungodly*—and how does it go on? *For one will scarcely die for a just person, though for a good person perhaps someone might dare to die* (Rom 5:6-7). Perhaps someone can be found who would have the courage to die for a good man. But for the unjust, for the ungodly, for the wicked who would be willing to die, apart from Christ alone, who was so just that he would even justify the unjust?

So, my brothers, we didn't have any good works, they were all bad. Though the deeds of men were of such a sort, his mercy did not forsake men themselves. And though *they* deserved punishment, he for the punishment that was owing bestowed the grace that was not owing. And he sent his Son to redeem us, not with gold, not with silver, but with the shedding of his blood as the price, the unblemished lamb led as a victim to slaughter for the blemished sheep, if indeed they were merely blemished and not totally depraved.

So we have received this grace. Let us live worthily of the grace we have received, let us do no wrong to so great a grace. Such a splendid doctor has come to us, he has forgiven all our sins. If we are determined to get sick again we shall not only be very damaging to ourselves but also ungrateful to the doctor.

Christ showed us the way of humility

3. So let us follow the ways he has shown us, especially the way of humility, which he himself became for us. He showed us the way of humility by his teaching, and he constructed it by suffering for us. He wouldn't suffer, you see, unless he humbled himself. Who could kill God unless God humbled himself? Christ is the Son of God, and the Son of God is of course God. He is the Son of God, the Word of God, of whom John says, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was made nothing* (Jn 1:1-3). Who could kill the one through whom all things were made, and without whom was made nothing? Who could possibly kill him, unless he humbled himself?

But how did he humble himself? John himself tells us: *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us* (Jn 1:14). The Word of God could not

be killed. In order that the Word which could not die might be able to die for us, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Being immortal he took on mortality in order to die for us and by his death kill our death. This is what the Lord did, this is what he offered us. Being great he humbled himself, being humbled he was killed, killed and risen and lifted up on high, in order not to leave us dead in hell, but to lift us up on high in himself in the resurrection of the dead, having lifted us up now in faith and in the confession of the just.⁶

*It is rather shameless to call upon his name
if you don't confess to him*

4. So he gave us the way of humility. If we keep to it we shall confess to the Lord, and not without reason shall we sing *We will confess to you, O God, we will confess and call upon your name* (Ps 75:1). It is rather shameless to call upon his name if you don't confess to him. First confess, in order to prepare a dwelling place for the one you are calling on, that is to say calling in.⁷ After all, your heart is full of wickedness. But confession sweeps out the uncleanness you are cluttered up with inside, and cleans the house into which the one you are calling in is coming. But anyone who calls him in before confessing is deliberately insulting him by asking him in. If you wouldn't dare invite some holy person into your house unless you had first cleaned it out, in case something should offend their eyes, will you have the nerve to call in the name of God into your heart full of wickedness, unless you have first swept out all the iniquity inside by confession?

So confession, my brothers, humbles us, humbled it justifies us, justified it lifts us up on high.⁸ Because if we are proud, God opposes us; if we are humble, God exalts us; for *he opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble* (Jas 4:6), and *Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted* (Lk 14:11).

Turning to God, etc.

NOTES

1. This sermon survives only in the same Bobbio collection as Sermon 22A, following immediately upon it in that collection. Reference to it also follows immediately on reference to that one in the index of all Augustine's works drawn up by his disciple, friend and admirer—and first biographer—Possidius, bishop of Calama.

The Bobbio collection depends ultimately on the same collection of sermons (in Augustine's own library, very possibly, or at least in a copy made from that) which Possidius used in drawing up his index. Now I wonder if we may not draw a further tentative conclusion about dates from this. We don't know on what system those original volumes of Augustine's sermons were put together. It certainly was not the same arrangement,

according to the order of the biblical texts they were preached on, which we have now. It seems most likely that the arrangement was roughly chronological—that is to say that the sermons were copied out into a series of volumes more or less as they were preached.

Now a date has been suggested for this sermon by an Augustinian scholar, namely sometime between 412 and 416. I imagine the grounds for this are the way the sermon treats of grace and merit and free will, which preoccupied Augustine during the Pelagian controversy, and that did not really start until 411 or 412. Therefore, if this sermon is mentioned immediately after sermon 22A in Possidius' index, perhaps we can infer that it was preached soon after 22A—and so we shall be able tentatively to date 22A to the same period.

2. *Caritatem vestram*, “your charity,” an honorific address like “your holiness.”

3. See Mk 4:3.14.

4. It is a curious misquotation, in that the last phrase repeats the first, but with the words in a different order in the Latin; whereas that is not the case in Ephesians: the writer there does not repeat himself. Augustine's first phrase is *gratia ipsius salvi facti sumus*, putting in the first person plural what Ephesians has in the second person; his last phrase is *ipsius enim sumus gratia salvi facti*. Now the corresponding phrase in the Vulgate is *ipsius enim sumus factura*—“we are his workmanship.” Again, perhaps, just a slip of Augustine's tongue or his stenographer's pen?

5. See Gn 1:26.

6. Some rather weak rhetorical parallels, *in resurrectione mortuorum* being balanced by *in confessione iustorum*, and *in se* by *in fide*. This latter is reminiscent of his far more frequent balancing of *in re* with *in spe*.

7. *Invocare* means to “invoke” or “call upon.” It never appears to mean, properly, “call in,” that is, to have the sense of *vocare in*. But by a play on the word, that is how Augustine is treating it.

8. He here seems to be echoing, rather distantly, Rom 8:30.

SERMON 24

ON THE VERSE OF PSALM 83:
GOD, WHO IS LIKE YOU?

Date: 401¹

Gratitude to God

1. Thanks be to the Lord our God, and wave upon wave of praise to that God to whom praise songs are due in Zion.² Thanks be to him to whom we have been singing with devoted hearts and mouths, *God, who is like you?* (Ps 83:1), because we can feel the holy love of him deeply enconced in your hearts, because you revere him as Lord, love him as Father. Thanks be to him who is desired before he is seen, and whose presence is felt, and whose coming is hoped for. Thanks be to him, fear of whom is not shaken off by love,³ love of whom is not paralyzed by fear. He it is we bless, he it is we honor, both for you and in you.

For the temple of God is holy, which is what you are (1 Cor 3:17). Now consider what kind of life, what intensity of life must be his, when the very stones of his temple are living in this way. Think, brothers, what you are saying and to whom you are saying, *God, who is like you?* Temples are saying to their God, *God, who is like you?* Living stones are saying to their occupant, *God, who is like you?* Let your minds run over the whole of creation, the earth and everything on the earth, the sea and everything in the sea, the air and everything in the air, the sky and everything in the sky. *He spoke, and they were made; he commanded, and they were created* (Ps 148:5). That's why every faithful heart should say *God, who is like you?*, every obedient tongue should say, every devout conscience say, and say without a qualm, *God, who is like you?* It says it, you see, to one of whom it need not be ashamed. This is fitting, this is worthy of living stones.

Living stones and dead stones

2. And yes, if only the dead stones could be aware of the loving kindness of the living stones toward them! By dead ones I don't mean those of which these buildings are constructed, or those worked by

stone-masons' chisels, or those sculpted by men to be gods, or rather sculpted by men to be called gods, not to be them; I am not calling the stones themselves dead, which is what the gods are like,⁴ it is the people I am calling dead stones. The living stones are those the apostle Peter addresses when he says, *And you, brothers, like living stones are being built together into a holy temple of God* (1 Pt 2:5).

So if only, my brothers, the dead stones might be aware of the loving kindness of the living stones toward them! What, after all, is it that we are being run off our feet about? Whether we are being narrow-minded or broad-minded, what are we in labor with? What is all our care and zeal and anxiety about, except that we might liberate stone from stone?⁵ Living stones have eyes and can see, they have ears and can hear, they have hands and can work, they have feet and can walk.⁶ For of course they know their maker, and worship their craftsman, and praise their sculptor. But dead stones, on the contrary, the slaves of stones, attend to their gods and are not attended to, worship them and are not acknowledged, offer them sacrifices and themselves become a sacrifice to the devil.⁷

And if they did have eyes to see with, brothers, and ears to hear with, how much would it take to see the prophecies of Christ fulfilled? How much would it take to observe that the books tell the truth and the oracles do not deceive?⁸ But why don't they see? Why don't they hear? Because this too has been explained by the prophecy: *Let all who make them be like them, and all who trust in them* (Ps 115:8). Are they quite hopeless then, or to be despaired of? Certainly not. And what can you hope for from dead stones? What do you think, if not what we already have in writing: *For God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham* (Mt 3:1).

Worshipping a senseless, insensible object

3. And so, dearly beloved, because you know to which God we have said *God, who is like you?*, one we are not ashamed of, whose title we do not read engraved on stone but carry engraved in our hearts, whose name is both known to all and living in the faithful, dwelling in the subject, vanquishing the proud;⁹ because we know to whom we have said *God, who is like you?*, we must not let men whom God has made provoke us to hate them, but we may let ourselves be moved to hate whatever in man, made well by God, has been made bad by man himself. "Man" is a noun or name, and it is the name of a creature. I look for the artist who made this creature; it's God. Is man the only thing God created? Cattle and fish and birds and angels, and sky and earth and stars and sun and moon, and everything established and regulated above and below, the lowest and the highest, all fastened together by the chain of unity, isn't God the artist who made all these things? But man he made to his image and likeness.¹⁰

Man is said to be some sort of likeness to God. And how much of one to how great a reality? What is being likened to whom? Man to God. What is man, except insofar as you are mindful of him?¹¹ So let us say to our God, even we men made to his image and likeness, let us say *God, who is like you?* If man, made to the image and likeness of God, rightly says, truly says *God, who is like you?* (he added, you see, *Remember that we are dust* [Ps 103:14]); if man made to the likeness of God is far away from the likeness of God; if the very likeness is so far removed that it is not fitting to compare it to him; and yet¹² the heart of a man, the heart of a Christian who cannot possibly say "To man the god" is quite content to read "To Hercules the god!"¹³ He reads it up above, he looks down below, he asks the title who it has said this of, "To Hercules the god." The title doesn't speak, but at least it is read, "To Hercules the god." Who is it said of? Let it say who it's said of.

They are both dumb, both lifeless.¹⁴ Falsehood above, fiction below. A title accusing the inscriber, shaming the worshiper; a title not presenting a stone as a god, but showing up a man as a fool; a title imposing the name of a god as a fiction on a fiction, and deleting the name of a worshiper from the book of the living. What particle of sense can a man perceive in himself, who doesn't perceive that he is worshiping a senseless, insensible object?

Christians at peace with one another

4. And yet *God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.* May God himself, to whom we have been saying *God, who is like you?*, notice there what he himself has done in man. May he notice in man just that which he has done himself, and delete from man himself what has been done against him who made man. May he strike and may he heal, may he kill and make alive.¹⁵ You see, after saying to him *God, who is like you?*, we went on to add *Do not keep quiet, or grow gentle, God* (Ps 83:1).

Well, what next? Have we in this song, my brothers, been provoking God to anger by saying to him *Do not keep quiet or grow gentle, God*; saying it, that is, either to the one who sent or to the one who actually came¹⁶ and said, *Learn of me because I am gentle and humble of heart* (Mt 11:29)? Christ the Son of God is gentle and humble of heart. So, what now? He says *Learn of me since I am gentle and humble of heart*, and we have been saying to him *Do not keep silent, or grow gentle, God*. Suppose he answers us, "O man, isn't it enough that you won't learn from me to be gentle, but you also want to teach me not to be gentle?"

You see the problem, brothers; concentrate then, help us by your devout attention, your single-minded prayer, help us in his name to get out of this difficulty. The divine utterances seem to be quarreling. They will be thought to contradict each other unless understanding is available, and we receive it from the one to whom we have said *God, who is like*

you? Let us accept what he said himself, *I will give you understanding* (Ps 32:8). Let us take note of this: *My peace I give you* (Jn 14:27), says Christ, that Christians may be at peace with one another. But how can they imitate, how can they even hear the saying, if the divine utterances themselves cannot be at peace with each other? Look closely, observe as it were the thunder and counter-thunder of contraries.

Come to me, and Learn from me. Learn what? But first of all, who's calling? Whom is he calling? What is he calling to? Listen to who's calling: *I confess to you, Lord, Father of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and the prudent, and revealed them to the little ones. Yes, Father, since so was it decided in your presence.*¹⁷ *All things have been handed over to me by my Father.* There you have who's calling: *All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son, and whoever the Son wishes to reveal him to* (Mt 11:25-27). Immeasurable greatness, inexpressible sublimity. *All things*, says he, *have been handed over to me by my Father.* I alone know him, by him alone am I known. What, are we left out? Don't we know him? Then what about *whoever the Son wishes to reveal him to*?¹⁸

*Each member of Christ's body
must do his or her part*

5. Your sentiments and your eager faith, and ardent charity, and tireless and holy zeal for the house of God are all quite apparent in your voices, which you have made into the clearest possible witnesses to your thoughts.¹⁹ But now please permit the assiduous commitment of those few of God's faithful by whom you are governed²⁰ also to make itself known, I mean their commitment to these wishes of yours. For you, brothers, are the people of God, as he himself said, and the sheep of his pasture.²¹ In the name of God you have pastors, shepherds, servants of the Shepherd and members of the Shepherd.

The sentiments and will of the mass of the people for doing everything will have been made plain by these shouts of yours. But the concern of the few on your behalf must be shown not in shouts but in deeds. And so, brothers, since you have now fulfilled your part of the business by shouting, please allow us to satisfy you as to whether we are fulfilling our part of the business by acting.²² We have tried and tested you. Now it's your turn to try and test us, to see if after these voices which have borne witness to your thoughts and your keenness we are slack in doing what ought to be done.

Now far be it from us that, after you have been found worthy, we should be found unworthy. But since both you and we have one and the same will for action in the matters you have been shouting about (though we cannot share the same mode of action), we think, dearly beloved, that your will should be accepted by us, and our plan for carrying out your

will should be awaited by you. To prevent the members of Christ from being at variance with one another, they must all carry out what are their own proper functions in his body. The eye placed at the top must do the eye's job, the ear do the ear's, the hand do the hand's, the foot do the foot's, so that there may be no splits in the body but that all the same the members may be concerned for one another.²³

And so we are overjoyed and congratulate you on the charity²⁴ with which you have obeyed our holy lord and colleague, your bishop,²⁵ in what he said to you this morning. Carry on like this, do not wander from this way, or you may fall. God greatly helps along what you are wishing, provided you do what he has told you. For *what is man* (Ps 8:4), as I was saying earlier on,²⁶ every man? Or what is the life of men, which as it says²⁷ appears for a little while like mist? Think then, brothers, about our brittle frailty, our littleness, our fleshly, material condition, about the fleeting changes and chances of this world, and observe that things will then go well with us if all our hope is in him in whom alone it can be securely placed. But how can our hope be in him unless we obey his precepts?

*If the Roman gods have disappeared from Rome,
why do they still remain here?*

6. Am I saying "Stop wanting what you want"? On the contrary, we must be thankful that you want what God wants. That every superstition of the pagans and the Gentiles should be abolished is what God wants, God has ordered, God has foretold, God has begun to bring about, and in many parts of the world has already in great measure achieved. If your will in the matter was beginning from this city, so that you were seeking to get the superstitious worship of demons²⁸ abolished here first of all, it would perhaps be a task of some difficulty, though not one to be despaired of. But in fact this has already all been effectively accomplished where it started to be done, without any previous precedents;²⁹ so how much more effectively must we believe it can be carried out in the name of the Lord and with the help of his right hand, when we already have some precedents to guide us?

That's what you have been shouting, isn't it—"Like Rome, like Carthage"? If the business has gone ahead in the head of the nations, are the members not to follow? Consider, brothers, mark it in the very books of the Gentiles, hear it from those who still retain some traces of this unhappy condition, take note by hearing or reading of their own writings, and see that these very gods are called Roman. So these gods of theirs are called Roman gods. And when Christians were being compelled to worship them by the ferocious onslaught of the pagans, and, when they refused to, had to endure their savagery to the shedding of their blood, the sum total of the crime committed by the martyrs whose blood was being shed seems to have been that they would not worship the *Roman*

gods, that they were contemptuously refusing to perform *Roman* ceremonies, that they would not pray to *Roman* gods. The whole force of all this ill-will, these onslaughts, lay in the name of the *Roman* gods.³⁰

So if the Roman gods have disappeared from Rome, why do they still remain here? This then, brothers, this is what you must look to, this is what I have been saying, this you must put a stop to. *Roman* gods, *Roman* gods³¹ — so if, I say, the Roman gods have disappeared from Rome, why should they stay here? If they could walk, they would say they had fled here from there. But they didn't flee. Have they remained there, at Rome? Hercules who was once called a god is no longer to be found at Rome. Here, however, he wanted to have his beard gilded. You won't find him there — here he even wanted his beard gilded.

I was wrong, of course, saying that he wanted it. What can an inanimate lump of stone want? No, he didn't want anything and couldn't do anything. But those who wanted him gilded blushed at finding him shaved. So a sudden idea, heaven knows how, suddenly occurred to the newly appointed magistrate.³² What did he do? He didn't do anything that would mean a Christian honoring a stone, but something that meant a Christian being so angry with that superstitious object that he had it shaved. He did not bow down to worship it, he took action to punish it. Brothers, I think it was a much greater humiliation for Hercules to have his beard shaved off than to have his head cut off. So what was set up because of their delusion was removed because of their confusion.³³ Hercules is usually called the god of strength. His whole strength was in his beard. He shone from his cheeks.³⁴ Because he was not shining with light from the Lord, he was not lit up from "light," but grief-stricken from "grief."³⁵

God gets angry and takes pity

7. So let them keep quiet, let them now see that the real Hercules is the God to whom the faithful say, *God, who is like you? Do not keep silent, or grow gentle, God* (Ps 83:1). What I had undertaken³⁶ was to show how *do not grow gentle* means rooting out errors, not people. He does not grow gentle, so he gets angry. But he is *God*, so he also takes pity. He gets angry and he takes pity. He gets angry and strikes, he takes pity and heals. He gets angry and does to death, he takes pity and brings to life. In one person he does this. It's not that he does some people to death and brings others to life, but in the same people he is both angry and gentle. He is angry with errors, he is gentle with bad habits put right. *I will strike and I will heal: I will kill and I will make alive* (Dt 32:39). One and the same Saul, afterward Paul, he both laid low and raised up. He laid low an unbeliever, he raised up a believer. He laid low a persecutor, he raised up a preacher.³⁷

If he isn't angry, how did Hercules get his beard shaved off? He did this through his faithful followers, through his Christians, through the

authorities instituted by him³⁸ and now subjected to the yoke of Christ. So brothers, be satisfied with all that, and hope that with the help of the Lord an even better sequel will follow.³⁹ Amen.

NOTES

1. The scholars feel able to date this sermon, with unusual precision, to Sunday, 16 June, 401. They do this because of its connection with sermon 279 and Morin 1. These, according to the same scholars, were preached on the same day, namely 23 June 401. The date does not leap to the eye simply from a reading of 279 by itself. But given that they are right in that conclusion, the one about our sermon here follows with some certainty.

This for two reasons: in sermon 279, which deals at some length with the conversion of Saint Paul (see section 7, note 37), he says how on the previous Sunday he had preached on the text "God, who is like you?"; and while he could have preached more than once on this text, of course, there are all the same so many verbal echoes of what he says here in sermon 279 that this is a strong probable argument for our sermon 24 having been preached just a week earlier.

But what clinches it is that all three of these sermons are found in an old manuscripts' collection entitled *De Paenitentia*, which, there is every reason to believe, in some sections at least puts the sermons in chronological order (see above, sermon 23A, note 1). Now in this collection these three sermons are to be found one after the other in the order 24, 279, Morin 1.

Of much greater interest is the occasion for the sermon, which indeed puts it with some certainty within the period proposed above—might even suggest it was preached a year or two earlier. For in 399 the emperor Honorius issued an edict *De idolis deponendis* (which is to be found in the Theodosian Code, XVI, x, 18), which was addressed specially to Africa. Christians set about implementing it with fanatical zeal, and in some places got back as good as they gave. In a little town, a Roman colony, called Sufetula or Suffectana in the province of Byzacena (roughly southern Tunisia, Western Libya) 60 Christians were massacred for destroying a statue of Hercules. Augustine wrote the leading men of the town a letter of the severest remonstrance, saying: "We can easily give you another Hercules, if that's what's biting you; plenty of stone and wood, and sculptors around. But you cannot give us back our 60 brethren" (Letter 50).

The interesting point is that it should have been an idol of Hercules that aroused such passions, since it is precisely an idol of Hercules that we have to do with in this sermon. What he and his fellow bishops (a synod of the bishops of the African provinces was in session at the time—note 20, below) must have been terrified of was a similar and much worse bloody riot in the huge metropolis of Carthage.

Simply from the evidence of this sermon, I suggest the following reconstruction of events. The previous proconsul, governor of Proconsular Africa (Northern Tunisia), no doubt noting the riot at Sufetula, had refrained from executing Honorius' edict of 399. So the leading pagans, men of rank and position, had been lulled into a false sense of security. So when a new proconsul arrived in May or June 401, the priests responsible for the temple of Hercules rather rashly petitioned him to permit (or even subsidize from the treasury) the regilding of the god's beard, and no doubt his head as well. The new proconsul, like all senior government officials at this time, was of course a Christian, and no doubt a keener one than his predecessor. So as a cruel joke, instead of having Hercules' hair and beard gilded, he had it shaved off, presumably by a stonemason. The pagan priests themselves then for very shame removed the defaced idol, to have it patched up, no doubt. But when they were about to restore it to its temple, zealous Christians demonstrated against it, and

the possibilities of a bloody riot became very real. So that very morning, 16 June, Aurelius the bishop of Carthage (note 25 below) had stepped in to try to control the situation. I cannot imagine that he had actually incited the large congregation of his cathedral church to go to demonstrate and protest against the reinstallation of Hercules; Bishop Aurelius as a rabble-rousing demagogue is unlikely in the extreme. He is much more likely to have exhorted them to keep their demonstrations peaceful, and at all costs to avoid violence against their pagan fellow citizens.

So here they are, back again in church in the afternoon, and in a distinctly restless mood. It is up to Augustine to persuade them that Aurelius and all the other bishops entirely approve of their anti-pagan, anti-Hercules zeal, and are acting in a more sober, more legal way with the authorities (that is, the new proconsul) to get Honorius' edict enforced. He begins by reminding them that pagans are capable of being converted (and so should not be physically attacked), and goes on to a piece of somewhat complicated exegesis, reconciling the distinctly Old Testament text of his psalm with the milder precepts and examples of the New Testament. But then (at the end of section 4) his congregation begins to manifest its impatience so warmly that he has to change tack. He succeeds eventually in getting them to laugh at the shaven Hercules, and so be content with the fact that the pagan idols have been publicly made to look ridiculous. As the sermon on the following Sunday (279) makes no reference whatsoever to these events, one may presume that he was successful.

For a reason why Hercules should have been such a popular deity in North Africa, (and why his devotees wanted to gild his beard), see note 34 below.

2. See 65:1.

3. He does not seem to be worried by 1 Jn 4:18, *perfect love casts out fear*, indeed he is probably being deliberate in appearing to contradict it. His argument would be that there are two sorts of fear, servile (the fear of slaves for their masters—what we would perhaps call craven fear), and filial, the respect children should show their parents. This kind of fear is a proper manifestation of love, not opposed to it.

4. See Bar 6:39. I have changed the order of the text, following a hint, but not the actual text, of one of the manuscripts. In this edition the text runs *non ipsos dico lapides mortuos, sed homines dico lapides mortuos, quibus dii similes sunt*: "I am not calling the stones themselves dead, it is the people I am calling dead stones, who are what the gods are like." But the text he is alluding to compares idols (and gods by implication) to "stones from the mountain," not to idolaters. Ps 115:8 says idolaters are like their idols—dumb and blind and lifeless. But there is hardly any sense or point in comparing pagan gods to their worshippers.

Now this one manuscript leaves out the phrase *sed homines . . . mortuos*, and this leaves us with the gods being compared to dead stones. What I suggest is that some corrector put the phrase back in the wrong place; so I translate *sed homines . . . mortuos*, but put it after *similes sunt*.

5. That is, idolater from enslavement to idols. "Being broad-minded or narrow-minded" of the previous sentence translates *cordis angustia vel latitudine*. Some may think this is slick but inaccurate. I maintain it is accurate—except for the pejorative note that attaches to the English "narrow-minded." He means, I think, strict in the application of Honorius' edict. "Broad-minded" means being more cautious in the matter, respectively the attitudes of the people and of the bishops.

6. See Ps 115:5-7.

7. This is a rather neat way of identifying pagan gods with demons, and sacrifices offered to them as sacrifices offered to demons. This was a commonplace of patristic theology; see, for example, Augustine's own *City of God* 2, 10.

8. See Sermon 22 above, notes 10, 11, 12. The language he uses here, "the books and the oracles," implies a contrast between the Christian scriptures and the Sybilline "books and oracles."

9. See Vergil's Aeneid VI, 853, which Augustine is echoing here; it was Rome's destiny *parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*.

10. See Gn 1:26.

11. An odd twisting of Ps 8:4.
12. A long and confused sentence, with far too many if's in it. I think either Augustine or the stenographer added one too many by mistake, so I have omitted the last one. Even so the sentence has no proper ending.
13. This is the inscription, the *titulus* above the shrine. It is not at all clear, but perhaps here Augustine is criticizing the excessively "broad-minded" Christian.
14. That is, both title above and idol below.
15. See Dt 32:39; also 1 Sm 2:6.
16. Either to the Father or to the Son.
17. It is the language of the imperial court: *placitum est coram te*; the Vulgate has *placitum est ante te*. *Coram* is a much more formal, judicial term than *ante*. The divine chief magistrate issues an edict, not unlike the edict of Honorius.
18. Here, I suggest in note 1 above, the congregation's impatience with these subtleties is manifested in no uncertain way.
19. I am sure there was a fairly marked tone of irony in these flattering words. Augustine cannot have been too pleased with the noisy interruption of "voices being the clearest possible witnesses of their thoughts."
20. That is, the bishops assembled at Carthage for the annual synod.
21. See Ps 95:7.
22. We should notice the element of primitive democracy in the Church of those days, which Augustine fully accepts. It is not infrequently said, especially by bishops and cardinals, that "Christ did not found the Church as a democracy." This is perfectly true; but he didn't found it as any other kind of -ocracy either, nor any kind of -archy, not even as a hierarchy. It has in its makeup, and in its history, elements of all kinds of polity, and the democratic element was certainly not lacking in the apostolic churches, and still survived in the patristic churches, as we can see here. Admittedly, it was a very rough kind of democracy, rather like that of supremely aristocratic eighteenth century Britain, where the democratic "element" was popular riot.
23. See 1 Cor 12, especially 12:25.
24. Literally, "we congratulate your Charity," an honorific address.
25. Aurelius, Augustine's life-long friend, colleague, and superior.
26. See section 3 above and note 11.
27. See Jas 4:14.
28. See note 7 above.
29. That is to say, at Rome. Whether he means that Honorius' edict was fully executed at Rome, or whether he is referring to an earlier and more famous occasion in 381 when the emperor Gratian—at the prompting of Ambrose, bishop of Milan, where the imperial court resided—had the winged statue of the goddess Victory removed from the Senate house in Rome, we cannot tell. This action, which was possibly accompanied by the removal of other idols as well, provoked a dignified but fruitless protest from the famous pagan orator of that time, Symmachus.
30. This was, of course, true. The persecution edicts, requiring Christians to sacrifice, had always been conceived by the authorities as tests of political loyalty to Rome and the emperor, though in fact Christians had not been required to sacrifice to all or any of the Roman gods, but precisely to "Rome and Caesar," given the honors of divinity.
- There is a marked ambivalence about this whole passage. On the one hand there is the sentiment of the Roman citizen, calling on the people of Carthage to do what Rome, "the head of the nations," had done. But on the other hand, and rather more heartfelt, I think, is the African's resentment at having been imposed on so long by Roman gods: a nationalist sentiment which Augustine clearly shared with his audience. That the gods were in fact Roman in names only will appear when we consider the case of Hercules in particular, note 46 below.
31. The Maurist editors suggest that this is a shout of the people—they even add a third *dii Romani*. The CCL editor disagrees. I am inclined to agree with the Maurists.

32. That is, the new proconsul.

33. By the pagan priests themselves, I suggest.

34. *Malo suo refulsit*. I translate *malo* by "cheeks," as though it were *mala*; perhaps it was an African dialectical variant of *mala*. The context seems to require the meaning "cheeks," though he could of course be playing on words, *malo* meaning "evil."

The whole passage shows that Hercules was in fact venerated as a sun-god, in fact as *the* sun-god, who would have been something like *Shemesh* in Punic (Phoenician, akin to Hebrew). In Greek mythology he is certainly a sun hero. His counterpart in Israelite legend is Samson (Shimshon) whose name has a clear connection with *shemesh*, the sun. His strength was in his hair, just as that of Hercules is thought to be in his beard (and probably also his hair on his head). That is why they wanted his beard gilded. So, in a word, the devotion of North Africans to Hercules was probably very traditional, deriving from old Punic or even Berber cults, and not a borrowing from Rome.

35. *Non a luce sed a luctu luxit*. He is punning on *luxit*, which can be the perfect both of *luceo* (*a luce*), "to shine," and of *lugeo* (*a luctu*) "to grieve."

36. Back in section 4.

37. See Acts 9:1-19.

38. See Rom 13:1.

39. He is either referring them to his forthcoming sermon the following Sunday, or, more likely, to further developments in the matter of removing idols.

SERMON 25

SERMON ON THE VERSE OF PSALM 94: *BLESSED THE ONE WHOM YOU INSTRUCT, LORD, AND WHOM YOU TEACH FROM YOUR LAW*

Date: 410¹

The testament is promised there, delivered here

1. While we were singing to God, we said to him, *Blessed the one whom you instruct, Lord, and whom you teach from your law* (Ps 94:12). So then the gospel of God boomed out, Zacchaeus gave alms.² Learn, all of you—learn! What better law of God is there, after all, than the holy gospel? It's the law of the New Testament, about which you heard, when the prophet was read, *Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, and I will perfect upon the house of Jacob³ a new testament, not like the testament which I laid down for their fathers when I led them from the land of Egypt* (Jer 31:31-32). The testament (or covenant) is promised there, delivered here; promised through the prophet, delivered through the Lord of the prophets. The testament we call old—read it and see. The law of God was given then too; read it, or listen when it is read, and see what sort of things were promised then. What you were promised then was a land of this earth, a land flowing with milk and honey, but still of this earth.⁴ However, if we understand it spiritually, because that land has not flowed with milk and honey, there is another land which will flow with milk and honey, that land of which it is said *My hope are you, my portion in the land of the living* (Ps 142:5). This here is the land of the dying. Do you want milk and honey? *Taste and see how delicious is the Lord* (Ps 34:5). It is his grace that is signified by the name of milk and honey. It is sweet and nourishing. This grace was prefigured in the Old Testament, revealed in the New.

*If you are hoping for the new inheritance,
go beyond the earth*

2. That law, at all events, because of those who take it in a materialistic sense, and look for rewards of that sort from God, and wish to worship God for the things that are promised in it—that law deserved to be told

by the apostle Paul that it bears children for slavery.⁵ Why? Because it is understood materialistically by the Jews. Spiritually understood, it is the gospel.

So it bears children for servitude.⁶ Who are they? People who serve God for the sake of earthly goods. When they have them they give thanks; when they lack them they blaspheme. Those who serve God for such things cannot serve him truly and from the heart. They look at people who don't serve our God, and they notice they have what they themselves are serving God for, and they say to themselves, "What's the use of my serving God? Have I got as much as that fellow who blasphemes him every day? A man prays and starves; a man blasphemes and belches." Whoever looks at things like that is just a human being,⁷ a person of the Old Testament.

Whoever, then, worships God in the New Testament should be hoping for the new inheritance, not the old one. If you are hoping for the new inheritance, go beyond the earth, tread the mountain tops, that is to say, despise the lofty station of the proud. But mind, while you are despising and treading, be humble, or you will fall from on high. Listen: *Lift up your hearts*; but *to the Lord*,⁸ not against the Lord. The proud all lift up their hearts, but against the Lord. If you, though, want really to lift up your heart, lift it up to the Lord. If you have lifted up your heart to the Lord, you see, then he himself holds your heart to stop it falling to the earth.

*From the moment we were thrown out of paradise
we spend evil days*

3. So, blessed is the man⁹—*Blessed the one whom you instruct, Lord*. Here am I talking, here am I shouting, here am I explaining. Who's listening to me? I know who's listening: *Blessed the one whom you instruct, Lord*, to whom God is speaking in his heart. And when I stop speaking, that's the *blessed one whom you instruct, Lord, and whom you teach from your law*. How does it go on? That's as far as we sang: *and whom you teach from your law. To calm him in baleful days, while a pit is being dug for the sinner* (Ps 94:13). That's the person who is instructed by the Lord, that's the one who from the law of God learns from the Lord—the one who is calmed from baleful days, until a pit is dug for the sinner.

Listen to what it all means. There are baleful, evil days. Is it here we spend evil days, from the moment we were thrown out of paradise?¹⁰ Not only did our elders complain about their days, their grandparents too complained about their days. People have never been pleased with the days they lived in. But the days of the ancestors please their descendants, and they too were pleased with days they hadn't experienced—and that's precisely why they thought them pleasant. It's what's present that is sharply felt. I don't mean it comes nearer, but it touches the heart every

day.¹¹ Practically every year when we feel the cold we say "It's never been so cold." "It's never been so hot." "It," "it"—"it" is always in our minds. But *blessed is the man¹² whom you instruct, Lord, to calm him from baleful days, while a pit is being dug for the sinner.*

*A person takes his own war with him
wherever he goes*

4. Baleful days. But are these days baleful or evil, that are brought round again and again by the sun? Evil days are made by evil people, and that means practically everybody.¹³ Among the masses of evil people groan the few grains of wheat.¹⁴ Let's come back to the just. The others are evil and they make the days evil. What about the just? Aren't they in evil days too? Even by themselves—apart from what they suffer from the evil people among whom they are groaning—even when they are by themselves, let them take a look at themselves, go down into themselves, consider themselves carefully. They will find evil days within themselves.

They don't want war, they want peace. And who doesn't? And while everyone wants peace and doesn't want war, the man who lives justly turns his gaze on himself and finds war in himself. Ask me what war. *Blessed the one whom you instruct, Lord, and whom you teach from your law.* Here's a person asking me what war the just man experiences in himself. Teach him from your law. Let the apostle speak: *The flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh* (Gal 5:17). And where can I dump the flesh if war breaks out, if (which God forbid) an enemy invades us? A man flees, and takes his own war with him wherever he goes. I don't mean if he's a bad man. No, it's precisely if he's a good man, if he lives justly, that he finds in himself what the apostle says: *The flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.* In this war, how can there be good days?

In evil days I learn to look for good days

5. So the days are evil. But let us be calm. What does that mean, "Let us be calm?" Let us not get angry at the divine judgment. Let us say to him, "*It is good for me that you have humbled me, that I may learn your justifications* (Ps 119:71). You thrust me out of paradise, you cast me forth from bliss. I am in distress, I am groaning with pain. *My groaning is not hidden from you* (Ps 38:9). but *it is good for me that you have humbled me, that I may learn your justifications.* In evil days I learn to look for good days." What are the good days? Don't look for them now. Believe me, or rather believe with me, you won't find them. The evil days will pass, and the good ones come. But they will come as good for the good, for the bad as even worse.

6. Now I too have some questions for you: *Who is the man who wants*

life? I know, the hearts of you all answer me, “Well, who is the man who doesn’t want life?” I go on, *And loves to see good days?* You all answer, “Who is there who doesn’t love to see good days?” You have answered well. You want life, you want good days. Of course, when I said *Who is the man who wants life?*, everyone answers me “I do.” Who is the man who wants to see good days? Doesn’t each one of you say silently “I do”? Hear what comes next: *Keep your tongue from evil* (Ps 34:12-13). Now say, “I do.” You ask for pardon; now let me find what you really are.¹⁵ The past is over and done with. Your tongue used to be ill-natured, you used to be a talebearer, you used to be an informer, you used to be scurrilous; you used to be all these things, but let them pass away with the evil days; mind you don’t pass with the evil days. There is, after all, something you can hold on to in order not to pass. Human affairs flow along like a river; evil days flow along like a river. Hold on to the wood, or you will be dragged under. Here’s the river flowing: *All flesh is grass, and all the glory of the flesh like the flower of grass.* It tumbles over the waterfall, it passes: *the grass withers, the flower falls.* What can I hold on to? *The word of the Lord remains for ever* (Is 40:6-7).

Lift up your heart

7. So, *Curb your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit.* You that wanted life, or indeed want life now, and good days, *turn aside from evil and do good. Seek peace,* which we all long for even in this mortal flesh, even in this fragile state of the flesh, even in this most illusory condition of vanity. Seek peace, all of you. *Seek peace, and follow it* (Ps 94:13-14). “Where is it? Where am I to follow? Which way has it gone by? Which way has it gone, for me to follow?” It has gone your way, but it didn’t stay with you. Who am I talking to? To the human race, not to any one of you, but to the human race. Peace itself passed by way of the human race. As it passed by, the blind man cried out in yesterday’s reading.¹⁶ And where did it go? First see what peace is, then see where it has gone, then follow it. What is peace? Listen to the apostle, he was talking about Christ: *He is our peace, who made both into one* (Eph 2:14).¹⁷ So peace is Christ. Where did it go? *He was crucified and buried, he rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven.*¹⁸ There you have where peace went. “How am I to follow it?” Lift up your heart. Listen how you should follow; every day you hear it briefly when you are told *Lift up your heart.*¹⁹ Think about it more deeply, and there you are, following.

Listen also, however, more widely, in order to follow true peace, your peace, the peace which for your sake endured war, the peace which while enduring war for your sake prayed for the enemies of peace, and said as it hung there, *Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing* (Lk 23:46). It was war, and peace was flowing from the cross.²⁰ It was flowing, but what about afterward? He ascended into heaven. Seek

peace—and how are you to follow? Listen to the apostle: *If you have risen with Christ, seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated at God's right hand; savor the things that are above, not those that are on earth. For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ appears, your life, then you too will appear with him in glory.* There you have the good days; let us long for them, let us live for them, let us pray for them, for them let us give alms.

8. Now here we are already, by God's goodness, in winter. Think about the poor, how Christ in his nakedness is to be clothed. As the gospel was being read, didn't we all think how lucky Zacchaeus was, when Christ looked up at him in the tree, where he was intent on seeing him passing by? When, I ask you, can he ever have hoped to have him staying in his house? When he said to him, *Come down, Zacchaeus: today I must stay in your house* (Lk 19:5), I could hear your sighs of congratulation. You were all of you, so to say, in Zacchaeus, and welcoming Christ. You all said to yourselves, didn't you, "O lucky Zacchaeus! The Lord went into his house. O happy man! Can it happen to us? Christ is now in heaven." Christ, read me out the New Testament. Make him happy from your law. You read it out, to show you that you are not cheated of Christ's presence. Listen to the judgment he is going to pass: *When you did it for one of these least of mine, you did it for me* (Mt 25:40). You are all looking forward to greeting Christ seated in heaven. Attend to him lying under the arches, attend to him hungry, attend to him shivering with cold, attend to him needy, attend to him a foreigner. Do it, if it's already your practice; do it, if it isn't your practice. Knowledge of Christian doctrine is growing, let good works grow too. You praise the sower; present him with a harvest. Amen.

NOTES

1. The sermon was preached early one winter, as he says in section 8. The day before they had read the gospel of the blind man at Jericho (section 7, note 16) and this day the gospel of Zacchaeus which follows on it immediately in Luke (section 1, note 2). And from section 7 (note 19) we can infer that Mass was celebrated daily, and that this sermon was preached to a congregation that was in the habit of attending every day. So we may conclude it was preached on a weekday, and most probably in Hippos; at least there is nothing to suggest otherwise. The leading scholar on the subject suggests that it was about the year 410.

2. See Lk 19:1-10.

3. He has a very peculiar reading here, *consummabo super domum Jacob*, which cannot be accounted for by either the Hebrew or the Greek Septuagint, which is indeed here very faithful to the Hebrew: they read "I will strike with the house of Israel and the house of

Judah a new covenant." I think Augustine's memory must have got his wires crossed, but I cannot trace the other wire.

4. See Ex 3:8, and parallels.

5. See Gal 4:24.

6. I have changed "slavery" to "servitude" here, in order to make the verbal link with "serving God." He does not explain why people who serve God for such worldly motives are born by the old law for slavery. His reasoning is implicitly, I suppose, that of the collect which says that God's service is perfect freedom; if you serve God for these earthly goods, you are not really being God's servant or slave (and therefore free), but the slave of your attachment to earthly goods.

7. An odd statement, which my translation has softened a little by adding "just": *qui ad ista attendit, homo est, homo est de testamento vetere*. The manuscripts are all of one provenance, and their common source could of course simply have repeated *homo est* by an easy scribal error. Or, instead of the first *homo est* Augustine may have intended to say (or said, and been wrongly taken down by the stenographer) *caro est*, "whoever looks at things like that is flesh, is a person of the Old Testament."

8. From the dialogue between celebrant and congregation at the beginning of the eucharistic prayer.

9. *Beatus ergo vir: Beatus homo . . .* In English one cannot really reproduce the effect. But again Augustine has got his wires crossed, only this time he corrects himself. *Beatus vir* is how Ps 1 begins, whereas his text in Ps 94 has *Beatus homo*.

10. The answer, you would have thought, is "Yes." But Augustine does not agree. That is not the evil days he is talking about. They have no more real significance than the way we all moan, as we get older, that things were never as bad as this in our young days.

11. I really have no idea what he is trying to say in this sentence: *Non dico, propius admovetur, sed cor tangit quotidie*.

12. Ps 1 has now won the day—*beatus vir*. See note 9 above.

13. *Prope totus mundus*. I take *totus mundus* in the sense of the French *tout le monde*.

14. See Lk 3:17.

15. A play on words impossible to reproduce in English: *Quaeris veniam; modo te inveniam*.

16. See Lk 18:35-43.

17. Paul means he has made both Jews and Gentiles into one new people of God.

18. From the baptismal creed of the African Church; practically the same as our so-called Apostles' Creed, which is the old baptismal creed of the Roman Church. See *Early Christian Creeds* by J.N.D. Kelly.

19. See note 8 above. It seems from this sentence that it was the custom to celebrate Mass every day at Hippo in Augustine's time.

20. Peace flowing from the cross; the primary reference is to these words of Jesus. But the word used, *manabat*, could also be translated "trickling," "dripping," and I think Augustine also had the blood of Christ in mind as also identified with peace—see Col 1:20.

SERMON 25A

A SERMON OF SAINT AUGUSTINE PREACHED IN THE BASILICA OF THE ANCESTORS

Date: uncertain¹

Wicked people are like grass

1. We have been singing to the Lord, *Blessed the man whom you instruct, Lord, and whom you teach from your law; to calm him from baleful days, while a pit is being dug for the sinner* (Ps 94:12-13). So when a man is instructed by the Lord from the law of God, not instructed in the law of God but by the Lord *from* the law of God,² he is calmed from baleful or evil days while a pit is being dug for the sinner. In this world the prosperity of evil men is the pit for sinners. People are habitually upset by this, and often religious people too, people who wouldn't dream of blaming the Lord and yet wonder to themselves why bad people are so often successful. And such people are supremely upset when they themselves are beset by miseries and disasters though they are well aware that they live better lives than the others. They see evil people prevailing successfully all along the line in all their business which is admittedly earthly and temporal, but is still good. And they sigh in their miseries, and can scarcely restrain their thoughts from blaming God.

Let them listen to the psalm, then, and so find happiness. Let the Lord instruct them from his law. Let him tell them from another psalm, *Do not be jealous of evil-doers, nor envy those who work iniquity* (Ps 37:1). But that's precisely what you were doing, isn't it, being jealous and envious, when you kept on saying to yourself "Why do they flourish?" Listen to this from the law of God: *For like grass they shall quickly wither* (Ps 37:2). Grass flourishes; why admire its greenness? Ask the summer: "They shall quickly wither." *All flesh is grass: the grass has withered, the flower fallen.* You just see where you have your root: *The word of the Lord abides for ever* (Is 40:6-8).

So these flourishing wicked people are like grass, thrusting up in winter, drying up in summer. Take care that you, though, fix your roots in the word of God which abides for ever, and that you are a tree living in a hidden way. *For you are dead,* the apostle says, *and your life is hidden*

with Christ in God (Col 3:3). That's where your root is, that's where you are alive. That, you see, is where you have placed your hope, if you haven't merely pretended to believe. So don't let the winter time get you down, the time when many prolific fruit trees without the ornament of leaves in winter time³ and without the grace of fruit are like withered trees, and yet they are not in fact withered. When the grass is flourishing, these haven't even got leaves. But what I said about the grass I can say about the tree that is alive in a hidden way. What did I say about the grass? If you admire its greenness, ask the summer. Between the blades of grass so green in the winter and the fruit tree stripped so bare in the winter, the summer is the judge. In the same way, between the godly who are sweating it out in this world and the ungodly who are blooming and verdant in this world as in winter time, the sun of justice⁴ is the judge. Wait, wait; the judgment is coming. The tree can say to the flourishing grass,⁵ "Why are you so full of yourself? The summer is coming, and it'll test both of us."

So in order that trees like this may be calmed or soothed for evil days, the apostle addresses consoling words to them, foretelling the summer, promising their greening. *You are dead*, he says, *and your life* (where your roots are) *is hidden with Christ in God*. When summer comes, *when Christ appears, your life*, where your greening lies, *then you too shall appear with him in glory* (Col 3:3-4). Finally, learn the sentence of that sun of justice, and what he is going to do in the summer: *For the Son of man will come, in his majesty, and all the angels with him, and all the nations will be gathered together before him*. Now look at the trees and the grass: *He will divide them, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats; and he will place the sheep on his right, the goats on his left* (Mt 25:31-33).

There you have the judgment of summer. Summer means heat. What heat? The heat hits the fruit trees too, but its effect is to make them green. So what heat then is turned on in this judgment? *When a just king sits on the throne, who will boast that he has a chaste heart* (Prv 20:8-9)? Who will boast that he is clean of sin? Scorching heat! But the very judge you dreaded gives you comfort instead. He quickly gives relief to the heat, or rather to those who are steaming in it. After all, they were alive all the time at the roots, they weren't withered trees. So notice the greenness of them: *Come, blessed of my Father*. Come. Receive what you longed for, see what you have believed, have what you hoped for, hold what you have loved. *Come, blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom* (Mt 25:34). That's the greenness in summer of trees that seemed to be withering through the winter, but were in a hidden way still full of sap.

Now look at the dryness of grass. What is dry, withered grass good for? *Go into eternal fire* (Mt 25:41). So for the good, fruit-bearing trees, which are calmed or soothed for baleful days, the heat is mitigated by the relief of a reward, mitigated by the relief of the kingdom of heaven. There, life is for ever. That herb or plant that we call on this earth

“For-ever-and-aye”⁶ has its true place there. There one lives for ever and aye, there is only life there, no corruption, no want, eternal greenness is the rule, without fear of drying up. *Go into eternal fire* is what is said to the ungodly. That is the pit of the sinner; the digging of it is accomplished in this time, this life. The success of the crook is the sinner’s pit. He imagines, you see, when he does wicked things and is successful, that God does not bother about human affairs. That is the pit of the sinner.

What to say to the rich of this world

2. So, of your charity, what I have to say to you is this: do not love the success of this world, and those of you who maybe have it, do not set your hopes on it. It’s false, it’s deceptive, it isn’t really to be had. Well, even if you do have it, don’t love it, don’t rely on it, and it won’t be a pit. *Command the rich of this world*, says the apostle, *command them to be rich* (1 Tm 6:17-18).⁷ But the rich of this world are Christians, they are believers. Command them. To do what? *Not to think highly of themselves, nor to have their hopes set on the uncertainty of riches. As the psalm says too, If riches pour down*, as from a spring where you can draw as much as you want without effort and what you draw will vanish straightaway—if they flow, *do not set your heart on them* (Ps 62:10), where it is flowing. If it’s flowing, it’s making a flood; you set your heart there, it carries it off.

So if you should happen to become rich, at least don’t gloat about it greedily; it’s all right to accept what’s offered, not to grab what belongs to someone else; to accept what’s offered, not to sell justice. If you sell justice, don’t imagine you are accepting a present.⁸ You are accepting a present when the person who gives it wants to, not when it is given by someone who doesn’t want to. “Yes, I sell justice,” he says. “What’s wrong in accepting something in return for a good service I give?” So far as you are concerned, justice on this earth is for sale. This means that you do not possess justice in order to receive a heavenly reward for it, but to sell it on earth. *Amen I tell you, they have received their reward* (Mt 6:5). A gift spontaneously left you by a friend in his will, yes, that’s a case where no harm is done to innocence. That’s why, you see, scripture hasn’t condemned the rich where it says, *Having food and clothing, with these we are content. For those*, he says, *who wish to get rich*—he didn’t say “who are rich,” but “who wish to get rich”—through their very greed *fall into temptations and the many and harmful desires which plunge people into destruction and ruin*. Do you want to know what he was blaming? *It is avarice that is the root of all evils* (1 Tm 6:8-10). Don’t have such a root; it is the root of the grass that withers.

You who are poor, don’t despise yourselves

3. So then, my brothers, you who are poor, don’t despise yourselves.

There is nothing so rich as faith. Your outer storeroom is empty, your inner coffers are full. Full coffers are a good conscience. Everything he possessed outwardly, the holy man had taken away from him by the devil. These coffers the devil did not get at. With these Job was rich, so that he could say *The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away*. The Lord gave; no room for the devil to boast—the *Lord has taken away*. The evil one only took away what the good one allowed him to, wishing to prove Job by testing him, in order to propose him to us to imitate him. *As it pleased the Lord, so has it happened; blessed be the name of the Lord* (Jb 1:21). If he was poor, where did he pour out such treasures from? His inner coffers were full, and the interest on them grew by disbursement; in fact he was investing and not losing them.

So then, all of you who are poor, take pains, rather, to have inner wealth, to have hearts full of virtues—justice, loving kindness, charity, faith, hope. These are true riches, which you cannot even lose in a shipwreck. And in case the success of the wicked should tinge the good with sadness, may God calm or soothe you from baleful days. The baleful days, in which this apparent absurdity is to be seen, are passing away; and the days are coming in which no wicked person is fortunate, no good person unfortunate.

Supply the poor person's lack, and diminish your load

4. You though, all of you who are rich in this world, do what the apostle advises: *let them be rich*, he says, *in good works; let them give easily* (1 Tm 6:18). Why should it be difficult, after all, when the means for giving easily is there?⁹ So *let them give easily, let them share*. Let them too have something, but let them give to the needy; let them both help a comrade and unburden themselves. You rich man, the poor man has been appointed your comrade in this life. You see him in difficulties by not having things, yourself in difficulties by having things. In not having things he has nothing to support him; you, in having much, have what weighs you down. Supply his lack, and diminish your load. That's why it says *let them share*. The same apostle, you see, says in another place *Not that there should be relief for others, difficulty for you* (2 Cor 8:13). So, *let them share*. Let them have, but what they have over let them share. In this way they keep what's enough, and don't lose whatever they give. They will possess more than what they keep, which they will leave behind them here, or use up by spending. But as for what they give away, listen to the same text on what becomes of it. It continues, *Let them store up for themselves a good foundation in the future, that they may lay hold of true life* (1 Tm 6:19). So what's so terrific about what you have given away, if you have already made arrangements to emigrate from this place, where everything perishes? What you have given to the poor, well you have made them your porters.¹⁰

So then, if you would be people of that sort, you will not flourish like

grass in the passing of this world, but like an olive tree which is green even throughout the winter, and it will be your voices saying, *But I am like a fruitful olive tree in the house of God*. But like a fruitful olive tree in the house of God, see what follows: *I have set my hopes in the loving kindness of God* (Ps 52:8), not in the uncertainty of riches (1 Tm 6:17).

NOTES

1. This sermon survives in only one manuscript, which means the text cannot be established by comparing a variety of readings. No suggestion has been made about its date. On the Basilica of the Ancestors in Carthage, see Sermon 16A above, note 1.

This is the title of the sermon as given in the manuscript. The first editor of the manuscript, Dom G. Morin (*Revue Bénédictine*, 1924) added the following: On the responsory of Psalm 94, “Blessed the man whom you instruct, Lord, and whom you teach from your law, to calm him from baleful days while a pit is being dug for the sinner.”

2. The point he is making in this aside is that since we as Christians are no longer “slaves under the law but free people under grace” (*Rule of Saint Augustine*), there is no question of our having to be instructed in the law, but God still wishes to use the law in order to teach us useful lessons about the life of grace.

3. The text is overloaded here; this “in winter time” (*tempore hyemis*) should really be removed. Either Augustine was forgetting how he had begun the sentence, or the copyist (perhaps interrupted here) had forgotten how it had begun.

4. That is, Jesus Christ; see Mal 4:2.

5. The whole elaborate, and effective, comparison between the tree and the grass only really works in a Mediterranean climate of hot dry summers and comparatively wet winters. In northern Europe the grass is green in summer, and rather less so in winter, especially if the frosts are severe and prolonged. In Southern Africa, for example, it is green in the warm, wet summer and quite dead and brown in the cold, very dry winter.

6. This is rendering a Latin folk name for a plant, like an evergreen, and we don’t know what plant it is.

7. A provocatively foreshortened quotation; he will solve the riddle in the last section of the sermon.

8. He is clearly addressing very prominent officials, magistrates, even perhaps the proconsul, not only warning them against taking bribes in the administration of justice, but rebuking them for doing so, and for justifying their doing so. For scholars more learned in the history of Roman Africa from 400 to 430, this might perhaps provide a clue to the date of this sermon.

9. I here omit a sentence that only has a point in Latin: *Puto enim propterea dictas facultates, quasi dicerentur facilitates; nam et inopia difficultas vocari solet* – I suppose that that is why riches are called “faculties” (means, in English) as though they were called “facilities” (easinesses); for want is in its turn usually called “difficulty.”

10. To carry it to the heavenly banks for you!

SERMON 26

A SERMON PREACHED IN THE THEODOSIAN BASILICA
ON A VERSE OF PSALM 95

Date: 417¹

It is God who made us, and not we ourselves

1. The psalm which we have been singing to God and urging one another to worship him and prostrate ourselves before him and weep before the Lord who made us prompts us to look a little more closely at what it means by saying *who made us* (Ps 95:6). That man was created by God is something no man doubts, unless he is utterly graceless. We know, after all, because that's what we have read in the Bible, and that's what our faith tells us, that God made man, among the many other things he made, to his own image.² This is the original condition of man, this is the original human creation.

But I don't somehow think that this is what the Holy Spirit was chiefly concerned to remind us of in this psalm, where it says, *Let us weep before the Lord who made us* (Ps 95:6). In another place it says, it is *he who made us, and not we ourselves* (Ps 100:3)³ about which, as I remarked, no Christian has any doubt. Because not only did God create the first man, from whom come all men, but God also creates each and every human being today—he who said to one of his saints, *Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you* (Jer 1:5). So at the beginning he created man without man, now he creates man from man. Still, whether it's man without man, or man from man, it is *he who made us, and not we ourselves* (Ps 100:3).

So at this first and easy sense of these words—still a true one, of course—*let us worship him, brothers, and prostrate ourselves before him, and cry before the Lord who made us* (Ps 95:6). He didn't, after all, make us and now desert us. He didn't go to the trouble of making us, and then not bother to look after us. *Let us cry before the Lord who made us* (Ps 95:6), because we didn't cry when he made us, and yet he made us all the same. So having made us before he was asked, is he going to desert us when he is asked? As if someone were doubting whether he would be listened to when he prayed, scripture reassures him when it says, *Let us*

cry before the Lord who made us (Ps 95:6). Of course he listens to those he made, of course he cannot fail to care for those he made.

The false doctrine of the Pelagians

2. And yet according to a deeper, and in my opinion a more useful, meaning the Holy Spirit has seen that some people say or are going to say that God made them men and women, but they themselves make themselves just. Foreseeing such people he gave them a warning and checked this arrogance in them by saying, *It is he who made us and not we ourselves* (Ps 100:3). After all, why should he add *and not we ourselves*, when it would have been enough to say *it is he who made us*? Why indeed, if not because he wanted to warn against that invention whereby people say “We made ourselves, that is, of course, we made sure of being just, we made ourselves just by our free will.”⁴ When we were created we received the power of free choice. So to be just, is what we achieved by free choice. Why should we go on beseeching God to make us just, when we have it in our power to make ourselves just?”⁵

But listen, just listen: Even to be just *it is he who made us, and not we ourselves*. The first man was created with a blameless nature, in a nature without fault. He was created upright,⁶ he didn't make himself upright. What he did make himself is well known: something that fell from the potter's hand and was broken. The one who made him, you see, was keeping him right. He wanted to desert the one he was made by. God allowed it, as though saying, “Let him desert me and find himself, and let his wretchedness show him that he can do nothing without me.”⁷

What free will is without God

3. So in this way God wanted to show human beings what free will is worth without God. Oh what a bad thing free will is without God! We have experienced what it's worth without God. That's why we have become so wretched, because we have experienced what it's worth without God. Having experienced it then, let us at last, sooner or later, realize it and—*Come, let us worship him and prostrate ourselves before him, and weep before the Lord who made us* (Ps 95:6). As ones who have been ruined by ourselves, may we be remade by the one who made us. Look, man was made good, and by free will man made himself bad. Now when is man, bad by freely choosing to desert God, going to make man good? When he was good he couldn't keep himself good, and now that he is bad, is he going to make himself good? When he was good he didn't keep himself good, and when he's bad he says, “I'll make myself good!” What can you do being bad, having destroyed yourself as good, unless he remakes you who remains for ever good?

Nature is common to all of us, not grace

4. So it is he who made us, and not we ourselves. But we are his people and the sheep of his pasture (Ps 100:3). There you are, he who made us made us men into his people. You see, we weren't already his people when we were created as men. Notice, my brothers, and observe from the very words of the psalm why he said *It was he who made us and not we ourselves*. This is why he said *He made us and not we ourselves*, that we might be his people and the sheep of his pasture.

After all, pagans too are born and all the godless, all the enemies of his Church.⁸ That they might be born, it is he who made them. It's not some other god that created them. Those who are born of pagan parents have been made by him, have been created by him. And they are not his people nor the sheep of his pasture. Nature is common to us all, not grace.⁹

Nature should not be treated as grace—but if it may perhaps be reckoned as grace, it's because it too has been bestowed on us gratis. After all, man who did not yet exist cannot have had the right to exist. If he had the right, he was already there; but he wasn't already there. Therefore there was no one there to have the right, and yet he was made. And he wasn't made like the animals, nor was he made like a tree, nor was he made like a rock. He was made to the image of the creator. Who gave him this distinction? God, who was already there, and had been there from eternity. Who did he give it to? To man, who wasn't yet there. The one who was, gave; the one who was not, received.

Who else could have done this but the one *who calls what is not as if it were* (Rom 4:17)? About him the apostle says, *He chose us before the foundation of the world* (Eph 1:4). He made his choice before the foundation of the world. It is in this world that we were made, and the world was not when we were chosen. Inexpressible marvels, my brothers. Who would ever be capable of explaining this? Or even of thinking what to explain? Those who are not are chosen. And the one who chooses doesn't make a mistake, doesn't choose a will-o'-the-wisp. He chooses all the same, and he has his chosen ones, whom he is going to create to be chosen. He has them, of course, with himself, not in their own nature but in his foreknowledge.¹⁰

God made us his people

5. So don't get big ideas. We are human beings. *It is he who made us* (Ps 100:3). We are believers—if indeed we really are, when we argue like this against grace—but yes, we are believers. Even as believers, even as being just, because *the just lives by faith* (Rom 1:17), it is he who made us and not we ourselves. I ask what it is he made us. You are going to say, "Human beings." That's not what the psalm was talking about. We know that, it's well known, it's obvious. We don't need great doctrine to know this, that it is he who made us human beings. Now see what it was

talking about: *It is he who made us and not we ourselves*. What did he make us if not what we are? And what are we? *But we*—here is what we are; what is it?—*are his people and the sheep of his pasture* (Ps 100:3).

It is he who made us his people, it is he who made us the sheep of his pasture. He who sent the innocent sheep to be slaughtered, made us sheep out of wolves. That's what grace is. Apart from that common grace of nature by which we who were not were made human beings, and precisely because we were not, didn't deserve to be made; apart from that grace, this is the greater grace, by which we were made his people and the sheep of his pasture, *through Jesus Christ our Lord* (Rom 7:25).

6. But now someone will say, "Through Jesus Christ we were also made human beings." Quite so; through Jesus Christ pagans too were made. Not as pagans, not to be pagans but to be human beings, they were made through Jesus Christ. After all, who is Jesus Christ if not *in the beginning the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God? This was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him* (Jn 1:1-2). So pagans too owe it to him that they were created as human beings, and all the more worthy of punishment because they have given up him by whom they were made, and worshiped things they have made themselves.

Christ, the mediator

7. So apart from that grace by which human nature was established—which is common to Christians and pagans alike—the greater grace is this, not that we were created human beings through the Word, but that through the Word made flesh we were made believers. *For the one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus* (1 Tm 2:5) *in the beginning was the Word* (Jn 1:1). There was as yet no man Christ Jesus, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The world itself was not yet, when the Word was God. All things were made through him, and the world was made through him. So when he made us to be men, he wasn't yet man himself. This is the grace which the apostle particularly commends to Christians when he says, *For the one God and one mediator between God and men*—and he doesn't just add *Christ Jesus*, in case you should suppose it was said about the Word, but he added *the man: mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus* (1 Tm 2:5). What's a mediator? One by whom we would be joined together, through whom we would be reconciled, because we were lying there isolated by our own sins, we were in death, we had utterly perished. Christ wasn't man when man was created. To stop man perishing, he became man.

The Pelagian heresy

8. I am saying this to you against the novel heresy which is trying to catch on, so that I am often obliged to argue against it, because I want you to be firm in the good and unscathed by evil.¹¹ This, you see, was their line of argument, when they first began to appear and to argue against grace, crediting man's weakness, not his freedom as they claimed, with so much, and making so much of man lying there in his wretchedness that they would stop him getting to his feet with the help of the hand stretched out to him from above.

So by arguing against grace in favor of free will they gave considerable offense to pious, Catholic ears. They began to be shuddered at, they began to be avoided like the plague. It began to be said about them that they were arguing against grace. And to relieve the pressure of this unpopularity, they came up with this kind of ploy: "I'm not arguing against grace," he says. "How can you prove that?" "The very fact that I'm defending free will," he says, "shows I am not attacking the grace of God." Notice what a sharp point it is—but it's made of glass; cheap and flashy, smashed by the truth.

Observe with what apparent acuteness they have thought out what they wanted to say: "By the very fact that I defend man's free will, and say that with free will I have enough to be a just man, I am not leaving God's grace out of what I say." The devout prick up their ears. Whoever hears these words begins to feel relieved: "Thank God! He isn't defending free will without the grace of God. After all, there is such a thing as free will, but it is incapable of anything without God's grace. So if they are not defending free will without reference to God's grace, what's wrong with what they say?"

Explain to us then, Professor, what grace you are talking about. "When I say man's free will," he says, "notice I say it's man's." What then? "Who created man? God. Who gave him free will? God. If therefore it is God who created man, and God who endowed man with free will, to whose grace does man owe whatever he can do by free will, if not his who set him up with free will?"¹² That's what they have been saying with such apparent acuteness.

The law does not give life

9. However, my brothers, notice how what they are preaching is that general grace by which man was created, by which we are human beings. And of course we share being human beings with the godless, but we don't share being Christians with the godless. So this grace by which we are Christians, that's what we want them to preach, that's what we want them to recognize, that's the grace we want, of which the apostle says, *I do not render null the grace of God. For if justice is achieved through the law, then Christ died for nothing* (Gal 2:21). Notice what the apostle was talking about. He was talking about the law: *If justice is achieved*

through the law, then Christ died for nothing. So because justice was not in fact achieved by law, what Christ died for was that those who were not justified by the law might be justified through faith. *For if, he says, a law had been given that could bring to life, justice would altogether come from law*—which we were reminding ourselves of yesterday.¹³ *But scripture locked up everything together under sin, in order that what was promised*—promised, not foretold; one who promises something carries it out himself—in order that what was promised, he says, *by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe* (Gal 3:22).

There you have what kind of state the grace of the savior found us in, people whom not even the law could make well. Why should the law be given, anyway, if nature was enough? Why give the law if nature was enough? And yet not even the law was enough, so crippled was this nature. A law was given, but not one which could bring to life. Why was it given, then? *The law, says the apostle, was given for the sake of transgression* (Gal 3:19). It was enacted for the sake of transgression—in order to make you a transgressor. “Why on earth, to make me a transgressor?” Because God knew your pride. He knew you were saying, “Oh if only there were someone to teach me, oh if only there were someone to show me!” There you are then, the law tells you *You shall not covet* (Ex 20:17).¹⁴ You know the law which says, *You shall not covet*. Covetousness surges up in you, which you didn’t know. It was there inside, you see, but it wasn’t known. You started to make an effort to overcome what was inside, and what was hidden came to light. Proud fellow, through the law you have been made into a transgressor. Acknowledge grace, and become a praise-singer.¹⁵

The law is from God

10. “But anyway,” you ask, “who gave the law?”¹⁶ Because there are silly people—no, worse than that, wicked people—who say the law was given by someone else while grace was given through our Lord Jesus Christ, as though the law were bad, as though the law were wrong, while grace is right. And the distinction they want to make between the two testaments is that they say the Old Testament comes from heaven knows what prince of darkness, while the New Testament is from the Lord God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now listen to Paul. If the reason you think the law was given by some other being and not by God is that through it you have been turned into a transgressor, listen to the apostle himself singing the praises of the law. *And so, he says, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy; add, and just; once more add, and good. Did what is good, then, he goes on, become death for me? Perish the thought! But sin, in order that it might be shown up as sin* (Rom 7:12-13). Sin was there, you see, but sin was lying low. When was sin lying low? When it was not yet experiencing you as its antagonist. You began to make an effort, and it became clear who¹⁷ was

holding you back. As long as you were going along with it, you never felt the chain. You tried to escape and your shackles were shown up. You wanted to run away, and you began to be dragged along.

Well then, because you have begun to be dragged along, let the one who has never been tied up come to your help. And who has never been tied up, but the one who said, *If you have found any sin in me, say so* (Jn 8:46)? Who has never been tied up, but the one who said, *Behold, the prince of the world is coming, and in me he will find nothing* (Jn 14:30)? He will find nothing to kill me for, because death is the just due only of sin. So why are you going to die? *That all may know*, he says, *that I do the will of my Father* (Jn 14:31). He does the untying, never having been tied up himself. He sets free from the dead, being himself *free among the dead* (Ps 88:5).

Elisha, symbol of Christ

11. But he it is who also promulgated the law. The law through his servant, grace by himself in person. Consider Elisha in a great and profound mystery,¹⁸ a real prophet, foretelling things by his actions, not only by his words. The son of his hostess had died. What could the dead boy have represented but Adam? The holy prophet was told about it—he prophetically prefigured the Lord Jesus Christ. He sent his servant with his staff and said to him, *Go, go, place it on the dead boy*. Off he went, like an obedient servant. The prophet knew what he had done. He placed the staff on the dead body, it didn't rise up. *For if a law had been given that could bring to life, justice would altogether come from law* (Gal 3:21). So the law couldn't bring to life.

The adult himself came to the child, the healer to the one to be healed,¹⁹ the living to the dead. He came himself. And how did he act? He shrank his limbs to a child's proportions, as though emptying himself to take the form of a servant.²⁰ So he shrank his limbs to a child's proportions, he fitted himself as a little one to the little one, in order to fashion the body of our lowliness into the likeness of the body of his glory.²¹ Thus in this figure of Christ prophetically enacted the dead was raised up, standing for the godless being justified.²²

Creation is grace, justification is a great grace

12. This is the grace to preach. This is the grace of Christians, brought through the man who was the mediator,²³ through the one who suffered and was raised up, who ascended into heaven and took captivity captive and gave gifts to men.²⁴ This, I repeat, is the grace to preach. Against this grace let there be no argument from the graceless. The prophet's staff did not avail the dead boy. Would his own dead nature avail him?

Let's admit that that too is a grace by which we were created, though we nowhere read that it is called so; still, because it was given gratis, let's

allow it to be so. But now let me show you how much greater is this other grace by which we are Christians. Pay close attention.

Before we were created we didn't deserve any good, and that's why it's a grace by which we were created — because we didn't deserve any good. So if it's a great grace when we don't deserve any good, how great a grace it must be when we deserve so much bad! Someone who didn't yet exist didn't deserve well; the sinner actually deserved ill. The one who was created didn't exist before. He didn't exist, but neither had he offended. He didn't exist, and he was made; he offended, and he was saved. He didn't yet exist, so he had no hopes, and he was made. When he fell he had damnation to look forward to, and he was delivered. This is *grace through Jesus Christ our Lord* (Rom 7:25). *It is he who made us*, both before we existed at all it is he who made us, and also when we were made and had fallen it is he who made us just, *and not we ourselves* (Ps 100:3). *If therefore there is any new creature in Christ, the old has fallen away, it has been made new* (2 Cor 5:17).

The potter has power from the same lump

13. From Adam there came one lump ripe for rejection, to which the only thing owing was torment. From it were made vessels for honorable use, from the same lump. For the potter has power, from the same lump . . . What lump? It had undoubtedly been rejected, undoubtedly it was already due for a just condemnation. Be thankful you have escaped. You have escaped a death that was your due, and found a life that was not your due. *The potter has power from the same lump to make one vessel for honorable use, another for disgrace* (Rom 9:21).

You say, "Why did he make me for honorable use and someone else for disgrace?" What am I to answer? Are you going to listen to Augustine, if you won't listen to the apostle as he says, *O man, who are you to answer God back?* (Rom 9:20)? Two children are born. If you are looking for what's due, they are both contained in the lump ripe for rejection. But why is one carried by its mother for grace, while the other is suffocated by its mother in her sleep?²⁵ Can you tell me how one deserved to be carried for grace, how the other deserved to be suffocated by its mother as she slept? Neither deserved anything good. But *the potter has power from the same lump to make one vessel for honorable use, another for disgrace* (Rom 9:21).

Do you want to argue with me? Why not rather be amazed with me, and exclaim with me, *Oh the depth of the riches!* Let us both be awe-struck, let us both cry out, *Oh the depth of the riches!* Let us both agree in being struck with awe, lest we perish by going astray. *Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable are his judgments, and unsearchable his ways!* (Rom 11:33). Go on, scrutinize the inscrutable, do the impossible, corrupt the incorruptible, see the invisible.

We receive everything from God

14. *Inscrutable are his judgments. You heard—be satisfied! And unsearchable his ways. For who ever knew the mind of the Lord, or who was ever his counselor? Or who first gave to him, that he should be rewarded?* (Rom 11:34-35). Who first gave to him, when he has received everything gratis and for nothing? *Who first gave to him that he should be rewarded?* If the Lord had wanted to reward, strictly, the only reward would have been the punishment due. They have given nothing, that they should be rewarded. *You will save them for nothing* (Ps 56:7). Who first gave to him, as though having the merit of doing him a favor? Who first gave to him, who was one jump ahead of the grace that is given gratis and for nothing? If any merit got in ahead of grace, then grace isn't given gratis, but is paid back as being due. And if it isn't given free, gratis and for nothing, why should it be called grace?

So, *who first gave to him, that he should be rewarded? For from him and through him and in him are all things* (Rom 11:35-36). What things, I ask you, if not all the good things we have received from him, and have received so that we may be good? *For every good endowment and every perfect gift is coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no change.* You, after all, have changed for the worse. But he with whom there is no change has come to the rescue. With whom there is *not even a shadow of alteration* (Jas 1:17), whereas you, aren't you, are lying prostrate in the darkness of your own night. So from him are all things. No one has first given him anything, no one is in a position to exact a debt. *By grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves, it is the gift of God* (Eph 2:8).

Acknowledge the benefits you get from the shepherd

15. "But it troubles me," you say, "that this one perishes, that one is baptized. It troubles me, it troubles me as a man." Well if you want to know the truth, it troubles me too, because I too am human. But if you are human and I am human, let us both listen to him saying, *O man!* Surely if the reason we are both troubled is that we are human beings, the apostle is addressing our weak and feeble human nature when he says, *O man, who are you to answer back to God? Does the product say to its producer, Why did you make me like this?* (Rom 9:20). If a sheep could speak, and said to God, "Why did you make this fellow a man, and me a sheep?", wouldn't you rightly flare up and say, "O sheep, who are you to answer back to God?" Well, you may be a man, but relative to God you're a sheep. And if only you were his sheep, the sheep of his pasture!²⁶ Acknowledge the benefits you get from the shepherd, and don't go straying after the wolves.

We were wolves. *We too were by nature children of wrath just like the rest* (Eph 2:3). But the sheep died, and turned us into sheep. *Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sin*, not of this person

or that but, *of the world* (Jn 1:29). So then, my brothers, let us claim no credit for anything we are, provided it is by faith in him we are whatever we are — let us claim no credit for ourselves, or we may lose what we have received. But for whatever we have received let us give him the glory, him the honor, and may he water the seeds he has sown. What would our land have if he hadn't sown anything? He too sends the rain. He doesn't abandon what he has sown. *The Lord will give his sweetness, and our land will yield its fruit* (Ps 85:12). Turning to the Lord, etc.

NOTES

1. So the title in the most ancient of the manuscripts. Others add, "and on the words of the apostle, For if a law had been given which could bring to life, justice would altogether come from law and from free will."

The sermon was preached a day after Sermon 156 (section 9, note 12), and that sermon was preached, according to one of the oldest manuscripts of it, on the feast of the Bolitan or Volitan martyrs; and that was celebrated on 17 October, according to a calendar of the Carthaginian Church that was available to the old Maurist editors in the seventeenth century. So this sermon was preached on 18 October. As for the year, the scholars suggest about 417. It was certainly when the controversy with the Pelagians was already weighing on Augustine's mind. They maintained that we are capable of achieving our own salvation (justification) by our own free will, without any need for extra grace from God. The doctrine of grace raises the whole perplexing mystery of predestination, and it is touching to find Augustine at the end of this sermon (section 15) admitting, in one of those little conversations he conducts with his "fall guy" from time to time, that he too is troubled by "one being chosen, the other left." This is not the conventional impression of the man that is usually conveyed by authors.

2. See Gn 1:26-27.

3. *And not we ourselves* is the rendering of the old versions. The Hebrew has *and we are his*: a difference of one letter in the Hebrew, and no difference at all in pronunciation.

4. One is reminded of the English expression "a self-made man."

5. The people who say this are the Pelagians. It is sometimes said that Pelagianism (Do-it-yourself Christianity) is a heresy very congenial to the English. Pelagius himself, a contemporary of Augustine's, was a British monk, so more of a Welshman than an Englishman. I have been told his name in Welsh would be Morgan.

6. See Eccl 7:29.

7. See Jn 15:5.

8. He is probably thinking here chiefly of the Donatists, who denied the Catholic Church the right to be considered the Church at all, because according to them it had forfeited all legitimacy by the apostasy of some of its bishops in the last persecution, 303-313. He would be more likely to call the Pelagians enemies of grace.

9. A translation of *natura* suggested to me here is "birth." The word certainly derives from *nascor*, to be born, and this translation is tempting. But it must be resisted, both because the meaning "birth" is so extremely rare and archaic in Latin, and also because with Augustine "nature" and "grace" become such an inseparable contrasting pair.

Augustine here seems to assume a very narrow sphere for the operation of God's grace, namely the Church. No modern theologian, no modern official statement of doctrine, would confine grace to coinciding with visible membership in the Church. The element of truth

in Augustine's narrowness is that grace, being a participation in God's own life, is of its nature ordered to the Church, which is the company of those who share in God's life.

10. . . . *non in natura sua, sed in praescientia sua*. Strictly speaking this means "not in his nature (that is, God's nature) but in his foreknowledge." Perhaps that is what Augustine meant and was saying. But I prefer to think he was using the reflexive pronoun *sua* loosely—that by his time it was in fact ceasing to be strictly reflexive and was on the way to becoming what it is in the Romance languages, simply the possessive pronoun of the third person.

11. The Pelagian heresy. See notes 1 and 4 above.

12. Note the parody of professorial pomposity. Augustine had been a professor himself (of rhetoric) before his conversion.

13. A reference to Sermon 156, section 2.

14. See Rom 7:7.

15. It is only possible to be a transgressor if there is a law to transgress. But even without the law, and hence without transgression, we still have many negative attitudes, the deepest of them being pride. Being made transgressors by the law makes us aware of our hidden sinfulness—not only of the covetousness, which this particular law forbids and so brings to light, but also of the pride which makes us confident that we can keep the law, till we discover by experience that we can't. The whole passage is a reflection on Rom 7. The last sentence, which seems rather abrupt, and lacking in any obvious connection with what goes before, echoes Rom 7:25.

Praise-singers are regular attendants on chiefs and other big men in Southern Africa.

16. Now the "fall guy," as a little diversion, is introducing the error of the Manichees, which Augustine goes on briefly to describe.

17. Sin, personified—as in Rom 7.

18. See 2 Kgs 4:29-35. By "mystery" he means what he often also calls "sacrament," an Old Testament episode symbolically prefiguring some New Testament truth.

19. The reference is simultaneously to Elisha and to Christ.

20. See Phil 2:7.

21. See Phil 3:21.

22. See Rom 4:5.

23. See 1 Tm 2:5.

24. See Eph 4:8, quoting and modifying Ps 68:18.

25. Here there seems to me to be a clear allusion to the story of the two harlots who came to Solomon for judgment, 1 Kgs 3:15ff, where baptism is not in question.

26. See Ps 95:7.

SERMON 27

ON PSALM 96, AND ON THE WORDS OF THE APOSTLE:
*ON WHOM HE WILL HE HAS MERCY, AND WHOM HE WILL
HE HARDENS. AND SO YOU SAY TO ME ETC.*

Date: 418¹

The house of God

1. As a door leads into a house, so the title of a psalm leads into understanding. Now this one has a heading as follows: "When the house was being built after the captivity."² You ask what house, the psalm shows you straightaway: *Sing to the Lord a new song, sing to the Lord, all the earth* (Ps 96:1). There you are, that's what house it is. When the whole earth sings a new song, it is the house of God. It is built by singing, its foundations are believing, it is erected by hoping, it is completed by loving. So it is being built now, but it is dedicated at the end of the world. Let the living stones, then, come flocking together to the new song, come flocking all together and be fitted together into the fabric of God's temple. Let them recognize their savior, and receive him as their occupant.

Christ came to redeem the captives

2. We have said what house it is; now we must say after what captivity.³ The psalm shows you this too. Carry on a little: *Sing to the Lord a new song, sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless his name, proclaim from day to day the gospel of his salvation. Proclaim among the nations his wonders, in all peoples his glory. Since all the gods of the nations are demons* (Ps 96:1-3). There you are again, that's whom the house was held in captivity under. From the first transgression of the first man, the whole human race, being born in the shackles of sin, was the property of the devil who had conquered it. After all, if we hadn't been held in captivity, we wouldn't have needed a redeemer.

So he came to the captives, not having been captured himself. He came to redeem the captives, having in himself not a trace of captivity, that is to say of iniquity, but bringing the price for us in his mortal flesh. You see if he hadn't had mortal flesh, where would the Word have found the

blood to shed for the captives? So he came into our captivity with the likeness of sinful flesh,⁴ he didn't come with sinful flesh. That was the likeness of sinful flesh; true flesh, but like sinful flesh; true flesh, but not sinful flesh.

So who was he who came in this way? *Proclaim the gospel from day to day* (Ps 96:2). There you are again, that's who he was. He was from day to day, he was God from God, he was light from light.⁵ But the Word became flesh, in order to dwell among us:⁶ majesty concealed, infirmity revealed, that infirmity might die and majesty be retained.

*Who can blame a creditor
for demanding payment of a debt?*

3. So if the whole world was being detained in captivity, it was quite in order to say, *I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful, and show mercy to whom I will show mercy* (Ex 33:19; Rom 9:15). If the whole world is in captivity, the whole world in sin, the whole world very justly sentenced to punishment, but part of it set free through mercy, who can say to God, "Why do you condemn the world?" How can God, the just judge, be indicted when the guilty world is convicted? You're guilty. If you consider what you owe, it is called punishment, and you cannot in fairness blame the one who inflicts it for exacting from you what you owe. You may blame the debt-collector if he seizes what you don't owe, but who can blame a creditor for demanding payment of a debt, even though you are hoping he will let you off?

On whom he will he has mercy, and whom he will he hardens. So you say to me, Why does he still complain, for who can resist his will? O man, who are you, to answer back to God? (Rom 9:18-20). Think about who he is, think about who you are. He is God, you are a man. Do you imagine all the same that you can talk justice, and that the very fountain of justice has dried up? If what you say is just, where do you get it from? Either what you say is unjust, and you ought to shut up, or else what you say is just, and you only get it from the very source of justice. And who but God is the source of justice? So first lay the foundation of faith: *Can there be unfairness with God?* (Rom 9:18-20). His fairness may escape you, but there can be no unfairness there.

4. Are you, perhaps, expecting me to tell you why he has mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardens? Are you expecting it from me, a man?⁷ If you're a man and I'm a man, then both of us have heard, *O man, who are you to answer back to God?* So trusting ignorance is better than rash knowledge. God says to me, Christ speaks through the apostle,⁸ *O man, who are you to answer back to God?* And I get indignant, do I, because I don't understand God's justice? If I am a man, I shouldn't be indignant. Let me go beyond being a man, if I can, and reach the source. But even if I do reach it, I may not tell about it to a man.⁹ Let

him go beyond himself also, and reach it with me. "And who is there," you will ask me, "who being a man can go beyond being a man?" Well, doesn't the apostle reproach some people and say, *For when you say, I am Paul's, I am Apollo's, are you not men* (1 Cor 3:4)? You're a man, and you belong to Adam; belong to the Son of man.¹⁰



We were saved in hope

5. And you know, perhaps he's saying to you, *I no longer call you slaves, but friends, because what I have heard from my Father I have made known to you* (Jn 15:15). "But he said this to the disciples, to those apostles, those are the ones he said it to." Well, we ought not to let it get us down because we are not yet like them. And in any case, even with them, what did he mean when he said, *Everything I have heard from my Father I have made known to you*? I think he meant it in hope, not yet in actual fact. I think he meant what he was going to do, not what he had already done. "And how can you prove that, seeing he himself says 'I have made known to you,' and doesn't say, 'I shall make known to you'?" Because in scripture some things are said in the past tense which are to be understood of the future. "How can they be said of the past, when they are to be understood of the future?" *They dug my hands and feet*, it says, *they counted all my bones* (Ps 22:16-17). It hadn't yet happened, and what was going to happen was announced as if it had happened.

He saved us by the washing of rebirth (Tit 3:5); and yet somewhere else he says, *We were saved in hope. But hope which is seen is not hope* (Rom 8:24). We say "we were saved in hope" only about the past. And since we were saved in hope, not yet in fact, what we hope for is still in the future. Sure, we already see and possess — but it's not the fact yet, but the hope. *For what anyone sees*, he says, *why should he hope for it? If however we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it in patience* (Rom 8:24-25). And yet we have been saved, and yet we are still hoping and waiting for salvation, we don't yet possess it.

So that's how we must take what the Lord says to the disciples, *Everything I have heard from my Father I have made known to you* (Jn 15:15). If this had already happened, why does he tell them somewhere else, *I have still many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now* (Jn 16:12)? Certainly, everything I have heard from my Father I have made known to you; but when he says, "You cannot bear them now," and says, "I still have to say to you," he is putting things off, not cutting them off altogether. So because of the certainty of his hope, by which he knew without a doubt that he would do this, it was in his reckoning already as good as done; and that's why he could say, "I have made known to you."

*What cannot be seen in the time of faith
will be seen in the time of sight*

6. So, *As long as we are in the body, we are away abroad from the Lord. For we are walking by faith and not by sight* (2 Cor 5:6-7). To the extent it is given to us, let us hold fast to faith and not have doubts about the justice of God. Let us on no account believe that there is any unfairness with him, or we may get sucked into a great whirlpool of ungodliness. And when we have held fast and firmly in complete faith that there is no unfairness in him, even if we do not see it now, I mean the fairness that is with him, the journey will be over and we have come home.¹¹ It cannot be seen in the time of faith, it will be seen in the time of sight. Now, you see, we are walking by faith, then it will be by sight.¹²

What does it mean, “by sight”? *Sightly in form above the sons of men* (Ps 45:2), because *in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* (Jn 1:1). *Whoever loves me, he says, keeps my commandments; and, whoever loves me, shall be loved by my Father, and I myself will love him.* — And what will you give him? — *And I will show myself to him* (Jn 14:21). That will be “sight,” when he does what he has said, *And I will show myself to him.* That is where you will see God’s fairness, that is where you will read it, without any code of law, you will read it in the Word.

And so, *when we see him just as he is* (1 Jn 3:2), then our travels abroad will be over. It is after that, though, that we shall rejoice with the joy of the angels. At the moment we are still on the road. What is the road? It’s faith. For the sake of your faith Christ became deformed, yet Christ remains “sightly.” *Sightly in form above the sons of men*, that is how he will be seen after our travels are over. But how is he seen now, in faith? *And we saw him, and he did not have any sighthiness or comeliness, but his features were abject, and deformed his bearing* (that means his strength); *contemptible and deformed his bearing, a man beset with injuries and familiar with enduring infirmities* (Is 53:2-3). Christ’s deformity is what gives form to you. If he had been unwilling to be deformed, you would never have got back the form you lost.¹³ So he hung on the cross, deformed; but his deformity was our beauty.

So then, in this life let us hold on tight to the deformed Christ. What do I mean, the deformed Christ? *Far be it from me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world* (Gal 6:14). That’s the deformity of Christ. Did I ever say I knew anything among you, except the road? This is the road, to believe in the crucified. We carry the sign of this deformity on our foreheads.¹⁴ Let us not be ashamed of this deformity of Christ. Let us hold to the way, and we shall arrive at the sight. When we arrive at the sight, we shall see the equal-handedness of God. And no longer will there be any occasion to say there, “Why did he come to the help of this one and not that one? Why was this one steered by God’s guiding hand to get baptized, while that other one who had lived a good life as

a catechumen suddenly collapsed and died, without ever reaching baptism? That other one again, who lived such a vicious life, as a lecher, as an adulterer, as a play-actor, as a bullfighter,¹⁵ fell ill, was baptized, departed this life, and in him sin was overcome, in him sin was eliminated – why?” Look for deserts, and all you will find is punishment. Look for grace—*Oh the depth of the riches!* Peter denies, the thief believes—*Oh the depth of the riches!* (Rom 11:33).

Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!

7. Do you imagine that I am able to investigate and solve this matter from which the blessed apostle shrank in dread? When he fell a-trembling as he gazed into such dizzy depths and heights, he cried out, *O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!* What had he just been saying, to bring him to this exclamation? He had been saying something which, if we don't trust God to have no unfairness in him, will be judged unfair. He was speaking to Gentiles, he was speaking to the faithful about the Jews: *Just as you, he said, did not believe God, but now have obtained mercy by their unbelief, so these too did not believe in your mercy, in order that they too might obtain mercy. For God has locked up all in unbelief together, that he may have mercy on all* (Rom 11:30-32). At this point Paul went on to say—“And what kind of explanation is this of God's fairness and justice, to lock up all in unbelief, in order to have mercy on all?”—You look for an explanation, I shrink back in dread from the brink—he went on to say, *Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!* You try to work it out; let me be lost in wonder. You argue about it; just let me believe. I see the depths, I cannot reach the bottom. *Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How inscrutable are his judgments, how unsearchable his ways!* Perhaps he is going to explain them? *For who has known the mind of the Lord, and who has ever been his counselor? Or who ever first gave to him, that he should be repaid? Because from him and through him and in him are all things. To him be glory for ever and ever* (Rom 11:34-36).

Paul found rest, because he found . . . because he found wonder. So don't ask me, any of you, to explain hidden things. He says, *inscrutable are his judgments*, and have you come to scrutinize them? He says, *unsearchable are his ways*, and have you come to search them out? If you have come to scrutinize the inscrutable and come to search out the unsearchable, believe, because you are lost.¹⁶ Wanting to scrutinize the inscrutable and search out the unsearchable is exactly the same as wanting to see what cannot be seen and utter what cannot be uttered. So let us get on with building the house. When it comes to be dedicated, then perhaps it will find the clearest explanation of these hidden matters.

NOTES

1. The sermon is on much the same kind of subject as Sermon 26, and a similar date is proposed for it, about 418 or the following years. Nothing is said in the heading of the manuscripts about where it was preached, so we may presume that the scene is Augustine's home church at Hippo. It is not really on Ps 96 at all, but the title of that psalm is used as a peg for a sermon about the mysterious workings of grace.

2. The psalm (Ps 96) has no title in the Hebrew text and modern translations.

3. Augustine knew perfectly well that the captivity immediately referred to was the exile in Babylon, just as he knew that the house was the temple, rebuilt after the exile. But he took all that for granted; that was not for him the real, which is to say the ultimate meaning. So he jumps immediately to what the Babylonian captivity and the second temple themselves mean, or represent.

4. See Rom 8:3.

5. See the Nicene Creed.

6. See Jn 1:14.

7. *Expectas a me homo?* I have translated as if it were *a me homine*, for which I admit there is no support in the manuscripts. What the Latin means as it stands is "Are you, a man, expecting it from me?" But that seems to miss the point completely. So I make so bold as to emend *homo* to *homine*—or else I make even bolder to assert that Augustine just forgot his grammar, and put *homo* in the nominative, in the place of emphasis at the end of the question, even though he meant it to be in apposition to me in the ablative.

8. He has, of course, a very strict notion of biblical inspiration. But I don't think he is assuming the crude view that Christ just dictated Paul's letters to Paul. He was well aware that Paul dictated them to a secretary. But they are divinely inspired, and so what Paul the apostle says has the authority of Christ, the authority of God behind it.

9. See 2 Cor 12:4.

10. And so in this way go beyond the old Adam, transcend your fallen humanity, indeed your mere humanity, in Christ.

11. As the text stands, there is an incoherence of different constructions in the sentence. It begins with the temporal clause "when we have held . . .," *cum . . . tenuerimus*, and after it the first main verb is in the subjunctive, *finiatur via*, "let the journey be over," and the next one in the perfect indicative, *et venimus ad patriam*, "and we have come home." Augustine could easily have said this—the roughness of syntax is not unusual with him, speaking as he was *ex tempore*. But my feeling is that it does not quite fit the context. The context here does not call for a desire for the journey to be over, but for an assurance that it will be over one day. In the next sentence the corresponding verb is in the future indicative, so I emend *finiatur* to *finietur*. The old Maurist editors tidied up the incoherence by emending *venimus* to *veniamus*, "let us come home."

12. See 1 Cor 13:23.

13. He is referring to the unspoil divine image, according to which man was created, which included in itself what later theologians would call the state of original justice. The concepts of "form" and "image" are very close; see Phil 2:6-8.

14. He is referring to the sign of the cross made on the foreheads of the newly baptized by the bishop—part of what we now call the sacrament of confirmation; or equally to the sign of the cross with which the faithful signed themselves, as we still do at the reading of the gospel.

15. *Venator*, a huntsman. But he is not referring to ordinary hunting; the *venator* was specifically the man who took on wild beasts in the amphitheater, now that they had (presumably) stopped throwing criminals and Christians to them for the entertainment of the populace. The nearest modern equivalent is, I think, a bullfighter. Acting in plays, which sooner or later involved obscene performances, and taking part in the sports of the circus, were regarded as unlawful for the faithful by the early Church, not only because of the obscenity and blood-lust involved, but also and chiefly because of the association of these

entertainments with pagan cults. The characteristic Anglo-Saxon disapproval of bullfighting may help us to get a feel of the sentiment involved.

16. *Nam peristi*; a puzzling expression, if one takes *peristi* in the strong sense of being eternally lost, or damned. Not much point in believing, if you are damned. But Augustine cannot possibly have told people they were damned in such circumstances. So one copyist changed *nam*, "because," to *non*, "you are not lost." another, more concerned with the text and less with making Augustine talk theological sense, emended it to *iam*, "Believe you are already lost." But if we take "you are lost" in the simple sense of just being lost, having lost the way, there is no problem. Augustine is telling those who wish to scrutinize the inscrutable, etc., that they are up a gum-tree, they are in an intellectual blind alley. The only remedy is faith.

SERMON 28

ON THE VERSE OF PSALM 105:
LET THE HEARTS OF THOSE WHO SEEK THE LORD REJOICE;
DURING THE FAST OF PENTECOST EMBER WEEK

Date: 397¹

1. Out of all these divine utterances, let us pick for consideration with the Lord's help the one we heard last: *Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice* (Ps 105:3). It's appropriate that our stomachs too are fasting; our hearts will rejoice if our minds are hungry. When nice dishes are set before us at a banquet, the gullets of those who seek food rejoice. When gaily colored and agreeable painted objects are set before our eyes, the eyes of those who seek to look at something bright rejoice; the ears of those who seek a song rejoice; the noses of those who seek a pleasing smell rejoice. *Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.*

Christ is the food which nourishes without perishing

2. Now it's obvious that of the objects presented to our various senses, each one gives pleasure to a distinct sense. Sounds don't give pleasure to the sense of sight, nor colors to the sense of hearing. But for our hearts the Lord is both light and voice and fragrance and food. And the reason he is all these things is that he is none of them. And the reason he is none of them is that he is the creator of them all. He is light for our hearts, since we say to him, *In your light we shall see light* (Ps 36:9); he is a sound for our hearts, since we say to him, *To my hearing you will give exultation and gladness* (Ps 51:8); he is fragrance for our hearts, since it is said of him, *We are the sweet fragrance of Christ* (2 Cor 2:15).

Now if you are seeking food, because you have been fasting, *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice* (Mt 5:6). But it is said of the Lord Jesus Christ himself that he has become for us justice and wisdom.² There you have the banquet that has been provided. Christ is justice, nowhere is he in short supply; he is not provided for us by cooks, nor is he imported by merchants from overseas, like exotic fruits.³ He is a food that appeals to everyone whose inner man has a healthy appetite. He is the food which recommends itself to us by saying, *I am the living bread,*

who came down from heaven (Jn 6:51). He is the food which nourishes without perishing; he is the food which doesn't disappear when it is taken;⁴ he is the food which fills the hungry and remains whole. When you depart from here to your own tables, you won't eat anything like that. So because you have come together to this banquet, take care that you eat well. And when you go away, mind you digest it well. You eat well and digest badly if you hear the word of God and don't do it. In that case you don't derive any useful energy from it, but belch it out in the raw discomfort of indigestion.

Light is the food of our eyes

3. Don't be surprised that our hearts can feast in such a way that they are nourished, and what they are nourished on is not diminished. God gives precisely that sort of food to our bodily eyes. This light, isn't it, is the food of our eyes; they feed on this light of ours, and if anyone is too long in the dark, they grow weak as from fasting. People have lost their sight, you know, just by staying in the dark, without anything attacking their eyes, or anyone poking them out, or any alien fluid getting into them, or dust or smoke. They are led out from the dark, and they don't see what they used to see; their eyes are dead from hunger; they have wasted away from not taking their food, which is light.

So now try and see what I suggested, what the nature is of this food for our eyes. This light is seen by everyone, it feeds everybody's eyes. The sight of everyone who sees it is nourished, and the light continues undiminished. If two people see it, it remains as much; if more people see it, it remains the same. Let the rich man see it, let the poor man see it, it's the same for them all. The poor man's need for it is satisfied, the rich man's greed for it is wasted. Does he see more, just because he owns more? Can he steal a march on the poor man with a pre-emptive bid in gold, and corner the light market for himself, so that he can see and the poor man has nothing to see with? If that, then, is what the food for our eyes is like, what must God be for our minds?

*Sound remains in the ears,
meaning goes down to the heart*

4. Ears too have a kind of food, which is sound. And what is that like? What we are trying to do, you see, is to put together an idea of the mind's understanding from these sense experiences of the body. Here am I, speaking to your honors;⁵ there are your ears, there are your minds. I have mentioned two things, ears and minds. And in what I speak there are two things, sound and meaning. They travel together, together they reach your ears. Sound remains in the ears, meaning goes down to the heart.⁶

The first thing we should notice about sound is how much more highly

we ought to value meaning. Sound is like the body, meaning like the soul. As soon as the sound has agitated the air and touched the ear, it is gone and cannot be called back and is not still sounding. The syllables precede and follow one another in succession, in such a way that the second one doesn't sound until the first one has gone.

Even so, something as transitory as this has a positively miraculous quality about it. Look, if you were all hungry and I set a lot of bread before you, it wouldn't all reach each of you. You would divide among you what I had put out, and the more of you there were, the less you would each have. But now what I am offering you is a sermon. You don't divide the words and syllables among you; you don't cut up my sermon, one taking this piece and another one that, and thus what I say coming to each one of you in bits and pieces. No, one person hears it all, two hear it all, several hear it all, as many as have come hear it all. It is enough for all, it is complete for each one. Your ears are pricked up for listening, and they are not deprived of anything by someone else's ears being right beside you.

Now if this is the case with the word that makes a sound, what must be the case with the Word that makes everything? It's like this voice of mine, all of it for each of all my listeners, the whole of it remaining with each of you, and yet I haven't got as many voices as you have ears, but one voice fills many ears, not shared out among them but all of it in all of them. Well, think of God's Word in the same way; all of it in heaven, all of it on earth, all of it in the angels,⁷ all of it with the Father, all of it with the Virgin, all of it in eternity, all of it in the flesh, all of it descending into hell,⁸ all of it in paradise where he took the thief along with him. I have said all this as what we can learn from sound.

The Lord is Truth itself at the source

5. So what if I start saying what we can learn from meaning? And how much less even this is than the Word of God! Look, here I am uttering a sound, and when I have uttered it I can't now call it back. But if I want to be heard I utter another sound, and when that one's gone I utter another, or else silence follows. But when it comes to meaning, I both utter it to you and keep it with myself. You find what you have heard, I don't lose what I have said. See how true all this is, and *let the heart of those who seek the Lord rejoice*. The Lord, after all, is Truth itself at the source.

So meaning stays in my heart, emigrates to yours, and doesn't leave mine. However, when there is a meaning or idea in my mind, and I want to plant it also in your mind, I look for sound as a kind of vehicle by which it can pass over to you. And I take a sound, and load a meaning on it so to say, and utter it, and lead it along, and I teach you something and I don't lose it myself. If my idea can do this with my voice, couldn't the Word of God do it with his flesh? That's the kind of way, you see,

in which the Word of God, God with God, the wisdom of God abiding unchangeably with the Father, in order to proceed to us, looked for flesh as a kind of sound, inserted himself into it and proceeded to us and did not recede from the Father.⁹

Understand and savor wisely what you have heard. Consider how great and wonderful it is, and take care to think even more grandly, not meanly, about God. He surpasses all light, he surpasses all sound, he surpasses all meaning and all understanding. He is to be desired and longed for with love, that *the hearts of those who seek the Lord may rejoice*.

NOTES

1. The phrase is literally "during the fast of the fiftieth day." See note 1 on Sermon 7, which is headed by the same expression. The editor concludes from this that the two sermons were preached on the same day, 27 May 397. I cannot tell whether he has worked that out to be the Wednesday, the Friday or the Saturday after Pentecost; but if the two sermons go together, there is absolutely no reason why one should not have been preached on one of these ember days, and the other on another. For that matter, there is no reason why they should have been preached in the same year. But the references to the articles containing the editor's arguments, and the different arguments and conclusions of another scholar, are given in that note.

The subject matter of the two sermons is roughly the same—the trinitarian mystery. And so both have affinities with Augustine's great work on the Trinity. But the most notable connection of this sermon with his *Trinity* is the text it is preached on. For Augustine uses it to set the key of his masterpiece, quoting it at the beginning of the first book, at the beginning of the ninth, and at the end of the fifteenth, thus telling us that his reflections on the divine mystery are more a quest than a discovery.

There is little of that in this short sermon. But it would fit in with his preoccupations as he was beginning to compose *The Trinity*, which was shortly before 400.

2. See 1 Cor 1:30.

3. That Christ (or Christianity) *is* like imported fruits is the impression that missionaries and Church authorities in recent centuries have managed to convey to the peoples of Africa and other regions outside Europe and North America. Augustine's words are a clear justification for a pastoral policy of inculturation—which means extensive diversification.

4. There is a sustained play on words here which is scarcely imitable: *Cibus est qui reficit nec deficit; cibus est qui cum sumitur non consumitur*.

5. literally "to your charity," *caritati vestrae*.

6. The heart was thought of as the organ of thought, and was certainly always the symbol of mind. The brain, curiously enough, was symbolically indifferent to the ancients.

7. In his elaborate discussion of the creation in his book *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Augustine thinks of the angelic mind as a kind of screen onto which the work of creation, which he thinks happened instantaneously and simultaneously, is projected in a sixfold series, indicated by the recurring words "And it was evening and it was morning, the . . . day." The angels' "evening knowledge," then, is their knowledge of creatures as they are in themselves; their "morning knowledge" is their knowledge of creatures "in the Word," in which all things are known more perfectly than they can be known in themselves.

8. A reference to the article in the Apostles' Creed; the word "hell" would be more accurately rendered by "underworld": it is *inferas* in Latin, not *infernum*.

9. I deliberately keep the technical trinitarian term "proceed."

SERMON 28A

FRAGMENT OF A SERMON ON PSALM 116:10-19

Date: 411¹

1. Only *God is true, but every man a liar, as it is written* (Rom 3:4). So if God is true and only he is true, while every man is a liar, how will any man be true unless he approaches the one who is not a liar? Finally, human beings are told, *You were once darkness* (Eph 5:8): there you have *every man a liar*. To God, on the other hand, it is said, *with you is the fountain of life, in your light we shall see light* (Ps 36:9); and because only *God is true*, it is said *that God is light and there is no darkness in him* (1 Jn 1:5). So, human beings darkness, God light; man a liar, God true. When will man be true? *Approach him and be enlightened* (Ps 34:5).

So this is what scripture wished to demonstrate, that every human being, absolutely every single one precisely as human, is a liar. You see, what makes us liars is what we have of our own, and all we have of our very own is the capacity to be liars; not that we cannot be true, but that we cannot be true in virtue of what we are in ourselves. Therefore, in order to be true, *I believed, wherefore I also spoke* (Ps 116:10). Deprive him of “I believed”—*every man is a liar*. For when he moves away from the truth of God, he will remain in his lying, because whoever *speaks a lie speaks from what is his own* (Jn 8:44). Say therefore, *What shall I give back to the Lord for everything he has given to me* (Ps 116:12)? After all, *it was in my panic that I said*—and what I said was true—*every man is a liar* (Ps 116:11). But he gave me back, not punishment for lying, but good for evil, and by justifying the wicked he made of a liar a speaker of the truth.

NOTES

1. In Augustine's Bible this was Ps 115, while the first nine verses of Ps 116 were Ps 114. There is no means of dating the fragment. My instinct would be to place it in the years when he was preoccupied with the Pelagian controversy, that is, after 411.

SERMON 29

A SERMON PREACHED AT CARTHAGE IN THE RESTORED BASILICA
DURING THE VIGIL OF PENTECOST, ON THE VERSE OF PSALM 118:
CONFESS TO THE LORD SINCE HE IS GOOD

Date: 419¹

God is good of himself

1. We have been admonished to confess to the Lord, and indeed commanded to do so by the Spirit of God. And we have been told the reason for confessing to the Lord: *since he is good*. It is said very briefly; it can be thought about very deeply. *Confess to the Lord*, he says. And as though we asked him "Why?" the answer comes, *since he is good* (Ps 118:1). What more can you ask for, if you ask for anything, than the good? Such is the power of the good, that the good is what is sought even by the bad.

But all the other things that are called good get their being good from some particular good. Now if we examine all good things on what they get their being good from, we should call to mind, *And God made all things, and behold they were very good* (Gn 1:31). So nothing would be good unless it had been made by the good. And by what sort of good? By one that nobody made. So there would be nothing good, unless it had been made by the good which had not itself been made. The heavens are good, but made good; the angels are good, but made good; the stars are good, the sun and the moon, the alternation of night and day, the changes of the seasons, the unrolling of the ages, the course of the years, the germination of trees and plants, the natures of animals, and among all these things the praise-making creature, man.

They are all good, but made good. And it's from God that they get their goodness, not from themselves. The one who made these things is good beyond all of them, because no one made him good, but he is good of himself. So, *Confess to the Lord since he is good*.

Confession can mean either praising or repenting

2. Confession can mean either praising or repenting. You see, there

are some less well-informed people who immediately beat their breasts when they hear about confession in the scriptures, as though it can only be about sins, and as if they are being urged now to confess their sins. But to convince your honors² that confession doesn't only refer to sins, let us listen to the one about whom we cannot possibly doubt that he had no sin at all, as he cries out and says, *I confess to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth* (Mt 11:25). Who said this? *One who did no sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth* (1 Pt 2:22); who alone could say with absolute truth, *Behold, the prince of the world is coming, and in me he will find nothing* (Jn 14:30). And yet he confesses. But this confessor³ is a praiser, not a sinner. Anyway, listen to what he confessed. Listen to words of praise, and what this praise is about is our salvation. For what, precisely, does the Son without sin confess to God the Father? *I confess to you, Father*, he says, *Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to little ones* (Mt 11:25). This is what he recited in praise of the Father, that he has hidden these things from the wise and the prudent, that is from the proud and the arrogant, and revealed them to the little ones, that is the weak and the humble.⁴

Confession of sins, not excuses

3. But of course it's also true that the confession of sins is equally salutary. That's why we heard in the psalm that was read first, *Set a guard, Lord, on my mouth, and a door of restraint around my lips, and do not tip my heart into words of malice, to excusing my sins with excuses* (Ps 141:3-4).⁵ He asks God to put a guard on his mouth. And he goes on to explain what it is a guard against. There are people, you see, and plenty of them, who as soon as they are blamed for anything rush to make excuses. Now to make excuses is to look for reasons and to adduce pretexts why a sin should not be regarded as belonging to you. One says "The devil did it for me"; another says "My luck did it for me"; another "I was forced to it by fate"; no one blames himself.

Your accuser goes on scoring points off you, as long as you insist on making your own excuses. So do you want to ensure that your accuser—the devil, that is—suffers and groans? Do what you have heard, do what you have learned, and say to your God, *I myself have said it, Lord. Have mercy on me, heal my soul, since I have sinned against you* (Ps 41:4). "I myself," he says, "I myself have said it; not the devil, not luck, not fate. I myself have said it. I'm not making excuses, on the contrary, I accuse myself. I have said it. Have mercy on me, heal my soul." What's he ill with, anyway? "Since I have sinned against you."

4. So, *Confess to the Lord since he is good*. If you want to praise, what can you more safely praise than the Good One? If you want to praise, if you want to make the confession of praise, what can you more

safely praise than the Good One? If you want to confess your sins, to whom can you more safely do it than the Good One? You confess to a man, and because he is bad you are condemned.⁶ You confess to God, and because he is good you are purged.

If you are thinking of the confession of praise, whatever it is you are going to praise fully and at length, your attention is concentrated on showing that what you are praising is good. Good things, after all, are rightly praised, just as bad things are rightly blamed. The praise of your Lord is put to you very briefly—*he is good*. If you too are good, praise what makes you good; if you are bad, praise what can make you good. If you are good, you see, you get being good from him; if you are bad, you get being bad from yourself. Run away from yourself and come to him who made you, because by running away from yourself you follow yourself up, and by following yourself up you stick fast in him who made you.⁷

Praise what makes you good

5. How many good things there are that you want, bad man! You're certainly bad. Tell me what you want that isn't good. You want a horse, only a good one; you want a farm, only a good one; you want a house, only a good one; you want a wife, only a good one; you want a shirt, only a good one, boots, only good ones. It's only your soul you want bad! Aren't you being a contradiction in terms, by wanting good things while being bad yourself? If you want good things, first be what you want. If being bad you have acquired many good things, what use is it to you, seeing that you yourself have perished?

Love your souls, all of you, if they are good; hate your souls if they are bad. However, by loving him from whom comes everything good, you will be good. Hate your bad points, give preference to the good ones.

6. What does it mean, to hate your bad points? To repent and confess your sins. You see, everyone who repents, and in repenting confesses his sins, is angry with himself, and by repenting he after a fashion punishes in himself what displeases him. What God hates is sin. If you too hate in yourself what God also hates, you are all the same united to God in some part of your will—provided you hate in yourself what God also hates. Be savage against yourself, so that God may intercede for you and not condemn you. Sin, after all, must undoubtedly be punished. That's what sin deserves, punishment, condemnation. Sin must be punished, either by you or by him. If it is punished by you, then it will be punished without you being too; but if it is not punished by you, then it will be punished and so will you.

So, *Confess to the Lord since he is good*. Praise him as much as you can, love him as much as you can. *Pour out your hearts before him, God our helper* (Ps 62:8), *since he is good* (Ps 118:1).

NOTES

1. For the Restored Basilica, see Sermon 19, note 1; it was the metropolitan cathedral church of Carthage.

The editor of the CCL text maintains that it was preached at Pentecost, 397—to be precise on 24 May, a few days before sermons 7 and 28, which were preached during what we used to call the Pentecost ember days. I do not know what his arguments are. But I have another suggestion. This sermon in content, and often even in expression, is very like sermons 19 and 20. Now 19 was also preached in the Restored Basilica, but “during the Games,” which were usually held during December, but could, I suppose, have sometimes been held at other seasons. A reference in that sermon to a recent earthquake, or series of them, dates it as not earlier than 419. Augustine could, of course, have repeated then the gist of a sermon preached over 22 years earlier, but I think it is unlikely. I do not think that certain turns of phrase, connections of ideas and expressions, would be running in his head over quite so long a period with so little variation. So my inclination would be to put this sermon (to which there is no particular reason to attach sermons 7 and 28) at a date much closer to 419, whether before or after: 417 or 418, 420 or 421.

2. *Caritas vestra*: “your charity.”

3. I spell it this way to show that I mean “one who confesses,” since for some odd reason “confessor” in English has come to mean someone to whom one confesses, the father confessor; and in technical ecclesiastical English, it means a male saint who is not a martyr—*par excellence* (I don’t know why) King Edward the Confessor.

4. He doesn’t mean, of course, that “wise and prudent” simply mean the same thing as “proud and arrogant,” but that in this context Jesus is using these words ironically to refer to the proud and arrogant, and likewise with “the little ones.”

5. The psalm had been read first, presumably after an earlier reading. It is interesting to observe that the psalms were sometimes read (by a reader, not by everyone together), and not sung.

6. Here he is not talking about sacramental confession to a priest, but about the confession of a crime (usually extracted by torture) to a judge.

7. It is a similar paradox to losing your life in order to save it—but a less lucid one. I am not certain what he means by “following yourself up.” This is my translation of the simple verb *sequor*, “I follow,” which however can also have the meanings of its compounds *persequor*, “I chase or persecute,” and *assequor*, “I attain.” All these connotations are probably intended here.

SERMON 29A

ON THE VERSE OF THE PSALM 118:
CONFESS TO THE LORD SINCE HE IS GOOD

Date: 397^A

Confession means the praise of our Lord

1. *Confess to the Lord since he is good, since his mercy is for ever* (Ps 118:1). What the Holy Spirit has been urging us to do in the voice of the psalm, to which with one heart and voice we have been answering “Alleluia,” which in English² means “Praise the Lord,” this is what the same Holy Spirit through my voice is now urging you to do: *Confess to the Lord since he is good, since his mercy is for ever*. Whether you sing of his gifts in praise, or pour out your sins in groans, *confess to the Lord since he is good, since his mercy is for ever*. You see, as well as signifying the recital of our sins, confession also means the praise of our Lord, because even if we only do one of these things, we don’t do it without the other. For we accuse ourselves of our wickedness in the hope of his mercy, and we praise his mercy with a recollection of our wickedness.

So let us confess to the Lord since he is good, since his mercy is for ever. Some people think that this or that creature is bad, because it offends their senses. But it’s not true. God made all things very good,³ since he is good. Some people think God is unjust, because his faithful followers frequently suffer many hardships and calamities in this temporal life. But people who think like this are mistaken. *For he scourges every son, not whom he rejects, but whom he receives* (Prv 3:12), since his mercy is for ever.

The Lord is good and merciful

2. So let us confess to the Lord since he is good, since his mercy is for ever. Let us say to the Lord our God, *How wonderful are your works, in wisdom you have made them all* (Ps 104:24). *How just are your judgments, because of iniquity you have disciplined man* (Ps 39:11). *Before I was humbled, I did wrong* (Ps 119:67). Let us say these things in confession, because if things happen to us contrary to the entreaties

we make in this mortal life, he all the same brings good out of them, since he is good. And if we are corrected with pains and penalties, *he will not be wroth to the end, nor be angry for ever* (Ps 103:9), since his mercy is for ever.

What could be as good as our God? People blaspheme, and not only are they not humbled, they even grow proud of their misdeeds. And yet *he makes his sun rise on the good and the bad, and sends rain on the just and the unjust* (Mt 5:45). What could be as merciful as our God? People persist in their vices and villainies, and yet he never stops inviting them to turn back to him. What could be as good as our God, from whom even in affliction we receive so many consolations? What could be as merciful as our God, whose future sentence upon us we can even change by changing ourselves? Let us confess to the Lord since he is good, since his mercy is for ever.

It isn't everything of which the praises can be called confessions, but only the praises of the Lord our God.⁴ If it is true to say, *How good is the God of Israel to the upright of heart* (Ps 73:1), then it would seem to follow that he is regarded as bad by the crooked of heart. There is no one who wasn't first crooked before being made straight, and so as one both convicted and convinced he could begin to praise what he had previously found fault with, and to admire what he used previously to despise. In this way he confesses to the Lord, since he is good to him now that he is straight and upright, though he had seemed bad to him when he was crooked and bent. And because, while it was his own ill-will that bent him, it was God's grace that straightened him out, he should also confess to him, *since his mercy is for ever*.

We are bad, he is good; we get our goodness from him, our badness from ourselves. He is good to us when we are good, he is good to us when we are bad. We are savage against ourselves, he is merciful toward us. He invites us to turn back to him; he waits for us until we turn back to him; he pardons us if we turn back to him; he gives us the winner's crown if we don't turn away from him.

If you confess to a man you are punished; if you confess to God you are set free

3. Let us confess to the Lord since he is good, since his mercy is for ever. People have always thought confession of sins a frightening thing, but that is when it is to a human judge. Very often there is a use of scourges and whips of all kinds, of hooks and fire, to extract a verbal confession. And sometimes the limbs give way to the rack and the body's construction is destroyed, before the mind gives way to pain and the secret of the crime is divulged. In vain is the body mangled and entrails laid bare, while the charge is denied and the conscience remains closed.⁵ And why should anyone in such torments be afraid to confess, unless those who confess are customarily punished?

Well, if you confess to a man you are punished; if you confess to God

you are set free. And it's not surprising, really. What a human inquisition is trying to get from a man is what the inquisitor doesn't know. But God, who advises us to confess, knows what we were unwilling to confess, and he doesn't first learn about it when we finally do confess. Surely, he is all the more ready to deliver us from eternal death when we confess, seeing that he has been sparing us from temporal death for those wrongdoings of ours, which he knew about even before we confessed.

4. Perhaps you are saying to yourself, "Why does God want me to confess what he already knows? When a man, after all, requires this of another man, it's because he doesn't know." Why else, do you suppose, except that God wants you to punish your sin by looking hard at it, so that he can undo it by overlooking it? How, after all, can you expect him to overlook something that you yourself are not prepared even to look at?⁶ Listen to the psalm, and if you are wide awake notice your own voice in it: *My sin, he says, I know, and my misdeed I have not hidden. I said, I will declare my wrongdoing to the Lord against myself, and you have forgiven my impious thoughts* (Ps 32:5). Listen to it in another psalm: *Since I myself acknowledge my iniquity, and my wrongdoing is before me always* (Ps 51:3). Thus it wasn't sheer impudence when he went on to say to God, *Turn away your face from my sins* (Ps 51:9). The time God is prepared to turn his face away from a person's sin is when the person is at pains to turn his own face toward his sin, and so to be able to say in God's hearing, *And my sin is always before me*. And God being said to turn his face away doesn't mean that he doesn't know, but that he overlooks.

So then, man, if the reason you are afraid to confess to a human judge is that he is bad, or at least that he is compelled to apply the full rigor of the law, you may feel quite safe in confessing to the Lord, *since he is good, since his mercy is for ever* (Ps 118:1).

NOTES

1. This sermon, like the previous one, was possibly preached at a vigil of Pentecost. The rather elaborate style, less spontaneous than usual, suggests an early date, even earlier than 397.

2. He, of course, said *Latine*.

3. See Gn 1:31.

4. This is a curiously inconsequential reflection, which is not followed up, and has little connection that I can see with what has gone before.

5. This appalling paragraph merely describes the procedure under Roman law for the examination of accused persons. It seems to have been felt that a conviction for a crime would only be entirely safe and satisfactory if the accused confessed; so the accused must be induced to confess by torture.

6. He is playing on the words *cognosco* (know), *ignosco* (pardon) and *agnosco* (acknowledge), in a way I can only palely reproduce in English.

SERMON 30

SERMON PREACHED IN THE BOWERY BASILICA ONE SUNDAY,
ON A VERSE OF PSALM 119

Date: 412¹

The law's threats are fruitless when iniquity is the mistress

1. Undoubtedly, brothers, it was a heavy burden all right, and a heavy yoke of iniquity he wanted to avoid, this person who said to God, *Direct my steps according to your word, and let no iniquity master me* (Ps 119:133). Let us see, then, when it is that iniquity masters a person, so that we may understand what we heard him praying for, and what we too have been praying for ourselves, by making the response. All of us, I imagine, responded with devout and truthful minds to the holy psalm, as we prayed and said to the Lord our God, *Direct my steps according to your word, and let no iniquity master me.*

From the mastery of this worst of all mistresses we have been redeemed by precious blood. And what was the use of having received the law, commanding and threatening us and not helping us at all, and of being under it before we received the grace of God? The law's threats are fruitless when iniquity is the mistress. The law, to be sure, is not something materialist or carnal; since God who gave the law is spirit,² the law is unquestionably spiritual. But what is it the apostle says? *For we know that the law is spiritual, but as for me, I am carnal, sold under sin* (Rom 7:14). So don't be surprised, O you who have been sold under sin, if you are under the mastery of the one you have been sold to. Listen to the apostle John: *Sin is iniquity* (1 Jn 5:17). So it's against that kind of mistress that we invoke the Master when we say, *Let no iniquity master me.*

2. The one who has been sold cries out; if only the redeemer would hear him! It is man who sold himself by his free decision³ under the mastery of iniquity, and the price he got for himself was a brief forbidden pleasure from the tree.⁴ So now he cries out, "Direct my goings, which I have made winding and twisted; *direct my steps, which I have made crooked by my own choice; direct them according to your word.*" What does it mean, "Direct them according to your word"? So that my steps may be straight, because your word is straight.

"I," he says, "have been twisted under the weight of iniquity, but your word is the set-square of truth. So straighten me out, twists and all, as though in line with a set-square, that is to say with your straight word. So *direct my steps according to your word, and let no iniquity master me*. I have sold myself; you, please, redeem me. I have sold myself by my own choice; redeem me by your own blood." In the seller let pride be ashamed, in the redeemer let grace be proud. For *God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble* (Jas 4:6).

*By willing what is bad,
he lost the power for what is good*

3. *For the law is spiritual, but as for me, I am carnal, sold under sin. For I cannot tell what I am about; for it is not what I will that I do* (Rom 7:14-15). It is as a carnal man that he says "It is not what I will that I do." He is not blaming the law, but himself. The law, being spiritual, is not at fault. It is the carnal man who has sold himself that incurs guilt. He does not do what he will. When he will he cannot, because when he could he would not. By willing what is bad he lost the power for what is good.⁶ It's as a prisoner he is now speaking, and the prisoner says, *It is not what I will that I do. For I do not perform the good that I will, but the bad thing I hate is what I do* (Rom 7:15)

"Not what I will." And of course Mr. Know-all contradicts, "Of course it's what you will." *"It's not what I will that I do."* "You do exactly what you will." *"It's not what I will that I do.* Believe me, brother, *it's not what I will that I do."* "Come off it; if you wanted to, you would do it; it's because you don't want to that you don't do good." *"It's not what I will that I do.* Believe me, brother, I know what's going on in me. *It's not what I will that I do.* You are no arbiter of conscience, you opponent of grace. I know that I do not do what I will, and are you going to keep on saying 'You do what you want to do'? *No one knows what goes on in a man except the spirit of the man which is within him* (1 Cor 2:11)."

The struggle between the flesh and spirit

4. And you are a man. If you won't believe me, take a look at yourself. Do you really live in this corruptible body, which weighs down the soul,⁷ in such a way that the flesh does not lust against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh?⁸ Is this kind of brawling unknown in you? Is there no lust of the flesh in you, resisting the law of your mind?⁹ Well, if there is nothing in you resisting something else, consider where you as a whole must be. If your spirit has no disagreement with the flesh lusting against it, consider that perhaps your whole mind may be in agreement with the flesh, consider that the reason why there is no war may perhaps be that

there is an unwholesome sort of peace. Perhaps you are in total agreement with the flesh, and so there is no brawling going on. What hope have you got of being able to win eventually, if you haven't yet even started to fight?

But if you delight in the law of God according to the inner man, while you see another law in your members fighting against the law of your mind;¹⁰ if you are delighted by this one and tied up by that one, free in the mind but a slave in the flesh; if this is already the case, then you should rather sympathize with the man who says, *It is not what I will that I do*. After all, don't you want that lust which resists your mind to be entirely eliminated in you? You are a man of bad will if you don't want to be without such an opponent.

For my part, I tell you, anything in me that rebels against my mind, and argues with me in favor of a contrary kind of pleasure, anything in me of that sort I would like to slay completely. And if by chance it happens with the Lord's help that I defeat it, I would still much rather not have anything to argue with. For me, not having an enemy is infinitely preferable to defeating one. It's not the case either, is it, that the fact of the flesh lusting against the spirit has nothing to do with me, or that I have been stuck together from a different and opposite nature? No, that fact is a fact about me, and my not agreeing to it is a fact about me. The free part of me is to some extent resisting the bits left over from slavery in me. I want the whole thing to be healed, because I am the whole thing. I don't want my flesh, as something foreign to me, to be separated from me for ever, but to be all healed with me for ever.¹¹

If this is not what you want, then I don't know what your ideas about the flesh are. I suppose you think it comes from goodness knows where, like from some unfriendly nation. Well that's false, it's heretical, it's blasphemous; of mind and flesh there is one and the same maker.¹² When he created man he made each of them, and joined them both together. He subjected the flesh to the soul, and the soul to himself. If the soul had always remained beneath its master, then the flesh would always have obeyed its master. So don't be surprised if the soul which forsook its superior should suffer punishment through its subject. *For the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. For these, are opposed to each other, so that you do not do what you would* (Gal 5:17). Hence also this assertion: *It is not what I will that I do* (Rom 7:15). For the flesh lusts against the spirit, and I don't want it to lust. I think it's great if I don't consent to it, but what I would like is to be without it all together. So, *It is not what I will that I do*. What I will is that the flesh should not lust against the spirit, and this I cannot do. That's what I have been saying: *It is not what I will that I do*.

Collapse and rebuilding

5. Why do you malign me? I say, *It is not what I will that I do*, and

you say, "You do what you will." Why malign me? You don't acknowledge the doctor, why malign the patient? At least allow me to ask for the doctor. *Redeem me from the malice of men, and I will keep your commandments* (Ps 119:134). I will keep them through your redeeming me, not through my own power. The reason I do not pretend to a health which I do not yet enjoy is that I want to send for the doctor. As for you, the defender of nature—and I wish you were, not by putting forward a spurious defense of it as if it were in good health, but by sending for the doctor because it is not yet in good health—as for you now, defender or rather assailant of nature, while you are praising the creator for nature as if it were in good health, you are keeping the healer away from it when it is in fact ailing.

The one who created it heals it as it is collapsing by itself, raises it up by himself. That's the faith, that's the truth, that's the very basis of Christian faith. One and one.¹³ One man through whom the collapse, another man through whom the rebuilding. Collapse by that one, rebuilding by this one. The one who did not stay put fell, the one who did not fall picked him up. That one collapsed because he let go of the one who stays put, this one while staying put came down to the other as he lay there.

Let not sin reign in our mortal bodies

6. So if the flesh is lusting against the spirit, so that by that very fact you are not doing what you will, because your will is that it should not lust and you cannot bring that about, at least keep your will in the grace of the Lord, and persevere in relying on his help. Say to him what you are singing: *Direct my steps according to your word, and let no iniquity master me* (Ps 119:133). What's the meaning of *Let no iniquity master me*? Listen to the apostle: *Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies*. What does *reign* mean? *Make you obey its desires* (Rom 6:12). He didn't say, "Don't have bad desires." How, after all, can I avoid having bad desires in this mortal flesh, in which the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh? So what you must do is this: *Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, to make you obey its desires*. Even if there are desires, you mustn't obey them, lest iniquity should master you.

Do not offer your members to sin as weapons of iniquity (Rom 6:13). Do not let your members become weapons of iniquity, and no iniquity will master you. But even this, your members not becoming weapons of iniquity, you surely don't accord it to yourself by your own powers, do you? You see, when your members do not become weapons of iniquity, there is still some iniquity in your members, in the form of unlawful desires, but it doesn't reign. How can it reign if it hasn't got any weapons? Part of you, your flesh, the lust of your flesh, is rebelling against you by its sluggishness. This sluggishness is a tyrant. If you want to be the tyrant's conqueror, invoke the aid of Christ your emperor.

7. Oh yes, I know what you are going to say to me, or what you are already saying to yourself. Whoever you are of this sort, listening to me here, I know what iniquity is saying to you inside your head. You see, you are still under the yoke of iniquity, as long as you fail to acknowledge the price paid by the redeemer. I know what you are saying to yourself: "Here's my flesh lusting against my spirit. It's lusting for a spot of adultery, but I don't consent. I don't give permission, I don't go along with it. Not only do I not do it, I don't even consent to do it. Not only do I not commit it outwardly in the flesh, in my mind I do not even go along with the flesh's rebellion. Do I consent to its revolt, do I give in to its unrest? I certainly do not! So there you are: no iniquity is mastering me."

Is that so? Is that the truth? Give thanks, if that's the case, to the one who has granted you that it should be the case. Don't take the credit for it yourself, or you may lose what you have received, and begin to ask for it back again in vain. Are you not afraid of God withstanding the proud but giving grace to the humble?¹⁴

The doctor is calling us to himself

8. So you bestow it on yourself, do you, that iniquity does not master you? If this presumption of yours is true, then our prayer is pointless, in which we have been saying to God, *Let no iniquity master me*. Did you sing these words today or not? You were here when we were all saying, *Direct my steps according to your word, and let no iniquity master me*. If you were bestowing this on yourself, why were you asking for it with me?

I've caught you praying, I've caught you invoking his aid, I convict you of laboring. So let us both listen to him as he says, *Come to me, all you who labor* (Mt 11:28). Let us listen and let us come. What do I mean by "Let us come"? Let us go forward by believing, approach by giving thanks, arrive by persevering. Let us come to him who says *Come to me, all you who labor*. You too are laboring, and I am laboring. Let us listen to him and come to him. Why are we quarreling with each other? In order not to hear the doctor calling us? What a calamitous infirmity! The doctor is calling us all to himself, and the sick person is busy quarreling! Notice what he says as he calls: *Come to me, all you who labor*. How are you laboring, but under the burden of sin, under the yoke of that bad mistress, iniquity? So, *come to me, all you who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will refresh you* (Mt 11:28). I who made you will make you afresh.¹⁵ I, he says, will make you afresh, because *without me you can do nothing* (Jn 15:5).

For your sake God became man

9. How will I make you afresh? *Take my yoke upon you, and learn*

from me (Mt 11:29). What are we to learn from you? We know you, Lord, in the beginning the Word, the Word who is God, the Word who is with God; we know that all things were made through you,¹⁶ things we see and things we do not see.¹⁷ What are we to learn from you? After all, we your students and apprentices are not going to set up another universe, like the apprentices of an artist or craftsman. You have established the one and only universe, you have made heaven and earth, you have brightened each with its creatures and its decorations. What are we to learn from you?

Learn from me, he says. When I was in the beginning, God with God, I created you. That is not what I want you to learn from me. But I became what I made, in order that the one whom I made might not perish. How did I become what I made? *He emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, made in the likeness of men; and being found in condition as a man, he humbled himself* (Phil 2:7-8). Learn that from me; it says he humbled himself, you see. *Learn from me, since I am meek and humble of heart* (Mt 11:29).

After all, he says, I am not teaching you this as though you had some time or other been in the form of God, not thinking it robbery for you to be equal to God.¹⁸ That was proper to him alone; it was nature to him, not robbery. He is born of the Father in equality with the Father. What did he do, though, for your sake? *He emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being made in the likeness of men and found in condition as a man*. So there, for your sake God became man, and are you not willing to recognize yourself for the man you are? There you are, for your sake God became a man without sin, and are you not willing to recognize yourself as a man with sin, and so come to him who is saying, *Come to me all you who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will refresh you; take my yoke upon you* (Mt 11:28-29)?

For one who loves it is easy

10. Have you taken this yoke upon you? Have you really? Have you felt you have a rider on your back? Have you really taken this yoke? You answer, "Yes, I have." Do you feel you have a rider on your back? Do you feel you have a driver? "Yes, I do," you say. Then say to him, *Direct my steps according to your word* (Ps 119:133). He directs you under his yoke and under his burden. For his burden to be light for you and his yoke easy, he himself inspired you with love. It's easy and comfortable for one who loves; for one who doesn't, it's difficult and rough. For one who loves it is easy: *The Lord has given ease* (Ps 85:12).

Or perhaps because at least you have come when you heard the words *Come to me*, perhaps you intend to put this down to your own credit, the very fact that you have come? "There you are," you say, "I have come to him of my own accord, of my own free will. It is because I have come that he refreshes me. It is because I have come that he puts his easy

yoke upon me. He gives me love, and so his burden that he puts on me is light for me, now that I love him truly. Yes, all this he has done for me—but because I have come to him.” So that’s what you think, is it, just because you have come, it is you yourself who have done this for yourself? *What have you that you have not received?* (1 Cor 4:7).

How have you come? You have come by believing, but you haven’t yet come through to the end. We are still on the road. We have come, but we haven’t yet come through. *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice before him with trembling, lest ever the Lord be angry, and you perish from the way of justice* (Ps 2:11-12). When you arrogate to yourself the discovery of the way of justice, be afraid of perishing from the way of justice through this very arrogance. “I have come,” he says, “I’ve come of my own accord, I’ve come of my own free will.” Why this huffing and puffing? Do you want to hear that even this much has been bestowed on you as well? Listen to him calling: *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him* (Jn 6:44).

Turning to the Lord, etc.

NOTES

1. To this title, taken from the leading collection of manuscripts, the CCL adds, from other manuscripts, “and on the words of the apostle, *For we know that the law is spiritual, but as for me I am carnal, etc.*” (Rom 7:14).

“The Bowery Basilica” (literally the Basilica of the Bowers or Summer Houses), presumably a suburb of Carthage.

The sermon is mainly against Pelagian ideas, and is dated anytime between 412 and 416, when the issues of grace and free will, raised by the Pelagian controversy, were beginning to preoccupy Augustine more and more.

2. See Jn 4:24.

3. His *liberum arbitrium*, usually translated “free will.”

4. See Gn 3:6.

5. The text reads *sanguine meo*, “by my own blood.” With a little hesitation I have treated it as a misprint, *meo* for *tuo*—a slip it would be easy to make since we have just had *arbitrio meo* a few words before. My reason for treating it as a mistake is that the Maurist editors read *tuo*, but there is no reference to this reading of theirs in the apparatus, which there surely would have been if the CC was preferring *meo* to *tuo* on the evidence of the manuscripts. For *meo* is certainly a very strange and unexpected reading. Furthermore, at least in Migne’s edition of the Maurist text there is no footnote to their reading *tuo*; and again I think there would have been if there were strong manuscript support for *meo*.

However, should *sanguine meo* be correct, we have to make sense of it: “redeem me by my blood.” But we are all redeemed by the blood of Christ, not our own. However, if we realize that the speaker here is Adam, representing all of mankind, he can call Christ’s blood “my blood,” because it is “man’s” blood, the blood of the human race, of the last Adam. I myself would be happy to think that Augustine really did say *sanguine meo*.

6. The translation is perhaps slightly inaccurate. The Latin runs *Per malum velle perdidit*

bonum posse: the “bad” and “good” qualify the acts of willing and being able, not their objects. The difficulty is the defectiveness of the English “can.” It would be nice to be able to say “By bad willing he lost good canning,” but it is not possible.

7. See Wis 9:15.

8. See Gal 5:17.

9. See Rom 7:23.

10. The law in your members is practically the same as the lust of the flesh in the other text alluded to. The English word “lust” is a little too narrow both for the Latin *concupisco* of Augustine and Saint Paul’s Greek which it rendered. The wider word “covet” would be better, except that from the Galatians text the flesh lusting against the spirit has become almost an English stock phrase. By “flesh” Paul did not mean the body, any more than by “spirit” he meant the soul. Augustine is inclined to interpret him as if he did—or rather, he will equate “spirit” with “mind.” But he as well as Paul will readily include the lust for power and superiority and fame and glory—ambition, in other words—among the “lusts of the flesh,” even though the appetite for such things is not what we would nowadays call a carnal desire.

Augustine in this passage, it must be confessed, does read a little like a Stoic, with the ultimate aim being the elimination of all passion, or *apatheia*. But I imagine he would answer that it is only the evil passions he wants eliminated.

11. And here he shows his essential freedom from the Platonic view of man as a soul imprisoned in an alien body, though he never entirely escaped from the Platonic style of language. The whole person is body and mind, flesh and spirit, and Augustine wants the whole to be healed for ever.

12. Here he is hinting, more ingeniously than fairly, that the Pelagians are adopting a Manichaean view of man, according to which the body, the flesh, being material, is intrinsically evil. I say this is ingenious, because Augustine’s Pelagian critics will in due course insinuate that he with his doctrine of grace and denial—as they saw it—of free will had never really ceased being a Manichee.

13. Adam and Christ; see note 5 above.

14. See Jas 4:6.

15. He is playing on the words *facio*, “make” and *reficio*, “refresh,” but literally “remake.”

16. See Jn 1:1-3.

17. See Col 1:16 and the Nicene Creed.

18. See Phil 2:6.

SERMON 31

ON THE RESPONSE OF PSALM 126:
THOSE WHO SOW IN TEARS SHALL REAP IN JOY

Date: 404¹

1. This psalm, being sung to the Lord, seems to fit the holy martyrs; but if we are members of Christ, as we ought to be, we can take these words as referring to all of us: *Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. Going they shall go and weep, casting their seed. But coming they shall come with merry-making, carrying their sheaves* (Ps 126:6). Where are they going and where are they coming from? What are they sowing in tears? What is the seed, what are the sheaves? Going into death, coming from death; going by being born, coming by rising again. Sowing is whatever good we have done; our sheaves, what we shall receive at the end. So if the seed is good, the works good, why "in tears," seeing that God loves a cheerful giver?²

The martyrs spent themselves by confessing Christ

2. The first thing to notice, dearly beloved, is how these words above all suit the blessed martyrs. Nobody, after all, has spent as much as those who have spent their very selves, as the apostle Paul says: *And I myself will be spent for your souls* (2 Cor 2:15). They spent themselves by confessing Christ, and by carrying out with his help the saying: *You have sat at a great table; know that you must prepare similar things yourself* (Sir 31:12).³ What's the meaning of *Know that you must prepare similar things yourself*, if not what the blessed John explains: *Just as Christ laid down his life for us, so we too ought to lay down our lives for the brethren* (1 Jn 3:16)? There you are, that's how much they spent.

But have they perished, seeing they have received from the Lord an assurance even about their hair? Can the hand perish when the hair on it doesn't? Can the head perish when the hair doesn't? Where the eyelid doesn't perish, can the eye? So on receiving such a firm assurance, they spent themselves. So let us too sow with good works, while there is time, since the apostle says *Whoever sows in a niggardly way, a niggardly harvest shall he reap* (2 Cor 9:6). *Tirelessly*, he says, *while we have the*

time, let us do good to everyone, but above all to the family of the faith (Gal 6:10). And again he says, *Let us not falter in doing good; for at the proper time we shall reap the harvest* (Gal 6:9).

Our head was sympathizing with his weaker members

3. So why then "in tears," since all our good works should be marked by cheerfulness? About the martyrs indeed it can be said that they sowed in tears. They fought bravely and endured great tribulation. And in order to console their tears Christ transferred or transposed⁴ their situation to himself, and said, *My soul is sorrowful to death* (Mt 26:38).

And yet for all that, my brothers, it seems to me that our head was sympathizing with his weaker members, in case perhaps the weak members should despair of themselves, and being troubled at the approach of death, as is usual with human frailty, should say that they don't belong to God, because if they did belong, they would be glad.⁵ For that reason Christ was the first to say, *My soul is sorrowful to death. Father, if it can possibly be so, let this cup pass from me* (Mt 26:39). Who is saying this? What power, what weakness is saying it? Listen who is saying it: *I have power to lay down my life and I have power to take it up again. No one shall take it from me, but I myself will lay it down and take it up again* (Jn 10:18). This power was sorrowful, when it was doing what it would not do unless it had wished to. You see, he did it out of power, not because of his condition; because he himself wished it, not because the Jews had the power to do it.

So he transposed the weak members of his body into himself. And perhaps it was of them that it is said, *Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy*, that is to say, of the weaker ones. After all, that great herald of Christ wasn't sowing in tears when he said, *For I indeed am already being sacrificed, and the time of my casting off is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have completed the course, I have kept the faith. For the rest, there is being kept for me the crown of justice—a crown made of sheaves. There is being kept for me*, he says, *the crown of justice, which the Lord, the just judge, will render to me on that day* (2 Tm 4:6-8). As though to say, "He will render me the harvest, for whom I am spending myself in sowing." These words, brothers, as I understand them, are the words of someone merry-making, not of someone crying. You don't suppose he was in tears, do you, when he said this? Wasn't he exactly like the cheerful giver, whom God loves? So let us refer these words⁶ to the weak, in order that not even those who have sown in tears need despair, because even if they have sown in tears, the pain and the sighing will pass away. Sadness passes at the end, and gladness comes without end.

We all cry

4. And yet for all that, dearly beloved,⁷ this finally is how it seems to me that these words refer to everyone, *Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. Going they were going and weeping, casting their seed. But coming they shall come with merry-making, carrying their sheaves* (Ps 126:5-6). Listen, if with the Lord's assistance I am able to explain it, how "*Going they were going and weeping*" belongs to everyone. From the moment we are born, we are going. Is there anyone, after all, who stands still? Is there anyone who, from the moment he enters life, isn't forced to get moving? An infant is born, it gets moving by growing. Death is the end. We have still got to come to the end—but with merry-making.

Is there anyone, after all, who doesn't cry here, along this bad road, seeing that the very infant begins with crying? Certainly when the infant is born it is tumbled out of the cramped confines of the womb into the wide open spaces of this world, it proceeds from darkness into light. And yet as it comes from the dark into the light it is able to cry, it isn't able to laugh. This life is such that when you are enjoying it here, be afraid it may all be deceptive. When you are crying here, pray for release. Trouble passes, trouble comes. People laugh, people cry. Even what people laugh about is a matter for crying. But one man cries over his losses, another cries about his affliction because he has been dumped in jail, another cries because he has lost one of his dear ones who has died.

One for this reason, another for that. For what reason does the just man cry? First of all, for all these.⁸ The just man, you see, cries truly over those who are crying fruitlessly. He cries about those who cry and he cries about those who laugh, because those who cry are crying pointlessly about pointless things, and those who laugh about pointless things are laughing to their own undoing. He cries all the time, so he cries the most.⁹

Exile doesn't long for home without tears

5. But *they will come with merry-making, carrying their sheaves*. So do you see how the just man is cheerful when he does a good deed? Oh certainly, he grows cheerful, *for God loves a cheerful giver* (2 Cor 9:7). So when does he cry? When he commends his good deeds to God in his prayers. The psalm wished to commend the prayers of the saints, the prayers of exiles, the prayers of those who are toiling along this road, the prayers of those who love, the prayers of those who groan, the prayers of those who are sighing for their eternal home, until those who are now in a situation of grief are eventually satisfied with the sight of it. After all, my brothers, *as long as we are in the body we are exiles from the Lord* (2 Cor 5:6). Exile doesn't long for home without tears. If you long for what you haven't got, shed tears.

Why else are you going to say to God, *You have placed my tears in your sight* (Ps 56:8)? Why else are you going to say to God, *My tears*

have become my bread day and night (Ps 42:3)? They have become my bread; they have solaced my groans, they have fed my hunger. *My tears have become my bread day and night*. Why? *While it is said to me every day: Where is your God?* (Ps 42:3). Is there any just man who hasn't known these tears? Whoever hasn't known them hasn't been grieved at being in exile. How can anyone have the cheek to come home, if they haven't been sighing for it while they were away? Aren't they saying to us every day, *Where is your God?* Learn, my brothers, learn to be of the few. Live good lives, walk along God's way, and then see how often you hear *Where is your God?* You will be fortunate when you hear this, unfortunate if ever you say it. When we are defending the Christian faith and get given the answer, "Look, here is the name of Christ being preached everywhere, why is there so much evil around?" what else does it amount to but *Where is your God?* When you hear this you start groaning, because the one who says this is perishing.

The tears of saints and sinners

6. There are tears of the pious, there are tears of the saints,¹⁰ which are indicated by their prayers. He does a good deed, and is cheerful about it. And he also cries that he may do good, he cries because he has done good. By crying he obtains the capacity for the good deed, by crying he commends to God the good deed he has done.¹¹ So the tears of the just are very frequent—but along this road. And when they get home? Why not when they get home? Because *coming they will come with merry-making, carrying their sheaves* (Ps 126:6). Good times are coming, and are tears to be recurring?

But now take those who cry here pointlessly, who laugh pointlessly, tossed this way and that by their lusts; when they are cheated they cry, when they cheat successfully they make merry. They too cry along this road, they too cry—but not with merry-making.¹² *But coming they will come with merry-making, carrying their sheaves*. What sheaves can they bind, though, if they haven't sown anything? Though in fact they do bind and gather something, but it's what they have sown. Because they have sown thistles, they bind and gather fire, and they go not from weeping to laughter like the saints—*Going they were going and weeping, casting their seed, but coming they shall come with merry-making*—no, but they go from weeping to weeping, from weeping together with laughter to weeping without laughter.

What, after all, is going to happen to them? Where are they going when they rise from the dead? Can it be anything else but what the Lord said, *Bind them hand and foot and cast them forth into the outer darkness* (Mt 22:13)? Come on then, what next? Shall there be darkness, and shall there be no pain? They will grope around, perhaps, but not feel any pain? They won't be able to see, but they won't be tormented? Don't you believe it! There won't only be darkness, they won't only have the sights they

used to enjoy taken away from them, they will also be given something to groan about for ever. Don't shrug off the prospect of that darkness, you ne'er-do-well whoever you are, accustomed not only not to dread the dark but positively to look forward to it on account of your evil deeds and wanton adulteries; you won't have that sort of darkness in which you enjoy yourself and have fun and pamper yourself with the pleasures of the flesh—that's not what that darkness will be like.

What will it be like, though? *There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth* (Mt 22:13). Tormented without flagging, tormented without sagging. The torturer never tires, the one tortured never dies. So there will be everlasting tears for those who have lived like that. There will be eternal joys for the saints, when *coming they shall come with merry-making, carrying their sheaves*. For at harvest time they will say to their Lord, "Lord, with your help we have done what you commanded; render what you promised."

NOTES

1. This sermon only survives in a collection of homilies for liturgical use, compiled in the eighth century by Paul the Deacon—an Englishman, I believe. In this collection it is simply put under the heading "For the feast of many martyrs." The heading here is provided by the CCL edition.

One scholar considers the sermon cannot be later than 405, but I do not know on what grounds—slight indications of style, perhaps. No suggestions are offered about the occasion it was preached on. It is unlikely that it was delivered on the feast of some martyrs; if it had been, the preacher would at the very least have mentioned who the martyrs were.

2. See 2 Cor 9:7.

3. Sir 31:12—at least for the first half of the sentence. The second half is quite different, both in the Greek and in the Latin Vulgate.

4. *Transfiguravit*. I think he gets the word and the idea from 1 Cor 4:6, where it translates and takes on the meaning of the Greek *metaschematizo*.

5. He has had second thoughts about his explanation of sowing in tears, and is now sailing off on a new tack. In due course he will offer yet a third explanation. But these various explanations must not be thought of as canceling each other out.

6. The words of Jesus in Gethsemane.

7. This is the second and final change of tack, the third explanation.

8. For all these other kinds of people, I think, rather than for all these reasons; though I think, if you had asked Augustine about it outside the rhetorical context of the pulpit, he would have allowed that mourning the loss of dear ones is not pointless crying. It is a kind of crying in which the just man shares, but he also cries over the attitude of those people who cry for their loss as "irreparable."

9. A rather dismal passage altogether! It seems it's not much fun being just. But in fact it is no more than a legitimate rhetorical elaboration of texts like Lk 6:25: *Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep*.

10. *Sunt lacrymae piorum, sunt lacrymae sanctorum*. Here Augustine is deliberately echoing Virgil's famous phrase, *Sunt lacrymae rerum*, Aeneid I, 462.

11. That is to say, by “crying” Augustine all along means praying, means expressing one’s needs and desires.

12. That is to say, with no anticipation of eventual merry-making.

SERMON 32

GOLIATH AND DAVID, AND CONTEMPT OF THE WORLD

Date: 403¹

The scriptures

1. Our Lord and God takes care of and heals every ailment of the soul, and so he produced many medicines from the holy scriptures (which you could call the shelves of his pharmacy or drugstore) when the divine readings were being read. It is my ministry to apply these medicines to our wounds. For while I indeed own to being the doctor's assistant,² whom he is happy to employ in the treatment of others, it is not as though I myself had no need of his care. If we pay attention to him, if we present ourselves to him unreservedly for treatment, we shall all be cured.

There have been many things read, things both important and necessary. They are all like that, of course, and yet some things are hidden more thoroughly in the scriptures in order to stretch and test the students, while others are set there openly and ready to hand for the immediate treatment of the patients.³ This psalm⁴ indeed contains hidden secrets of great importance, but if we decided to discuss all of them one by one, I am afraid the weakness we all share wouldn't stand it, whether because of the heat of the season,⁵ or limited bodily powers, or slowness of wits, or even because of my less than sufficient capacity. So I will just pick out a few things from it, enough in my estimation to satisfy both my duty and your charity's expectation.⁶

Listen attentively to the word of God

2. First of all, then, its title is *At Goliath*.⁷ Those who are not unversed in the divine scriptures, who enjoy frequenting this school, who don't hate the schoolmaster⁸ like hopeless schoolboys, who lend an attentive ear in church to the readers and open the reservoir⁹ of their minds to the flow of divine scripture; who don't bring their domestic preoccupations inside these walls and settle down to enjoy some family gossip, coming together here only to find people they can chatter about trifles with, not people they can listen to useful things with; who don't enjoy talking about

other people's business when they have failed in their own, who don't come here in that spirit, and who come here often—such people are not unversed in the meaning of this psalm title which runs *At Goliath*; they know who Goliath was.

However, for the sake of others who are at least attentive now but were less so at other times, or were perhaps in the habit of stifling the useful seed of the word in their hearts with secular thorns, that is with the cares of worldly business,¹⁰ let us tell this story, thoroughly stale and familiar though it may be to eager and attentive students of the divine literature.

David's courage

3. Goliath was one of the foreigners, that is the Philistines,¹¹ who were waging war at that time against the children of Israel. Now at that time Saint David, whose psalter this is, or rather through whom the Holy Spirit has provided us with this psalter, was a boy feeding his father's sheep, of a very tender age, scarcely even to be called a youth. His brothers, already young men, were soldiers in the king's army. He was sent by his parents to take them something from home for their use. Thus at the time fighting was going on he was to be found in the army, not yet a soldier, but the brother and batman of soldiers. Then this fellow Goliath we have mentioned came forward, of colossal stature, bristling with weapons, in perfect trim, brimful of boasting, and he proudly challenged the opposing people to monomachy;¹² that is that they should choose one to come out against him, so that the issue of the whole war might be settled there in the middle between the armies by these two fighting alone, it being mutually agreed and accepted that whichever of them won, the whole side he came from would be accorded the victory.

So then the king of the people of the Jews, the children of Israel, was Saul. He was in a terrible state of agitation and anxiety as he tried to find someone in his whole army to match him. But he couldn't find anyone to equal him, either in stature and strength or in the cheek of his challenge. While he was growing more and more agitated this boy David, trusting not in his own power but in the name of his God, boldly offered to go out against the man. He told the king, not in a spirit of boyish bragging but of religious confidence. The king didn't veto the proposal, or refuse to allow it. When he saw the boy so bold, he realized there was something of divinity in him, he understood that such a tender age would not presume to be capable of such a feat without some divine prompting. He gladly accepted. David stepped out against Goliath.

4. So all those who belonged to the side David came out from were relying only on God. But the hopes of the other side were all pinned on the strength of one man. But *what is man*, other than what we have sung in this psalm? *Man is likened to vanity, his days flit by like a shadow* (Ps

144:4). So the hopes of that side were vain, being pinned on a fleeting shadow. David was duly equipped in order to be the other's equal at least in weapons, since he couldn't match him in age or strength. The old weapons, though, were no use to him; in fact they were more of a nuisance than anything to this youthful newness. And here what the reading from the apostle suggested before the singing of the psalm is very much to the point: *Put off the old man and put on the new* (Col 3:9). David didn't want the old weapons. He discarded them. He said they were a nuisance, because they got in his way. He was eager to go out to battle completely unencumbered, strong in the Lord, not himself, armed not with steel but with faith.

The five pebbles were the law

5. However, after discarding those weapons, he chose something to fight with. And this not without a sacred significance.¹³ In the whole scene you can observe two kinds of life sparring with each other, the old one among the Philistines, the new one among the Israelites. On that side the body of the devil, on this a prefiguration of the Lord Jesus Christ. He took five pebbles from the brook, from the stream, and put them into the shepherd's gourd into which milk is usually milked.¹⁴ Thus armed, he stepped out.

The five pebbles were the law, the law being contained in the five books of Moses. And in that law there are ten salutary commandments, and all those others serve those ten. So the law is symbolized both by the number five and by the number ten. And that's why David fought with the number five and sang with the number ten, saying *On a ten-stringed harp I will play to you* (Ps 144:9). He didn't sling all five pebbles either, but just took one. With the number of the pebbles he indicated the number of the books of the law, with the single pebble the unity of those who fulfill the law. Unity itself fulfills the law, that is to say, love.¹⁵ That's why those five pebbles were taken from the stream. But what did the stream signify at that time?

Allegory in scripture

6. You see, the same things are not always signified in the scriptures by particular objects. Your holinesses should know this too, besides other rules, in order to be able to learn things easily when you listen to the reader. Things that are put allegorically in the scriptures don't always signify just this. A mountain doesn't always mean the Lord, a stone doesn't always mean the Lord, a lion doesn't always mean the Lord; it isn't always something good or always something bad that is signified, but it varies according to different places in scripture, account being taken of the whole context of any particular passage.

It's like letters, which are repeated in so many thousands of words and

utterances, without their number being increased. There is an infinite number of words, but only a finite number of letters. Nobody can count how many words there are; anybody can count how many letters there are, out of which the multitude of words is composed. One letter is put in various places, and for each it has its value; it doesn't just have one value. What could be more different than God and devil? Yet in each you have the letter d, when we say "God" and when we say "devil." So just as a letter takes its value from its context, and anyone is plain wrong and too absurd and in a childish frame of mind who for example, on reading the letter d in the name of God, is afraid of putting it in the devil's name in case, forsooth, he should do God an injury. In the same way too, anyone listening ignorantly to the divine scriptures, when he hears for example (to stick to the same instance) a stream mentioned allegorically, as in the place where it says *The rapids of the river rejoice the city of God* (Ps 46:4)—and it is said about the inundation of the Holy Spirit, about which the prophet says elsewhere, *they will be drunk on the plenty of your house, and you will give them to drink from the torrent of your pleasure* (Ps 36:8)—so when in this way he takes "stream" in a good sense and applauds it and is delighted with it, and then is told that "stream" in another context stands for men of lax and unstable¹⁶ morals, given over to time-bound concerns, and passing away with the love of passing things—he is shocked. Because in another context he had taken "stream" to stand for something in a good sense, and so he is upset. This makes him dumb, inarticulate in the scriptures, just as he is rendered inarticulate in letters if he refuses to transfer the same letters to other words, but keeps them for those words alone in which he first learned them.

Symbolism of the stream

7. If your holinesses have grasped this point, then in my opinion you have learned something extremely useful, which will help you a great deal, not only in following my discourses, but also in understanding the scriptures themselves on which I am offering you these reflections.

So the stream from which David then took five pebbles did not signify something good at that time. I realize, of course, that it may occur to some people that that stream does have a good meaning; thus you may like to understand it as baptism, so that the pebbles lifted up¹⁷ from baptism, that is, baptized persons, may be very strong against the devil, who was signified by Goliath.

However, because of that number five, we are all agreed on the reason for saying earlier that the law is signified by the number five, on account of the five books of Moses.

What is meant by their being taken from the stream and put in the shepherd's gourd? I've already told you: by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, that the devil might be well and truly defeated, the law gave way

to grace. And what can so suitably represent grace as a plentiful supply of milk? But those pebbles were taken from the stream. The stream stood for a fluid, unstable people, given over to temporal concerns, in love with passing things, rushing down the rapids of greed to the sea of this age, and such was the old people of the Jews.

They had received the law, but they were trampling on the law and passing over the law and being carried down to the sea, like the stream over those pebbles. Those pebbles, you see, hadn't set a limit to the stream, and dammed its flow. If they had done, they would signify the constraint of the law, signify also those people who had begun to flow every which way according to their pleasures and lusts, but who on coming up against the precepts of the law stand still and rein back the forward rush of their desires. But those pebbles were not like that; they were in the stream and the water was passing over them, just as the people in its transgressions was overstepping the law. So that's where the Lord took the law from and transposed it into grace; that is, he took it from the stream and put it in the shepherd's gourd.

Grace helps us to fulfill the law

8. So anyone who wants to fulfill the law should start thinking about grace. That too is why those ten commandments of the ten-stringed harp are the very ones that were given to that old people, but the ten commandments oppressed that people with fear. It's because the love which comes through grace was not to be found among them, but fear was. The Lord's commandments were laws carrying a penalty for that people, because they were unable to fulfill them out of love. They tried to, but they were conquered by greed. So when folks have made the transition to grace they don't fulfill other commandments, but the same ones that couldn't be fulfilled that way are fulfilled this way. This, however, is not the special virtue of the commandments, but the special virtue of the grace of God. After all, if it were thanks to the law of the commandments,¹⁸ it too would fulfill them. Those who cross over to Christ cross over from fear to love, and begin to be able to do out of love what they couldn't do out of fear. And those whom fear used to fill with consternation are not filled with consternation by love. And because David stands for the man who crosses over to grace when he says *On the ten-stringed harp I will play to you* (Ps 144:9), it is this grace that we must sing about on the ten commandments, which we do by fulfilling the commandments cheerfully.

Do not rely on your own powers

9. And in order to appreciate that it is grace which achieves this, none of you, brothers, should rely on his own powers. In this way you rely on the grace of God. You see, God is calling you and ordering you to do

something, and he himself gives you the strength, so that you are able to carry out his orders. What you have to provide is a large faith, humbling yourself under the flood of grace, beseeching God, trusting not a whit to yourself, stripping yourself of Goliath, putting on David.

This is the point of what is said in the same psalm, which I had already started to draw your attention to: *What is man?* This is warning man not to put any trust in himself. Now see how he chants against Goliath who relied simply on himself, and commends to you David who being weak among men was as strong as can be in God. *What is man?* And he says what man is: *Since you are known to him.* This is the whole man, if God becomes known to him. But if God doesn't become known to him, man is nothing. What is man if God is not known to him? *Man is likened to vanity, his days flit by like a shadow.* And so, *What is man, since you are known to him; and the son of man, since you take account of him* (Ps 144:3-4)? What's the meaning of *you take account of him*? You were pleased to choose him, and place him in a higher, more distinguished position.¹⁹ This comes from your kindness, not from his merits.

10. Look for what is proper to man, and what you will find is sin. Look for what is proper to man, and what you will find is falsehood. Take away sin, and whatever you look at in man is God's. So let not man love what is proper to him. The same point can be made by what the apostle says: *Let no one seek what is his own* (1 Cor 10:24). Sometimes, you know, people hear that from the readers, and they are very edified—it allows them to pinch what belongs to others. It makes a difference who says to you “Do not seek what is yours.” Sometimes this is said by an evil seducer, sometimes it is said by a good teacher. God is a good teacher. So when you hear God saying “Do not seek what is your own,” don't take it in the sense it is usually meant. It's something good that God is advising you. As we were saying—seek what is your own and you will find sin. So don't seek sin, and then you are not seeking what is your own. Don't seek falsehood, and you are not seeking what is your own. Truth is from God, you see, falsehood from you.

Through the doors of greed and fear the devil comes in

11. And if the devil sometimes suggests something, he can only hold you if you consent, he cannot compel you against your will. The only people he can seduce or entice are those whom he finds to be in some respect like himself. If he finds them greedy for something, then it's greed that opens the door which lets the devil's suggestion in. If he finds them afraid of something, he advises them to shun or shirk what he finds they are afraid of. He advises them to go and get what he discovers they are greedy for. And it's through these two doors of greed and fear that he comes in. Shut them, and you carry out what the apostle told you in today's reading: *Do not give the devil a foothold* (Eph 4:27). What the

apostle wished to show there was that, even though the devil may come in and take possession, it's man who lets him get a foot in the door, and so lets him in.

12. So because man is nothing when God is not known to him and when God takes no account of him, God gives him his grace, finding much to condemn in him and forgiving him everything when he confesses, in order to give him the prize for believing. After all, did the Lord find anything in men when he came, but what deserved condemnation? Absolutely nothing, brothers, if you think about it, he found absolutely nothing, whether in that people of the Israelites or among the nations, except things to condemn. And so the reason why he decided to come in humble guise, not as a judge, to us sinners, was in order first to offer us his mercy by forgiving sins, and only afterward to show severity by punishing sins.²⁰ Let us not abuse his mercy, which means use it badly, and we shall not feel his severity.

So then, this is the whole of what man is, that God becomes known to him, that he gives him his grace, which is what David relied on. Goliath on the other hand relied on himself, on his own strength, so proud, so haughty and full of himself that the first thing he did was to take upon himself alone the entire responsibility for victory for his whole side. And because pride carries its insolence on the brow, he was felled by the pebble coming whizzing at his brow. The brow which bore the mark of insolent pride was undone, and the brow marked with the humility of the cross of Christ²¹ was victorious.

The sign of the cross on our foreheads

13. That's why we too bear the sign of the cross on our foreheads. Who really understand this? I say this, brothers, because many people make the sign and are not at all willing to understand it. God is looking for doers of his signs, not painters of them. If you carry the sign of Christ's humility on your forehead, then carry the imitation of Christ's humility in your heart. I said just now, brothers, that the one who gives the devil a foothold is the one who opens to him the doors of greed or fear. But what kind of greed, and what kind of fear? After all, we are greedy for the kingdom of heaven, and we are afraid of hell. Well, just as those doors, greed for temporal things and fear of temporal punishments, frequently draw people on to wickedness and give the devil a foothold, so greed for eternal things and fear of eternal punishments provide a foothold in the heart for the word of God.

Do not let greed overcome you

14. Briefly then, brothers: if we wish to lead good lives, let us have a greater love for what God promises than for what this world promises.

And let us be more afraid of God's threats than of the threats of this world. Is that something so very long and complicated I have just said? The temptation comes to you to commit a little fraud. You want to commit fraud in order to make some money. God promises those who do not commit fraud the everlasting realms of heaven. Greed for money overcomes you.

Is there anyone, though, who doesn't want the kingdom of heaven? But to want earthly things more, that's to sin; to want more what is present, and not to believe what is to come; to want more what man sees and not to desire what God promises, though what man sees can be taken away from his sight, what he possesses can be lost, while what God promises cannot even be seen by the eyes in your head for the time being, and when you eventually arrive at the things God has promised, you are not afraid of losing them, because there is nobody mightier than the one who has given them. Therefore, brothers, cling in charity to the promises of God, and the world's various kinds of greed will not overcome you.

Do not be afraid of human threats

15. Again, a temptation of fear comes along. Someone says to you, "Give some false evidence for me." To begin with, he promises you something for it. But you don't fall for it, no doubt you put God's promises before the inducements of men, greed doesn't win. Then he tries threats, he starts threatening horrible things. Perhaps he's a powerful man in town, powerful in the world. It looks as if he can carry out his threats. Fear of an immediate evil overcomes you, which God could certainly protect you from if he considered that would be for your good; and if he decided not to fend off the evil, you ought to realize that he would not let it happen to you unless he knew that this too would be for your good.

The same God fended off the fire from the three young men.²² Has God changed, because he never fended off the sword from the martyrs? The God of the three young men was the same as the God of the Maccabees.²³ The first escaped the fire, the second were tortured by fire. Yet both were victorious in the eternal God. The former did not find their pleasure in this temporal life, and the latter's spirit was not broken by temporal threats.

16. Therefore do not be afraid of any man who threatens you. *What, after all, is man? He is likened to vanity, his days flit by like a shadow* (Ps 144:3.4). Either he will do you no harm, and that shadow will flit by before he can flick his dart at you; *for God is powerful* (Rom 11:23). Or else if he is allowed to harm you, he will for a time harm your shadow, that is to say, your fleeting concerns, your temporal life, your old life. Up to the very moment of death, you see, we carry with us something of the old man.²⁴ He can harm this temporal life, no one can deprive you

of eternal life. He will take away from you the excess baggage that ties you down here, and you will cling to God to whom, having sent hope on ahead, you had already bound yourself by love.

17. That's why it says of the bad man so neatly, so beautifully in the psalms, *You have practiced deceit like a sharpened razor* (Ps 52:2). That's how the Spirit of God makes fun of him. What's he thinking of in a razor? Not that people can be killed with razors, but what are razors made for? They are made for shaving hairs. Is there anything more superfluous in your body than its hairs? How thoroughly, how energetically, how carefully, how attentively a razor is sharpened in order to shave hair!

In the same way the bad man throws himself into the part, thinks, thinks again, thinks it all out, piles fraud on fraud, works out a plot, instructs his henchmen, procures false witnesses — sharpens his razor. And what, to be precise, is he going to do with it all, but shave off superfluities?

Let us not love transitory things

18. Therefore, brothers, if you wish to prepare yourselves for following the will of God, what I say to you, what I say first of all to myself, indeed what he says to everybody, he who says it with absolute assurance—if we want to prepare ourselves to follow the will of God, let us not love all these things that pass away, let us not reckon that to be good fortune which is called so in this world. That's what those Philistines used to reckon. They placed all their happiness in temporal things, all their enjoyment in shadows, not in the real light, not in the real truth.

Thus the last half of this psalm, which is aimed at *Goliath*, claims your attention. By the mercy of God it's all set out in the plainest of words and the most straightforward language, which calls for no explanation or comment. So nobody can say, "Well, of course—he told it how he wanted it, he's a clever hand at interpretations, he made it mean what he wanted";²⁵ no, it's all set out in such a way that no one can get away with excuses like that. It's set out in the words of David, that is to say of the new life, of the life of Christ, of the life given us through Christ, poking fun at the old life, the old well-being of men, and at those who set their hopes on it, and those who get it and rejoice in it.

God knows when to give and when to take away

19. The just, I agree, appear to have a hard time in this world, and the unjust to live happily in this world. And as though God were asleep and neglecting human affairs, the latter often swagger about with impunity, and the former are often cowed by their bad luck, and think there's no point in living a good life because they don't have the things sinners appear to have plenty of, villainous and godless people. And as

long as they go on asking God to give them such things as though they mattered enormously, just so long they continue on the wrong road.

And they should beware of being handed over into the power of their own greed. Because it's written, *God gave them over to the lusts of their hearts* (Rom 1:24). God is in fact kinder when he doesn't listen to someone asking for superfluous trifles, in such a way as to grant them, but listens in such a way as to cure him by not granting them. After all, we all know why people seek these things, don't we? It's in order to waste it all on luxuries, on trifles, on crazy, monstrous spectacles,²⁶ that people seek to obtain these things from God.

20. Give me a man of the world, let him ask God for wealth, let it be given him, and just see the countless snares of death he gets by it. He uses it to oppress the poor man. Mortal man himself, he proudly looks down on his fellow man and equal, he seeks empty honors from men. And to obtain these he organizes for them sports of wickedness, sports that pander to evil lusts. He buys show-grounds and bears,²⁷ he throws his money away on beast-fighters, while Christ goes hungry in the poor.

What need is there to say more, brothers? Reflect for yourselves on what I pass over in silence, on what great evils men perpetrate with their surplus capital, when the interest on it comes flowing in. When a man is capable of using a good supply of this world's goods in such a way, isn't it better that God should take it off him instead of giving it to him? Isn't that real mercy?

21. And he'll say, "I've done good, I haven't taken anything that belonged to someone else, and you haven't listened to me. From what I have I give to the needy, I don't rob anyone. Now I'm asking something from you: give." As though, I suppose, he can give you a farm without someone else losing a farm. If someone says to you, "You should sell your farm," you shudder as if he had cursed you, you consider yourself very badly done by. You nurse a grudge in your bosom, because you have heard a man say you should sell your farm—as though you could buy without someone else selling. So, the fact that you are eager to buy and are determined to buy means, if it's a bad thing to sell, you are seeking what is bad for someone else. It's wonderful to find a bag of gold guineas on the road, and when you find it you say "God has given it to me"—as if you could find it unless someone else had lost it!

So why not rather opt for those wonderful treasures which everyone can possess with you without stint? You desire gold—desire justice instead. You can't have gold unless someone else loses it. Embrace justice, both of you, and you both expand.²⁸

Celestial and terrestrial happiness

22. So let's get back to the psalm, and your charity will understand

that the real Philistines are those who assume that the only perfect well-being is to be found here and now. But do you consider yourself worthy to be given these things too by God? Ask yourself how you would use them. If he hasn't given them to you, you must know that it is for your own good that a good Father doesn't provide you with them. Because sometimes your own little boy cries for you to give him that lovely knife with the gilt handle, and he can cry as much as he likes, but you don't give him something he can hurt himself with.

Lord, deliver me from the hand of the sons of foreigners, whose mouth has spoken vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of iniquity (Ps 144:11). And he explains what kind of vanity he means, and what kind of right hand. What he calls the right hand of iniquity is the prosperity of this world. Not because it is never to be found with good people, but because when good people have it they hold it in the left hand, not in the right. They hold everlasting felicity in their right hand, temporal felicity they hold in their left. Greed for eternal things and eternal felicity ought not to be mixed with greed for temporal things, that is to say for present and temporal felicity. And that's the meaning of *Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing* (Mt 6:3). So then, *their right hand is a right hand of iniquity*.

23. Listen now to how they spoke vanity, and how they have a right hand of iniquity. [At this point a number of women begin to leave the basilica.]²⁹ Let's listen, all of us. It's for your own good. Let's listen, and don't say you haven't heard what was said to the servant, "You should have deposited, and I would have collected."³⁰ And I said yesterday that I am the servant who deposits; there's someone else to do the collecting.³¹ Our sisters, unwilling to listen, are unwilling to meet the collector, it seems. But it's no good, my brothers, none of you should kid yourselves on this point. It's one thing not to have received, quite another to have been unwilling to receive. Whoever refuses the gift of God is necessarily guilty of that very refusal.

After all, just as it was said to the servant in charge "Why didn't you give?" so too it will be said to the servant he was put in charge of. "Why didn't you receive?"³² If there was nobody to give, you will have your excuse. But if the readers are thundering away, even when the expositors are silent—and the word of God is being preached everywhere, and it is truly said, *Their sound has gone forth to all the earth*, and the heat of God's word spreads everywhere, *and there is none who can hide himself from its heat* (Ps 19:4.6)—then there will be nothing for you to say at God's judgment. Brothers, let's listen, and let's put into practice. If we want to have hope, we mustn't always be excusing ourselves. Often enough a beggar asking for a coin chants God's commandments to you at your door.³³

24. So then, let's listen. *Whose mouth has spoken vanity, and their*

right hand is a right hand of iniquity (Ps 144:8). Now observe the worldly felicity on which the hopes were set of those who spoke vanity, whose right hand is one of iniquity. *Whose sons are like vines that have taken root*. A perfectly lawful felicity. He didn't mention frauds, perjury, robberies, crimes. He mentioned a felicity, it would seem, of complete innocence. And if such things are to be thought lightly of, think how we should lament those who commit robberies, thefts, crimes, murders, adulteries, and all the other things that even worldly felicity condemns?

Exegesis of Psalm 144

25. Now see what he wanted the man of the new life to be like, what he wanted the man to be like who belongs to the shepherd's gourd, and to the grace of God, and to the milk on which we are nurtured.³⁴ Listen now: *Whose sons are like vines that have taken root; their daughters adorned according to the likeness of the temple* (Ps 144:12). Perhaps this is why our sisters didn't want to listen.³⁵ So they've got to listen, willy-nilly, and learn to come to the Lord's house,³⁶ not in the pride of Goliath but in the humility of David. After all, does any of this need explanation? Is it in the least obscure?

People speak vanity, and they are called Philistines. They don't belong to the inheritance of Christ, to the kingdom of him whom we address as *Our Father*. They are counted as Philistines. And what do they call felicity? *Their sons are like vines that have taken root*, a self-propagating stock, so to say. "He has so many sons, so many grandsons; he's quite safe against the chances of death." As though often enough a single disaster doesn't destroy thousands of people. *Their sons are like vines that have taken root*. Fine; suppose their sons are like vines that have taken root. Doesn't a forest fire sometimes destroy the vineyards too near the woods?

Their daughters adorned according to the likeness of the temple. Let's pass over this quickly. We have to consider the modesty of the ladies. They can acknowledge what they have simply by having it; merely mentioning it makes me blush. *Their daughters are adorned according to the likeness of the temple* (Ps 144:12).³⁷

Their storerooms are full, belching from this one to that one (Ps 144:13); as we say of people who are prospering, "He's nowhere to put it, he doesn't even know what he's got." One storeroom is full, and the produce overflows. His possessions overflow, the storerooms belch from this one to that.

26. *Their sheep are prolific, multiplying in their goings forth* (Ps 144:13). They come in, few in number; they give birth, they go out many, *multiplying in their goings forth*. Last year they were so many, this year they are so many. Rejoicing and making merry! Goliath is bursting with pride, and proud in such prosperity, issues his challenge to the contest:

“Who can match me? Who will dare me?” Don’t people say that when they are prospering like this, doesn’t every one of them feel like this every day? He’s got rather more than his neighbor. Doesn’t he say, “Who can match me?” or, “If this neighbor of mine does me a bad turn, won’t I just show him?” See if Goliath isn’t challenging to the contest like this.

But David comes out, unprovided with the weapons of war, furnished with a few pebbles. He, that is to say the just man, will lay all pride low, just as the martyrs did; they laid the unjust low. At the very moment these seemed to be victorious they were conquered, when their leader the devil was overcome by the martyrs.³⁸

Gospel and psalm disagree with temporal prosperity

27. But carry on noting this prosperity: *Their sheep multiplying in their goings forth, their oxen fat. There is no collapse of a hedge*—the hedge is often, indeed usually, a stone wall—*there is no collapse of a hedge, no gap*. Everything is in good repair, everything complete, everything full. *Nor crying in their streets* (Ps 144:13.14); no quarrels, no rows. Notice how he is describing what you would call a perfectly innocent felicity, in case anyone wants to say, “But he said this about people who lay their hands on other people’s property.” He’s not saying anything about that here, such people are mentioned elsewhere. It’s obvious, after all, that criminals must be punished.

And as a matter of fact, they should clearly understand from this what kind of punishment awaits them, if any innocent person who makes proud and extravagant use of possessions is reproved by God and reckoned among the sons of the Philistines. After all, that rich man hadn’t had his eyes on someone else’s crops, the one whose land came up with good crops, and when he was in a quandary, having nowhere to store his worldly crops, and he didn’t notice the poor through whom he might have laid up treasure for himself in heaven,³⁹ he said *I will pull down my barns and build new ones with more space, and fill them*. What with, but his own crops, of course? *And I will say to my soul, You have many things, take your fill. But God said to him, Fool, this night shall your soul be taken away from you. The things you have prepared, whose shall they be* (Lk 12:16-20)?

So then, brothers, just as the gospel pours scorn on the man who rejoices in temporal prosperity, even though prosperity came to him from his own fields and not from property grabbed from someone else, so too this psalm pours scorn on temporal prosperity, in order that the soul who has been renewed and born again through the grace of milk may learn to desire that perpetual and everlasting happiness.

So notice how he strings it all together: *Whose sons are like vines that have taken root; their daughters adorned according to the likeness of the temple; their storerooms full, belching from this to that; their sheep prolific, multiplying in their goings forth; their oxen fat; there is no*

collapse of a hedge, no gap, nor crying in their streets. Blessed they called the people which has these things (Ps 144:12-15). But who called them so? Those whose mouth has spoken vanity (Ps 144:8).

28. But what do you say? They said *Blessed the people which has these things*. What do I say? *Blessed the people whose God is the Lord*. So you see, that is the people truly blessed which, instead of its sons and instead of its daughters in their finery, instead of the fatness of oxen, instead of the fertility of sheep, instead of the fullness of storerooms, instead of the good repair of buildings, instead of peace from quarrels and civil disputes, instead of all this kind of felicity, wants to possess its God; in place of everything to have him who established everything, and to say *For me to cleave to God is good (Ps 73:28)*.

Let this people worship him for nothing. Let them worship him when he gives these things, and when he takes them away, and when he doesn't give them; and let them fear nothing so much as him taking himself away. Thus the Christian people, brothers, which says in its heart, "Let him take away whatever he likes, provided he doesn't deprive me of himself," is *the blessed people whose God is the Lord (Ps 144:15)*.⁴⁰

NOTES

1. The title comes from the oldest manuscripts and is confirmed by Possidius in his catalogue of Augustine's library. As the reader will discover, the sermon is in fact on Ps 144, and Goliath figures in the title of that psalm in the Septuagint and Augustine's text.

In section 1 we learn that the weather was hot (note 5 below), and in section 23 that he had preached the day before a sermon that with practical certainty can be identified as Sermon 2 on Ps 32 in the *Expositions of the Psalms* (note 31 below). Now that sermon was preached at the shrine of Saint Cyprian in Carthage (*Exposition of the Psalms* 32, sermon 1, 5, and sermon 2, 9), and it ends with an invitation to attend next day at the Bowery Basilica (*Basilica Tricilarum*; see Sermon 30, note 1 above). So that is where this sermon 32 was preached—if we remain as certain as I was two sentences ago that it was preached the day after the sermon on Ps 32.

But one point that rather undermines this certainty is that the invitation at the end of that sermon concludes an exhortation to his congregation to pray for the Donatists, and promises that he will tell them the next day, at the Bowery Basilica, something about what the bishops had just decided in a council in their regard. And this sermon of ours here does not refer to the Donatists at all. Augustine could, of course, have preached twice in the same day; he frequently did. But we have to admit that these indications of date and sequence are often more tantalizing than definite in the information they give us. In any case, the feast of Saint Cyprian was, and is, kept in the middle of September, and one scholar suggests the year 403.

Augustine is not exactly at his most genial in this sermon. He comes through as being in a somewhat sour and peevish mood, and perhaps rather tired. If the sequence of preaching engagements suggested above is correct, and he was also fully occupied in council meetings, then what with the hot weather as well, this is not surprising. Readers may sympathize with

some members of his congregation not being in a very good mood either (section 23, note 29 below).

2. *Nos . . . pueros medici*. The plural allows us to include the other clergy, especially other bishops, and the sentence could have been translated in the plural. But it is less confusing to keep “we” for a plural that embraces both Augustine and his congregation.

3. Rather a free translation; “the students” renders *quaerentes*, “the patients” *desiderantes*; literally, those seeking and those desiring. The image that occurred to me was that of a teaching hospital, with the medical students needing to be exercised in some of the mysteries of pharmacy, and the patients wanting simple, ready-to-hand remedies.

4. Ps 144.

5. *Aestus temporales*. It could also mean “temporary heat”—in other words suggesting unseasonable weather, say a heat wave at the end of September.

6. The readers may judge for themselves how brief the preacher was. I would estimate he went on for almost an hour.

7. The title of the psalm in the Septuagint. *Ad Goliath* in the Latin. The “at” must be taken in an adversive sense; the psalm is aimed at Goliath, like David’s slingstone.

8. Christ, or the Holy Spirit.

9. *Exceptorium*; a word suggesting he had in mind Sir 39:17.

10. See Mk 4:18-19.

11. *Exallofilis, id est ex alienigenis*. *Allofilis* simply transcribes the Septuagint *alloyphloi*. This is the invariable Septuagint rendering of the Hebrew *Peishtim*, the Philistines. Why the Septuagint translators were allergic to the proper name “Philistine” I do not know. But anyway, Philistines are familiar to modern English readers; so in this sermon I will regularly translate *alienigena* by “Philistine.” Its further uncomplimentary connotation in English will not be out of place either.

12. Augustine’s Latin text took over this word also from the Septuagint. It was as unfamiliar to his Latin listeners as it is to English readers, so I have kept it in the translation. The story of David and Goliath is to be found in 1 Sm 17.

13. *Non sine sacramento*.

14. The Latin *vas*, used here in the phrase *vase pastoris*, like the Hebrew *k’li* which lies behind it, while usually translated “vessel,” is as general in meaning as “instrument.” The RSV translates “shepherd’s bag,” and one usually pictures a leather wallet or scrip. But Augustine, no doubt aware of the Septuagint using the word *kadion*, a little pot or jar, pictured something for holding milk. The best thing I could think of is “gourd.”

15. See Rom 13:9.

16. *Fluentes* has this meaning. Its reference to flowing water is more obvious than one can get in English.

17. The sponsors were said to lift up, *levare*, the newly baptized from the baptismal pool.

18. See Eph 2:15. It is this allusion that decided me to translate “the law of the commandments” and not “the commandments of the law.”

19. See Lk 14:10.

20. There is a phrase in the middle of this sentence, *cum parcat illis*, “when he spares them” (immediately after “not as a judge”), which I have left out because it so overloads the sentence. I take it to have been a marginal comment from some reader which then crept into the text.

21. So marked when the newly baptized were confirmed by the bishop. But in the next sentence or two he goes on to refer to the sign of the cross which Christians regularly made on themselves; the sign on our foreheads we now only make at the reading of the gospel. It would seem that in those days this was the normal, perhaps the only, way of crossing oneself.

22. See Dn 3:24f.

23. See 2 Mc 7.

24. See Col 3:9.

25. A criticism that was no doubt brought to Augustine's notice from time to time—one not entirely undeserved.

26. The spectacles were chiefly the so-called games in the amphitheater, gladiatorial combats and “hunting” or fighting with wild beasts, but also chariot races and theatrical performances.

27. *Ludos et ursos*, literally “games and bears.” It is such an odd pair that one manuscript reads *Lupos et ursos*, “wolves and bears.” But there is no record of wolves ever appearing in the amphitheater.

28. This section, if you transpose the material dealt with from land to stocks and shares, is very applicable to the contemporary financial world of takeover bids, and squeezing rivals out of the market.

29. I have added the sentence in brackets as a kind of stage direction. I infer it from the sentence a few lines further on, “Our sisters, unwilling to listen . . .” The only way they can have shown they were unwilling to listen, I suppose, was by getting up and walking out—or rather just walking out, because they would all have been standing in any case. I infer this disturbance occurred precisely here, because it is here that he begins to get a little agitated and urges everyone to listen.

Why the ladies started walking out (or possibly, of course, making a subdued tumult over someone who had just fainted) is anybody's guess. It is unlikely that it was in protest against anything the preacher had just said. It may have been impatience, perhaps, because earlier on (section 18) he had said the text was so plain it didn't need any explanation or clever interpretation—and here he is giving a typically subtle (far-fetched?) interpretation. More likely they were thinking of the dinner spoiling at home, or they just couldn't stand the heat.

30. See Lk 19:23.

31. As we said in note 1, the reference seems to be to the *Exposition of the Psalms 32*, sermon 2. In section 2 of that sermon he makes almost exactly the same point as he is making here, making use of the same text from Luke. In note 1 we also saw an objection to that being the sermon referred to here—that this sermon of ours here makes not the slightest reference to the Donatists.

32. The allusion now shifts to another parable, Mt 24:45.48.

33. So even if you have had no chance to hear the preachers and the readers, you have still “received” enough to deprive you of any excuse at the judgment.

34. See 1 Pt 2:2. He seems to drop the point immediately. It is the suspense technique—or else he is just getting a bit tired, but he picks the point up again right at the end.

35. Unlikely, since they hadn't got that far then. Rather, it is Augustine still a little rattled, and feeling piqued at the ladies' walkout, being a trifle catty.

36. *Ad dominicum*. *Dominicum* would have been a translation of the Greek *kuriakon*, which was already in the fourth century becoming the common, if not the usual word for the church (the building). From this Greek word, indeed, comes the English word “church,” and similar words in other Germanic and Slavonic languages.

37. At this point, if they had any spirit, the remaining ladies should have walked out in protest! But of course, such remarks on the feminine toilette were common form for preachers, and Augustine makes extremely few of them, compared with other famous preachers. At about the same time as he was preaching this sermon (if 403 is the right year), John Chrysostom was getting into hot water at Constantinople for what he had to say about the extravagances of the Empress and her ladies. In one famous—and fatal—sermon he as good as compared her to Herodias. It is worth reminding ourselves that these censures were aimed primarily at the upper classes.

38. *In his*. Augustine not infrequently uses the preposition *in* in a manner reminiscent of Hebrew, to mean “with,” instrumentally. So I translate it “by the martyrs.” He may have picked up this usage simply from the Hebraisms in his Latin Bible, or it may have been a feature of African Latin, from its association with Punic (Phoenician), which was very closely related to Hebrew.

39. See Mt 6:20.

40. It should be observed that Augustine's text, that of the Septuagint, supported by some Hebrew manuscripts, does call for the interpretation he gives this psalm. In verse 12 all the temporal blessings that follow are applied to the characters of verse 11, "whose mouths speak lies, etc." Verse 12 continues, in this version, "Whose sons etc." It is a common enough biblical theme: the apparent blessings of the wicked, here spelled out with such amplitude, and contrasted so effectively and succinctly with the true blessings of the true people of God.

SERMON 33

ON WHAT IS WRITTEN IN THE PSALM:
O GOD, I WILL SING YOU A NEW SONG

Date: 405-411¹

Charity sings the new song

1. As it is written, *O God, I will sing you a new song, on a harp of ten strings I will play to you* (Ps 144:9), we take the harp of ten strings to be the ten commandments of the law. Now to sing and play is usually the occupation of lovers. The old man, you see, is in fear, the new is in love.² In this way also we distinguish the two testaments or covenants, the old and the new, which the apostle says are allegorically represented by the sons of Abraham, one born of the slave woman, the other of the free; *which, he says, are two covenants* (Gal 4:22-23). Slavery, surely, goes with fear, freedom with love, seeing that the apostle says, *You have not received the spirit of slavery again in fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship by adoption, in which we cry out, Abba, Father* (Rom 8:15). And John says, *There is no fear in charity, but perfect charity throws out fear* (1 Jn 4:18). So it is charity that sings the new song.

True, that slavish fear embodied in the old man can indeed have the harp of ten strings, because that law of the ten commandments was also given to the Jews according to the flesh, but it cannot sing to its accompaniment the new song. It is under the law and cannot fulfill the law. It carries the instrument but doesn't manage to play it; it is burdened, not embellished, with the harp. But any under grace, not under law, they are the ones who fulfill the law, because for them it is not a weight to shoulder but an honor to wear; it is not a rack for their fears, but a frame for their love. Fired by the spirit of love, they are already singing the new song on the harp of ten strings.

The fullness of the law is charity

2. That, you see, is precisely what the apostle says: *For whoever loves the other has fulfilled the law. For, "You shall not commit adultery, you shall not commit murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and*

any other commandment there is, are summed up in this saying: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' " *Love of neighbor works no evil. Now the fullness of the law is charity* (Rom 13:8-10). Again, it is because the Lord had said *I did not come to undo the law, but to fulfill it* (Mt 5:17), that he gave his disciples the kind of commandment which would enable the law to be fulfilled by them: *A new commandment, he said, I give to you, that you should love one another* (Jn 13:34).

So it's not surprising if the new commandment sings the new song, because as we have said, the ten commandments of the law are the harp of ten strings, and the fullness of the law is love. The apostle, though, only wanted to mention a few of the strings, the others to be taken as read, when he said, "You shall not commit adultery, you shall not commit murder," etc. Because just as there are two commandments of love, on which depend, as the Lord says, the whole law and the prophets,³ and thereby he shows clearly enough that love is the fullness of the law, so too those ten commandments were given on two tables;⁴ three, that is, are said to have been inscribed on one table and seven on the other. Just as the three first belong to love of God, so the seven others are assigned to love of neighbor.

The first three commandments

3. The first of the three is: *Hear, Israel: the Lord your God is one Lord* (Dt 6:4). *You shall not make yourself an idol, or a likeness of anything, neither things in heaven above nor things on earth beneath* (Dt 5:8),⁵ and the other points by which it binds us to the worship of one God, after fornication with idols has been given up. The second commandment is: *You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain* (Dt 5:11). The third is about keeping the sabbath.

I think it's because of the Trinity that there are three commandments belonging to love of God. The unity of the Godhead has its basis⁶ from the Father, and that is why the first commandment speaks above all about the one God. Then the second commandment warns us against thinking of the Son of God as creature, by taking him to be less than equal to the Father. *For every creature, as the apostle says, is subject to vanity* (Rom 8:20).⁷ And here we are commanded not to take the name of the Lord our God in vain. Finally, the Gift of God, which is the Holy Spirit, promises everlasting rest, which is represented by the sabbath.

So we keep the sabbath spiritually if we do not perform servile works. These, of course, were forbidden to the Jews on the sabbath even in the literal sense. But if you wish to understand the spiritual sense of servile works, listen to the Lord saying, *Everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin* (Jn 8:34). Now sin is not only something that people easily recognize as such in some shameful or unjust deed, but also what has the appearance of a good work, but is done for a temporal reward and not for the sake of everlasting rest. You see, whatever people do, if they do it simply with

a view to obtaining an earthly advantage, they do it in a servile or slavish fashion, and thereby they are failing to keep the sabbath.⁸

For God, surely, is to be loved freely and for nothing, and the soul can only find rest in what it loves. But eternal rest can only be given it in loving God, who alone is eternal. And that is perfect sanctification and the spiritual sabbath of sabbaths. Since therefore we are sanctified in⁹ the Holy Spirit, surely the fact that of the three commandments referring to God the third is the commandment about the sabbath should prompt anyone to suspect a profound mysterious meaning here.¹⁰ And among all the things that scripture in the book of Genesis records God having made, nothing is there said to have been sanctified but the seventh day, which signifies the sabbath.¹¹

Seven commandments allotted to love of neighbor

4. Of the seven commandments that are allotted to love of neighbor the first is: *Honor your father and your mother*; the second: *You shall not kill*; the third: *You shall not commit adultery*; the fourth: *You shall not steal*; the fifth: *You shall not utter false witness*; the sixth: *You shall not covet your neighbor's wife*; the seventh: *You shall not covet your neighbor's goods* (Dt 5:17-21). This division is clearly supported by the apostle, where he says, *Honor your father and your mother, which is the first commandment* (Eph 6:2).¹² You look it up, and you discover that it isn't the first in the whole decalogue, because the first of the ten commandments is the one which instructs us about worshiping the one God. And therefore the one about honoring parents is written on the other table, and is the first because from it begin the commandments which refer to love of neighbor.

The Donatists do not sing the new song

5. So let us sing the new song, playing on the ten-stringed harp. This is the new song, the grace of the new covenant, which distinguishes us from the old man, who was the first to be made, of the earth earthy.¹³ He was made from the mire,¹⁴ and on losing his happy state was rightly cast forth into wretchedness, because he had emerged as a transgressor of the commandment. But what does he say through the prophet, who gives thanks to God for the grace of God that reconciles us to God by the forgiveness of sins, and renews us when we have shed that oldness? *He brought me out, he says, from the bog of wretchedness and from the mud of the mire, and set my feet upon the rock, and guided my steps, and put into my mouth a new song, a hymn to our God* (Ps 40:2-3). That is the new song, which he plays on the harp of ten strings. For none can praise God, that is utter a hymn, unless they tune their deeds to their words by loving God and neighbor.

The rebaptizing Donatists should not think they belong to the new

song.¹⁵ They cannot sing the new song, seeing that with insufferable impiety they have cut themselves off from the Church which God willed to exist in every land. After all, the same prophet¹⁶ says somewhere else, *Sing to the Lord a new song, sing to the Lord every land* (Ps 96:1).¹⁷ So anyone who refuses to sing with every land, and doesn't withdraw from the old man, doesn't sing the new song, and doesn't play on the ten-stringed harp, because he is an enemy of charity, which alone is the fullness of the law, and which we say is contained in the ten commandments that pertain to love of God and of neighbor.

NOTES

1. A rather longer title is given by Possidius in his Index to Augustine's works, giving the number of the psalm, and the full verse which is quoted at the beginning of the sermon. The date proposed for the sermon is any time between 405 and 411.

It is, for Augustine, an uncharacteristically bloodless sermon, a very pale echo — or pale premonition — of Sermon 9 above. The reader will notice that there is no reference to the congregation having just sung this psalm; there are none of those little conversations he usually constructs with some "fall guy" he sets up; there is no actual addressing of the congregation directly at all. One begins to suspect there was no congregation. What I suggest is that Augustine found himself for some reason or other, perhaps ill health, unable to fulfill some preaching engagement, and wrote or dictated this short sermon for someone else to deliver on his behalf. At the same time it contains some hints of profound and important doctrine on the mystery of the Trinity, and on the nature of sin.

2. See Col 3:9. Note the characteristic contrast between fear and love. He has a number of variations on this theme. He will sometimes say that these are the two basic passions, or emotions or drives, neither being good or bad in itself; it all depends what you fear and what you love. Here he is treating fear as something to be outgrown, and ousted by love.

3. See Mt 22:40.

4. See Ex 31:18.

5. Augustine, quoting from memory, is mixing up two texts, or rather conflating them. He substitutes the first clause of the famous *Shema*, Dt 6:4, for the first two clauses of the decalogue, Dt 5:6-7. In another division of the decalogue, adopted by the Protestant Churches, probably following the synagogue (and possibly Jerome), these constitute the first commandment, and Dt 5:8 the second. So in this division the first table of the law would contain four precepts, and the second six (Augustine's final two against coveting being treated as one). This, of course, would spoil the trinitarian typology he develops for the first table. But there is no evidence that Augustine invented the division he offers simply for the sake of the typology. It was traditional in his Church, probably in nearly all the Churches, Greek and Latin; and it was most likely derived from the Hellenistic synagogues which used the Greek Septuagint text of the Bible.

6. *Exordium*. The primary meaning of this word is "warp," the foundation threads of a cloth, across which the weaver proceeds to weave the "woof," which together with the warp eventually makes the whole "web." But practically none of us nowadays have any imaginative experience of warps and woofs and webs (we immediately think only of spiders), so I substituted "basis," seeing that the warp is the basis of the finished cloth.

There is a point of some doctrinal interest here. Augustine finds the basis or foundation

of the divine unity in the *person* of the Father. Now it is almost a cliché of the history of dogma that Augustine, and all Latin theology after him, in developing his trinitarian theology starts with the one divine *substance* and goes on from there to explain the distinctness of the three divine *persons*, whereas the Cappadocian Fathers, and all Greek theology in their wake, start with the trinity of persons, or *hypostases* as they call them, and conclude to their unity of substance or *ousia*.

This may be a just assessment of the difference between Latin and Greek trinitarian theology, as far as textbooks go, today—and for the past millennium or so. But at least our little text here suggests that it cannot accurately be applied to Augustine himself. Perhaps it may also serve to advise us that it is time to scrap the conventional cliché altogether. For it is this cliché, and not Augustine, or any of the Fathers, Greek or Latin, that implies or seems tacitly to assume that the divine substance is distinct from the divine persons, making as it were a fourth, a substratum out of which the three persons somehow emerge. But that, of course, is totally erroneous. The only emerging (or proceeding, to give it its technical name) that goes on in God is of the Son and the Holy Spirit. To think of the Father emerging or proceeding is wholly mistaken, and explicitly repudiated, for example, in the so-called Athanasian Creed. The Father simply is the divine substance, the divine unity, the warp, the basis, the substratum, from whom the other two persons proceed without in the least impairing that unity, because as we say in the Nicene Creed they are consubstantial, *homo-ousios*, with the Father.

7. The argument, of course, depends on the identity of concept in “vanity” and “in vain.” Every creature is subject to *vanity* (emptiness, nothingness), and so if something is taken *in vain* (treated as an empty formality, as worth nothing), it is being implicitly treated as a creature. Implicit to the argument is also the identification of the Son, the *Logos* or Word, with the name of God. See Sermon 9 above, notes 4 and 36.

8. The point Augustine is making here is that “sin” does not just consist of breaking laws or breaking rules, that is to say, doing things that are “obviously wrong.” Sin consists essentially of turning away from God, and consequently of ignoring God or not taking him and our relations with him into account. It is not, therefore, simply a moral or ethical, let alone a legal concept, but is strictly speaking a theological concept. So here: doing good simply for the sake of furthering one’s career, for example, is to be acting and living in a context in which God doesn’t figure at all—an unreal context, therefore, in Augustine’s view, a context of vanity, of nothingness, of godlessness, of sin. But if you do good, without any explicitly conscious thought of God, or his reward, simply because it is good, because it is right, whether or not it furthers your career or brings you any other temporal benefit, then implicitly you are doing it in a context that includes God, because he is the good of all goods. And if you do good explicitly “for the sake of everlasting rest” and to earn a heavenly reward—there is just a little caution that Augustine doesn’t mention here, but is perhaps necessary for the devout: beware of thinking of that heavenly reward as just being a temporal advantage, a furthering of your career or feathering of your nest to the nth degree. What it is, is God. We should do good for God’s sake, and that is the same as doing it simply because it is good.

9. I think this could also be translated “by the Holy Spirit.” See Sermon 32 above, note 38.

10. *Magnum sacramentum*. Presumably the great sacrament or mystery is the Holy Spirit represented in the sabbath commandment.

11. And “sabbath,” he assumes we know, signifies “rest.”

12. What the writer actually says is that this is the first commandment “with a promise” (the only one, in fact).

13. See 1 Cor 15:47.

14. See Gn 2:7. The Latin *limus* is much wetter and messier than dust, which is the meaning of the Heb. *‘aphar*; it is even wetter than the Gk *khous* of the Septuagint, which just means “earth”—and is so translated (*terra*) in the Latin of 1 Cor 15:47,48, though in fact there it is the adjective *khoikos* that is translated “earthy” (*terrenus*).

15. It is no doubt because of this mention of the Donatists that the scholars propose a

date for the sermon before 411, the year in which a great colloquy between the Catholics and Donatists was held in Carthage, the victory going, with full state support, to the Catholics. The reasoning, however, is not absolutely conclusive, since the Donatists did not just disappear after this as at the waving of a magic wand, nor did Augustine stop disputing with them, though he did become more preoccupied with the Pelagians from this time on.

The Donatists rebaptized Catholics and other Christians who joined them, because they denied the validity of all sacraments conferred by *traditores* (handers-over, those who had betrayed the faith in the last great persecution instituted by Diocletian from 303 to 313), and their heirs and successors. They took very literally Saint Cyprian's maxim, "Outside the Church no salvation," and hence no sacraments of salvation—as had Cyprian himself. They also carried the idea to its logical conclusion, and held that any who communicated with the heirs of the *traditores* became accessories after the fact to their sin and so put themselves outside the true Church. This existed, in their view, only among themselves, and thus only in the provinces of North Africa (though there was a small Donatist congregation in Rome). This is what Augustine means by saying that they had "cut themselves off from the Church which God willed to exist in every land." By so cutting themselves off from the other Churches they had sinned against charity. It was his controversy with the Donatists that led Augustine to emphasize that what essentially constitutes a Christian community or Church, and what binds local Churches together in unity all over the world is not common customs, or law, or liturgy or language—but *love*. It is a point in his doctrine of the Church in which he has not, perhaps, had as many *practical* followers among the theologians and the rulers of the Catholic Church as one could have wished.

16. He means David, both texts being from the psalms. It was common form for the Fathers to call David a prophet, though in the traditional arrangement of the biblical books the psalms are not numbered among the prophets.

17. *Omnis terra* could also be translated, here and in the previous sentence, "all the earth." That is certainly the meaning of the Hebrew and the Greek. But in the previous sentence I feel that "in every land" best conveys Augustine's meaning.

SERMON 33A

SERMON PREACHED AT UTICA ON 11 SEPTEMBER,
ON THE WORDS OF PSALM 146: *I WILL PRAISE THE LORD ALL MY LIFE, I
WILL PLAY MUSIC TO MY GOD AS LONG AS I LIVE*

Date: 410¹

Faith and vision

1. May the Lord grant me the ability to say something worthwhile to you about the words of this psalm which we have sung just now. What we said was, *I will praise the Lord all my life, I will play music to my God as long as I live* (Ps 146:2). The first thing I would do on these words is warn your charity against assuming, when you hear or say *as long as I live I will play music to my God*, that when this life comes to an end that's the end for us of God's praises. Not at all; we shall praise him then much more, when we are living without end. If we praise him during the exile we are passing through, how, do you think, shall we praise him at the home we are never going to leave? As it is said, and read, and sung in another psalm, *Blessed are those who dwell in your home; they shall praise you for ever and ever* (Ps 84:4). Where you hear "for ever and ever," there is no end. And living the blessed life in which God is to be perceived without any uncertainty, to be loved without any weariness, to be praised without end, why, yes indeed, that will be what our being alive consists in—seeing, loving, praising God.

So if we praise while we believe, how, do you think, shall we praise when we see? How, I ask you, is sight going to praise, if faith already praises like this? You see, the apostle says, *As long as we are in the body we are wandering in exile from the Lord; for we are walking by faith, not by sight* (2 Cor 5:6-7). So now it's by faith, then it will be by sight. Now we believe what we do not see; then we shall see what we used to believe. Believing is not an embarrassment because seeing will confirm its truth. Our Lord, though, has first of all built up in us faith; this faith is to be given its reward; we mustn't put the cart before the horse by looking for the reward at the beginning.

Life isn't long here

2. Someone says, "So why did the psalm say 'I will play music to my God as long as I live,' and not say 'I will play music to my God always'?" I agree that saying "as long as I live" seems to indicate an end—but only if it is not understood properly. If you think "as long as I live" is said about this life, just examine this life and see whether it's long. However much you live here, it isn't long. How can that be long which doesn't satisfy you? A boy says a man he sees to be old has lived long. But when he gets to the same age himself, then he will see how indeed it wasn't long. Yes indeed, that's how a lifetime flies by, that's how the moments run into one another, so that it seems it was only the day before yesterday we were boys, only yesterday we were young fellows, today we are old men. So when you reckon that "as long as I live I will play music to my God" was said of this life precisely because it said "*as long as I live*"—in fact the true understanding is that it was not said of this life, precisely because it said "as long as." Truth would never say "as long as" about this life, in which nothing is long.

Have the wise men of this world been able to see this, and are Christians not able to? One of the wise men of the world said, the most eloquent of men, "what after all is this 'long,' which has in it something that is 'last'?"² He absolutely denied that anything is long which can some time or other come to an end. Yes, "some time or other," not just to the extent that you have lived, supposing that you have reached extreme old age. One man's life, especially in these days,³ is a mist that appears for a little while (Jas 4:14). What I have just said has been said by scripture. Divine scripture has said it for boastful, self-confident people, capable of great things in their pride, not knowing whether they are to die straightaway,⁴ and it has warned such haughty personages, who put their trust in vain things, how fleeting and fragile they are. *For what, it says, is your life? It is a mist that appears for a little while, thereafter it will be dissipated* (Jas 4:14). So anyone thinking highly of himself in his pride is putting his trust in mist; he preens himself for his honors, and fades away with the mist.

Pride then is to be curbed, and indeed trampled on with all the deliberation we can muster. And we must understand that we live on this earth only to die, and we must think about the end to which there will be no end. The point is, as I was saying, it's not just a question of you, whoever you are, having grown old and being on top of the world, and thinking you have lived a long time, though you are going to be finished some day; but Adam himself, if he were still alive and going to die, not now but at the end of the world, would not have anything "long," because it would have in it something that would be "last." Yes, it was very truly said, that was, and shrewdly understood,⁵ and that it is true is not only being preached now, but also being acknowledged by the hearers.⁶

*The reason we become Christians
is not to have it so good in this life*

3. Let us turn our minds back to the psalm we sang, and discover that he wouldn't have said *I will play music to my God as long as I live*, unless he had meant that life where "long" really is to be found. After all, if the reason there is no "long" in this life is that there is always something that is "last," it follows that we are not called to desire this life when we become Christians. The reason we become Christians is not to have it so good in this life. If that is why we thought we became Christians, to have it good in this temporal life, with a fleeting felicity that evaporates like mist, then we are very gravely mistaken, and our feet will stumble when we see someone enjoying such an eminent position that he stands out head and shoulders above those he lives among, also enjoying good health, and finally reaching a decrepit old age.⁷

A Christian sees this, poor, proletarian, moaning and groaning at his daily drudgery, and perhaps he says to himself, "What's the good of my having become a Christian? Has it made me any better off than that fellow who isn't, than that guy who doesn't believe in Christ, than that so-and-so who blasphemes my God?" That psalm warns him, *Do not put your trust in princes* (Ps 146:3). Why do you take pleasure in the flower of the field? *All flesh is grass*, says the prophet. He doesn't merely say it, he shouts it. The Lord shouts to him: *Shout*, he says. And he answers, *What shall I shout? All flesh is grass, and all the honor of the flesh as the flower of the field. The grass has withered, the flower fallen*. So has everything perished then? Heaven forbid! *But the word of the Lord abides for ever* (Is 40:6-8).⁸ Why take pleasure in grass? Look, the grass has perished. Do you want to avoid perishing? Hold fast to the Word.

So too in this psalm. Perhaps a poor, lowly Christian had his eyes fixed on a pagan, rich and powerful perhaps, had his eyes fixed on the flower of the field, and was perhaps halfway to choosing him for a patron rather than God. The psalm has a word for this man: *Do not put your trust in princes, and in the sons of men who have no well-being*. He immediately replies, "It can't be speaking of this man, can it? He has plenty of well-being. Look how healthy he is. This very day I see him flourishing. It's me, rather, who am constantly and miserably ill." Why are you obsessed with these things as the only means of pleasure and satisfaction? That's not well-being. *His spirit will go out, and he will return to his earth* (Ps 146:4). There, that's what his well-being amounts to, *a mist that appears for a little while* (Jas 4:14). *His spirit will go out, and he will return to his earth*. Let a few years pass. Let the river flow on as usual, hurrying past different graves of the dead.⁹ Tell the difference if you can between the bones of the rich and the bones of the poor. When his spirit goes out he returns to his earth.

It's just perfect, the way it said nothing further about his spirit, because he too, when he was alive, had never a spiritual thought. *He will return to his earth*, that is to say his flesh will, his body will, the sphere in which

he excelled, in which he was exalted, in which you were taken in by him, in which you were dazzled by his material property. *His spirit will go out, and he will return to his earth; on that day shall perish all his thoughts* (Ps 146:4). Those thoughts that were bogged down on earth: “This is what I’m doing, this is what I’m carrying out, this is where I’m getting, here I’m buying this, here I’m getting that, here I’m reaching such and such an honor” — *on that day shall perish all his thoughts*.

But if you, seeing that *the word of the Lord abides for ever*, if you hold fast to the Word that he may give you eternal life, then not only shall your thought not perish then, but that’s when it comes into its own. When his perishes, that’s when yours comes into its own. He, you see, was thinking about temporal and earthly things, about adding wealth to wealth, increasing his deposits in numbered accounts, about glittering with honors and swelling with power. So, because he had such thoughts, *in that day shall perish all his thoughts*. You however, if you were thinking, because you have become a Christian, not about temporal felicity but about everlasting rest, when your body returns to its earth, that’s when your soul finds its rest.

Lazarus and the rich man

4. Turn your mind to the gospel, and see and inspect the thoughts of two men. *There was a certain rich man, who used to wear purple and linen, and feast sumptuously every day* (Lk 16:19). Every day, grass and the flower of the field. Don’t let yourself be seduced by the good fortune of that fellow who used to wear purple and linen, and feast sumptuously every day. He was proud, he was ungodly, he had empty thoughts and empty desires. When he died, on that day his thoughts perished. But *in front of his gate there was a certain poor man called Lazarus* (Lk 16:20). He kept quiet about the rich man’s name and mentioned the name of the poor man. One man’s name was bandied about, and God kept quiet about it; the other’s name was lost in silence, and God spoke it. Please don’t be surprised. God just read out what was written in his book. You see, it is said of the godless, *And they shall not be written in your book* (Ps 69:28). Again, when the apostles were feeling very proud of themselves because demons had been subjected to them in the name of the Lord, to save them from getting conceited and boastful like men about this thing, great and of notable power though it was, he said to them, *Do not rejoice in this, that the demons have been subjected to you; but rejoice because your names have been written in heaven* (Lk 10:20). So you see, God who lives in heaven kept quiet about the rich man’s name, because he didn’t find it written in heaven. But he spoke the poor man’s name, because he found it written there—indeed he gave instructions for it to be written there.

But now look at that poor man. We have been talking about the thoughts of the godless rich man, so distinguished, wearing purple and

linen, and feasting sumptuously every day, and we said that when he died all his thoughts perished. But the poor man Lazarus was in front of the rich man's gate, *full of sores, and he used to long to be fed from the scraps that were thrown down from the rich man's table, and no one ever gave him any; and what's more, the dogs used to come and lick his sores* (Lk 16:20-21). I want you to see yourself there, Christian, because the final ends of these two are reported. God of course is powerful enough, even in this life, to give well-being and remove destitution, and grant the Christian enough to live on. And yet, if even this were not to be the case, which would you choose? To be as that poor man, or to be as that rich man? Don't be taken in by appearances. Listen to the end, and observe what a wrong choice means.

There can be no doubt, of course, that the poor man being God-fearing, while trapped in his temporal miseries, was thinking how this life must end sometime, and how eternal rest is to be gained. They both died, but that poor man's thoughts did not perish on that day. You see, it happened that the beggar died and was taken away by the angels to Abraham's bosom. On that day all his thoughts were healed. And because Lazarus translated into English¹⁰ means "Helped"—if you are called Lazarus in Hebrew, you are called Helped in English—this psalm has rightly advised us, *Blessed is he whose helper is the God of Jacob* (Ps 146:5). When his spirit goes out and his flesh returns to its earth, his thoughts will not perish, because *his hope is in the Lord his God* (Ps 146:5). This is the lesson learned in the school of Christ the teacher, this is what is hoped for by the heart of the faithful hearer, this is the reward of the only true savior.¹¹

NOTES

1. This sermon survives in only two manuscripts, and was unknown to the Maurist editors of the seventeenth century. Utica, where it was preached, was an ancient city north of Carthage, doubtless on Augustine's route when he was traveling between Carthage and Hippo. The title gives the date, two days before the Ides of September, but no year. The year 410 has been proposed, that is to say, the year in which Rome was captured and sacked by the Goths. There are some expressions in the sermon, and the treatment of a particular topic, which could be interpreted as remotely alluding to that event.

On the other hand, if the city had already been taken by September, one would expect rather more explicit allusions to so catastrophic an event. If it had not yet happened, then there can be no allusions to it at all. So, as always, the dating of the sermon remains a matter of very tentative conjecture.

2. Cicero, *Pro Marcello* 9.

3. This is the first expression that can be interpreted as referring obliquely to the fall of Rome. But the expression is, in any case, rather inconsequential. His point surely is that whatever the times are like, whether peaceful and prosperous or dangerously unsettled, there is in this life no such thing as "long," as *diu*. Perhaps the fall of Rome could be

taken as a striking reminder of that truth. But he can hardly be said to treat it so here.

4. See Lk 12:20.

5. By Cicero himself is what he means.

6. No doubt their agreement was being eagerly manifested.

7. The shock of the fall of Rome, and the encounter with the refugees who came from the city to Africa in considerable numbers, may have led to a notable increase in the number of people applying to be baptized, many of them perhaps looking for a superstitious talisman against further disasters. On the other hand, the catastrophe had led many people to point an accusing finger at Christianity, and say "Look, it hasn't worked, it hasn't proved an effective guarantee of temporal and earthly felicity." So it could be argued that people were less likely at this time to seek baptism for the wrong reasons.

8. Augustine almost certainly takes "the word of the Lord" to be the Word which became flesh. But I do not give it a capital W in the actual quotation, because I do not think he would wish to deny that it has a more general reference here. The ambivalence of meaning was perfectly acceptable to him.

9. He means "time, like an ever rolling stream."

10. Of course he said "Latin." He is roughly correct about the meaning of Lazarus, which is an abbreviated form of Eliezer, which means "God is help."

11. Augustine's argument is that God/Christ is the true savior in whom we should put our trust, rather than "princes" and wealthy pagan patrons.

SERMON 34

SERMON PREACHED IN CARTHAGE AT THE ANCESTORS

Date: 420¹

1. We have been urged to sing to the Lord a new song.² It's the new person who sings the new song. A song is a matter of cheerfulness, and if we think about it more thoroughly, it's a matter of love. So anyone who knows how to love the new life knows how to sing the new song. So for the sake of the new song we need to be reminded what the new life is. All these things, you see, belong to the one kingdom—the new person, the new song, the new testament or new covenant. So the new person will both sing the new song and belong to the new covenant.

We love because we are loved

2. There is no one of course who doesn't love, but the question is, what do they love? So we are not urged not to love, but to choose what we love. But what choice can we make unless we are first chosen, since we cannot even love unless we are first loved? Listen to the apostle John. He is the apostle who lay back on the Lord's breast and drank in heavenly secrets during that supper.³ Drunk with that draught, in that state of happy drunkenness he belched out the words, *In the beginning was the Word* (Jn 1:1). What exalted humility and sober drunkenness!⁴ So that great belcher—that is, of course, preacher—among all the other things he drank in from the Lord's breast, also said this: *We ourselves love because he first loved us* (1 Jn 4:10). Seeing that he was talking about God, he had given a great deal to humanity by saying *We ourselves love*. Who love whom? People love God, mortals the immortal, frail fragile beings the unchanging one, artifacts the artificer.

We ourselves have loved. And where did we get this from? *Because he has first loved us*. Inquire where a person gets the ability to love God from, and absolutely the only discovery you will make is that it is because God has first loved him. He has given us himself, the one we have loved; he has given us what to love with. You can hear more plainly from the apostle Paul what he has given us to love with. *The love of God*, he says, *has been poured into our hearts*. Where from? From us, perhaps? No.

So where from? *Through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us* (Rom 5:5).

Let us love God with God

3. Having therefore such a great assurance, let us love God with God. Yes indeed, since the Holy Spirit is God, let us love God with God. Now why should I say more than once, "Let us love God with God"? Certainly, because I have said *the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us*, it follows that since the Holy Spirit is God and we cannot love God except through the Holy Spirit, we can only love God with God. So that's the line the argument follows.

Now listen to John saying it even more plainly: *God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God and God abides in him* (1 Jn 4:16). It isn't enough to say "Love is from God." Which of us would dare to say what is said here, *God is love*? The one who said it knew what he had. So why does human imagination with its flights of fancy fashion God for itself and manufacture an idol in the mind, composing it as best its thoughts may, and not as its objective search ought? "Is God like this? No, he's like that." Why sketch an outline, why arrange limbs, why provide him with an acceptable stature, why imagine a beautiful body? *God is love*. What color has love, what outline, what shape? We see none of these things in it, and yet we love.

Love is loved, though not seen

4. At the risk of shocking your charity, I am going to say, "Let us observe at the lower level what we may expect to find at the higher." The lowest kind of earthly love, the sordid love which sets its sights on bodily charms, can teach us something useful which we can apply at the higher and purer level. Some shameless lecher loves a very beautiful woman. He is of course roused by her beautiful body, but he also looks inwardly for some return of love. If he hears that she hates him, doesn't all that hot, urgent passion roused by her beautiful figure grow cold, and in some fashion or other shrink back from what he had intended? Isn't he put off, offended, doesn't he even begin to hate what he had previously loved? Has her figure altered? Isn't everything still there that had previously allured him? Yes, there it all is still. And yet while he was on fire for what he could see, he was demanding from her heart what he could not see. Should he perceive, on the other hand, that he is loved in return, how much more impetuous and ardent becomes his desire! She sees him, he sees her, no one sees love. And yet love is loved, though it is not seen.

5. Now raise yourselves from this muddy kind of lust, and so remain in the most radiant kind of love. You don't see God. Love, and you have

him. How many things are loved in our reprehensible desires, and are not had! They are greedily sought, but are not for all that immediately possessed. Loving gold is hardly the same thing as having gold, is it? Many people love it and don't have it. Is it the same as having broad and beautiful acres, which many people love and don't have? Is loving honors the same as having honors? Many who have none are on fire to receive them. They make every effort to get them, and most often die before they get what they were aiming at.

God, on the other hand, offers himself to us at a bargain price.⁵ He calls out to us, "Love me and you will have me because you can't even love me unless you already have me."

Be yourselves what you sing

6. My brothers and sisters, my children, O seedlings of the Catholic Church, O holy and heavenly seed, O you that have been born again in Christ and been born from above,⁶ listen to me—or rather, listen to God through me: *Sing to the Lord a new song* (Ps 149:1). "Well, I am singing," you say. Yes, you are singing, of course you're singing, I can hear you. But don't let your life give evidence against your tongue. Sing with your voices, sing also with your hearts; sing with your mouths, sing also with your conduct.⁷

Sing to the Lord a new song. You ask what you should sing about the one you love? For of course you do want to sing about the one you love. You are asking for praises of his to sing. You have been told, *Sing to the Lord a new song.* You are looking for praise songs, are you? *His praise is in the Church of the saints* (Ps 149:1). The praise of the one to be sung about is the singer himself. Do you want to sing God his praises? Be yourselves what you sing. You are his praise if you lead good lives.

His praise, you see, is not to be found in the synagogues of the Jews, nor in the madness of the pagans, nor in the errors of the heretics, nor in the applause of the theaters. You ask where it is to be found? Look at yourselves, you be it. *His praise is in the Church of the saints.* You ask what to rejoice about when you are singing? *Let Israel rejoice in the one who made him* (Ps 149:2), and all he can find to rejoice about is God.

If you want to acquire charity, look into yourself

7. Submit yourselves, my dear brothers, to a thorough interrogation, turn out your innermost closets and cupboards. Take careful stock of how much you have of charity, and increase the stock you find. Pay attention to that sort of treasure, so that you may be rich within. Other things that carry a high price tag are said to be dear, aren't they—and quite rightly. Look at the way you normally talk: "This is dearer than that." What do you mean by "it's dearer" but that it has a higher

price—it's more precious. Now if whatever is more precious is said to be dearer, what can be dearer, my brothers, than dearness itself, which is what charity means?⁸

What do we suppose its price is? How can we work out its price? The price of corn is your coppers; the price of a farm, your silver; the price of a pearl, your gold; the price of charity, yourself. So you ask yourself how you are going to get possession of a farm, or a jewel, or a mule; you look around for what you may buy a farm with, and you look into your assets. But if you want to acquire charity, look into yourself, and find yourself.

After all, why are you afraid to give yourself, as though you may waste yourself? Rather, it's if you don't give yourself that you will lose yourself. Charity herself speaks through wisdom,⁹ and tells you something to save you from panicking at being told, "Give yourself." If anyone wanted to sell you a farm he would say to you, "Give me your gold," and if it was something else, "Give me your coppers, give me your silver." Now listen to what charity says to you, speaking through 'the mouth of wisdom: *Give me your heart, son* (Prv 23:26). *Give me*, she says. Give her what? *Your heart, son*. It was ill when it was with you, when you kept it to yourself. You were being pulled this way and that by toys and trifles and wanton, destructive loves.¹⁰ Take your heart away from all that. Where are you to drag it to, where are you to put it? "Give me your heart," she says; "let it be mine and it won't be lost to you."

See, in any case, if he wanted to leave anything at all in you by which you might love even yourself—he who said to you, *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind* (Mt 22:37). What is left of your heart to love yourself with? What is left of your soul? Of your mind? "With all," he says. He who made you requires it all of you, the whole of it. But don't get depressed, as though there is nothing left in you to rejoice with. *Let Israel rejoice*, not in himself but *in the one who made him* (Ps 149:2).

When you love, it is you who profit by it

8. You, of course, will answer, "If nothing is left in me to love myself with, because I am ordered to love him who made me with my whole heart and my whole soul and my whole mind, how can I be ordered in the second commandment to love my neighbor as myself?" Well in actual fact, this is saying how you do owe love to your neighbor with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind. "How?" *You shall love your neighbor as yourself* (Mt 22:39). God with all of me, with my whole self, my neighbor as myself. "But myself what with and you what with?" Do you want to hear what you are to love yourself with? You love yourself precisely with the fact that you love God with your whole self.

Do you really imagine it profits God that you love God? That because you love God some benefit accrues to God? And if you don't love God,

that he will have less? When you love, it's you who profit by it. It will deposit you where you cannot get lost.¹¹

But you will answer, "When did I not love myself?" You may be quite sure you weren't loving yourself when you weren't loving the God who made you. When in fact you were hating yourself, you imagined you were loving yourself. *Whoever loves iniquity, you see, hates his own soul* (Ps 11:5).¹²

NOTES

1. This is the title in the manuscripts. An editor adds: *On the responsory of Psalm 149, Sing to the Lord a new song*. Other sermons preached at the same Basilica of the Ancestors (*Maiores*) are 16A and 25A. It was a basilica in a cemetery where Saints Felicity and Perpetua were buried.

No date has been suggested for it. But the beginning of section 6 makes it clear that the congregation contained a number of newly baptized Christians, no doubt in a prominent position in the front. So it is likely that it was preached shortly after Easter or Pentecost. I would be inclined to put it rather late—about 420. It has all the characteristic technique, but there is a distinct lack of concentration that perhaps indicates the onset of old age.

2. See Ps 149:1.

3. See Jn 13:23.

4. It is not quite clear how humility comes in here. It is probable that belching did not carry the stigma of coarse vulgarity in those days that it does among us in respectable circles; the word was used quite normally in a metaphorical sense of springs, for example, where we would use the word "gushing."

5. *In compendio*. I am not entirely certain what is meant by this. I thought of translating "in a nutshell," but the imagery here is all so consistently commercial, as is the basic meaning of *compendium*, that I have chosen a commercial expression. In fact, on reflection, I think Augustine means much more than "a bargain price"; he means no price at all, a profit to us, the opposite of *dispendium* or expense.

6. See Jn 3:3, where the word usually translated "again" can also mean "from above." It is this passage that indicates the presence of a whole section of newly baptized Christians in the congregation.

7. *Cantate oribus, cantate moribus*; a typical rhyming play on words I have not been able to reproduce in translation.

8. *Caritas*, from *carus, carior, carissimus*. It is a pity that "dearness" did not develop the same range of meaning in English.

9. Saint Thomas Aquinas formally associates the Holy Spirit's gift of wisdom with the virtue of charity (*Sum. Theol.* IIa IIae, 45).

10. I don't know what the equivalent of our contemporary "drug culture" was in Augustine's Africa, but no doubt there was one.

11. Another rhyming word play: *tu ibi eris, ubi non peris*.

12. One cannot help feeling it is a rather lame ending to the sermon. He was making an excellent point about how our loving God does us good, but doesn't do God any good, because it is impossible to do God any good. This was mixed up with another point that we cannot even love ourselves unless God loves us; and with yet another one that we love ourselves in the very fact of loving God. All this, being rather mixed up, needed clarifying. And yet he suddenly ends by suggesting yet another point about love. It seems as if he were feeling around for a punch line to end on, and couldn't find it, and got distracted onto a slightly different point. This, for me, is one of the indications that he was getting old.

SERMON 35

ON THE TEXT IN THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON: *IF YOU ARE WISE, YOU WILL BE SO FOR YOURSELF AND FOR YOUR NEIGHBORS: BUT IF YOU TURN OUT BAD, YOU ALONE WILL DRAIN THE DREGS OF BADNESS*

Date: 391-395¹

Our neighbor's good life makes us happy

1. If we do not listen carelessly to the divine utterances, we may not unreasonably be worried by the text: *Son, if you are wise, you will be so for yourself and for your neighbors; but if you turn out bad, you alone will drain the dregs of badness* (Prv 9:12). How, after all, can this be correctly understood? For surely, just as our neighbor's good life makes us happy, so also his irregular life makes us sad.

Or if you suggest that the text is talking about advice, and saying that a wise man is so for himself and for those he gives wise advice to, then how can it possibly be that if he turns out bad he alone will drain the dregs of badness, seeing that it is said of such kinds of advice, *Bad conversations corrupt good habits* (1 Cor 15:33)? And what else, I ask you, does the very voice of charity cry out: *If one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it; and if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it* (1 Cor 12:16)? So how can this be true: *Son, if you are wise, you will be wise for yourself and for your neighbors; but if you turn out bad, you alone will drain the dregs of badness*? How shall I rejoice in his being good, if I am not grieved at his being bad? How can I be delighted at his being found, if I don't care particularly about his being lost? So how, if he's bad, will he alone drain the dregs of badness, since together with the sick member the others also suffer likewise?

True love of neighbor

2. That's the problem then, and if it isn't solved it will go on worrying us. And with the Lord's help it shall be solved, provided we begin by holding it as a most certain truth, defined, fixed, and immovable, that no one can be good with someone else's goodness or bad with someone else's badness. That's why the apostle says, *Each one of us shall carry his*

own burden (Gal 6:5). And in another place, *Therefore each one of us shall render an account for himself* (Rom 14:12). And again, *Let each one prove his own work, and then he shall have honor in himself alone, and not in someone else* (Gal 6:4). The same point is made through the prophet Ezekiel: *The father's soul is mine and the son's soul is mine; it is the soul which has sinned that shall die* (Ez 18:4). This whole passage is so constructed as to show that bad sons are not given relief because of good parents, nor good sons oppressed because of bad ones.

So having first established this absolutely true and rock-firm principle on our own account, we go on now to examine what our obligations are in our relations with others; and here we must be very careful to distinguish between the effect of salvation which we must seek for ourselves, and the consideration which we must show to our neighbors. If you are good, you are good with your own goodness, not with someone else's. And yet through that goodness of yours with which you are good you also rejoice over another's goodness together with him, not by exchanging goodnesses, but by exchanging love.

Again, if you are bad, you are not bad with someone else's badness but with your own. And it is with the same badness of your own that you fail to love your neighbor as yourself. In fact you also fail to love even yourself. What you love is iniquity, your most implacable enemy, who doesn't attack you from without, but is foisted on you by yourself from within. To help it defeat you all the more easily, you are biased in its favor against yourself. Thus you are plainly convicted of hating yourself, since you love that by which you are shamefully defeated. Indeed, the divine utterance could hardly be mistaken which declares, *But whoever loves iniquity hates his own soul* (Ps 11:5).

Hate evil, love good

3. So it is, therefore, that with the goodness the good man is good with he both rejoices at the goodness of another and is saddened by another's badness. In this way, by availing yourself of such a neighbor—because that person is most correctly termed a neighbor who takes a neighborly, that is a concerned, interest in you—by availing yourself of such a neighbor, if you are wise you will be so both for yourself and for him.² Not because he will be good with your goodness, but because with his goodness he will be a lover of your goodness.

But if you turn out bad, you alone—not with him—shall drain the dregs of badness. For he will not be bad with your badness, but he will be concerned over it. Your viciousness pains him, but your punishment doesn't overtake him. It afflicts him with sadness, it doesn't infect him with unrighteousness. So, being bad, you alone will drain the dregs of badness, and not your neighbor with you, because the sadness, which being good he feels about you, comes upon him from his goodness and your badness. That sadness is an indication of his love and your loss. It

condemns you; it becomes him. It puts you down; it raises him up.

That's why it is also written, *Be obedient to your leaders—for it is they who keep watch over your souls, as the ones who will have to give an account—that they may do this with joy and not with sadness; for this is not to your advantage either* (Heb 13:17). So it is not to your advantage to be weighed down by their sadness. It is, though, to their advantage to be saddened by your unrighteousness.

So then hold your good neighbors in esteem and be good, with your own goodness of course, not theirs, and one not given you by yourself but imparted to you by God. *For what do you have that you have not received* (1 Cor 4:7)? And in this way, *if you are wise, you will be wise for yourself and for your neighbors*, for whom it is good to rejoice over your goodness. *But if you are bad, you alone will drain the dregs of badness*; they won't do so as well, because for them it is also good to be saddened by your viciousness.

NOTES

1. Apparently this sermon first appears in a medieval collection of sermons, which means it does not figure in any of the earliest collections of Augustine's sermons. It is however mentioned in Possidius' index. As I read it, it strikes me by its incongruity; it does not really read like a sermon at all, certainly not of the kind that Augustine was accustomed to preach. But it does read like many of the things he was accustomed to write, wrestling with some problem of scripture. I cannot help feeling it would have been more at home in, for example, his work entitled *Miscellany of Eighty-three Questions*.

Yet if Possidius, Augustine's slightly younger contemporary and disciple, lists it among the sermons, it found its place among them very early. So it is fairly certain that even if Augustine wrote it—or dictated it—like his many written works, he also spoke it. But it does not have the feel of something spoken in church to an ordinary congregation. It rather gives the impression of a talk or lecture given at what would nowadays be a bible study group.

The editor of the Latin text thinks that the style is that of Augustine's early years as a preacher. As I have indicated, I myself do not feel it is in his style as a *preacher* at all. But if it was a kind of lecture given to a small group, this is perhaps the sort of thing he is more likely to have done, and have had time for, when he was still only a priest than when he had become the bishop. So we can agree on the conclusion.

2. So he is interpreting the text as meaning that "being wise for one's neighbors" is being benefited by them, instead of benefiting them, which is how we would naturally be inclined to take it. And indeed it is only in this way that his whole argument will really work.

SERMON 36

ON THE TEXT IN PROVERBS: *THERE ARE THOSE WHO AFFECT TO BE RICH THOUGH THEY HAVE NOTHING, AND THERE ARE THOSE WHO HUMBLE THEMSELVES THOUGH THEY ARE RICH. THE REDEMPTION OF A MAN'S SOUL IS HIS RICHES, BUT THE POOR MAN DOES NOT ENDURE THREATS*

Date: 410¹

The value of riches in scripture

1. I am prompted by the holy scripture which has just been read in your hearing, or rather through it I am prompted by the Lord at whose bidding I am speaking to you, to tackle together with you this text that has been read, and find out what it really means: *There are those who affect to be rich though they have nothing, and there are those who humble themselves though they are rich* (Prv 13:7). For you mustn't suppose, indeed it is simply not to be credited, that holy scripture is concerned to advise us on these riches which the proud get such swollen heads about—I mean these visible, earthly riches, of course—as though we should either think they are very important or fear not to have them.² “After all,” someone will say, “what good does a man get from affecting to be rich when in fact he has nothing?” Scripture has taken note of such a person and found fault with him.

But the other one isn't all that acceptable either, or so very admirable a model, the one scripture appears to hold up for our approval—not if it is talking here of temporal, earthly riches. *And there are those*, it says, *who humble themselves though they are rich*. We are right to dislike that fellow who affects to be rich while he has nothing. But what about this one? Do we really like him because he humbles himself though he is rich? We may perhaps like him because he humbles himself, but we don't like him just because he's rich.

2. All right, then, let's accept that for the moment.³ It is not improper, nor is it unseemly or useless that the holy scriptures should wish to commend rich people to us for being humble. The thing really to be afraid of with riches, you see, is pride. In fact the apostle Paul has advice on this point for Timothy: *Command the rich of this world*, he says, *not to have proud thoughts* (1 Tm 6:17). It wasn't riches he went in dread of,

but the disease of riches. The disease of riches is great pride. A grand spirit it is indeed, that in the midst of riches is not prone to this disease, a spirit greater than its riches, surpassing them not by desiring but by despising them.

Great then indeed is the rich man who doesn't think he's great just because he's rich. But if that's why he does think he is great, then he is proud and destitute. He's a big noise in the flesh; in his heart of hearts he's a beggar. He has been inflated, not filled. If you see two wineskins, one filled, the other inflated, they each have the same bulk and extent, but they don't each have the same content. Just look at them and you can't tell the difference; weigh them, and you will find out. The one that has been filled is hard to move; the one that has been inflated is easily removed.

Jesus took on poverty without losing riches

3. So, he says, *command the rich of this world*. He wouldn't add "of this world" unless there were people who are rich and not of this world. Who are the rich not of this world? Those whose prince and head is he of whom it is said, *He became poor for us, though he was rich*. But if that was all he did, what on earth was the use? See what follows: *that you might be enriched by his poverty* (2 Cor 8:9). I presume that what Christ's poverty contributed to us was not money but justness.

But where did his poverty come from? From his becoming mortal. So true riches are immortality. That is where true plenty is to be found, where there is no destitution. So it is because we could not become immortal unless Christ had been made mortal for us, that *he became poor, though he was rich*. And it doesn't say, "He became poor though he had been rich." He took on poverty without losing riches. Inwardly rich, outwardly poor. Unseen as God in his riches, visible as man in his poverty.

Observe his riches: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him* (Jn 1:1-3). What could be richer than he through whom all things were made? A rich man can possess gold, but he can't create it. These riches of his having thus been declared, now observe his poverty: *And the word became flesh and dwelt among us* (Jn 1:14). It is by this poverty of his that we have been enriched, because by his blood which flowed from his flesh, the flesh the Word became in order to dwell among us, the sacking of our sins was torn up. Through that blood we have cast off the rags of iniquity, in order to clothe ourselves in the robes of immortality.⁴

All the faithful who are good are rich

4. So they are all rich, all the faithful who are good. None should

despise themselves – poor in their shacks, but rich in conscience. Those who are rich in conscience, indeed, sleep more easy on the ground than those who are rich in gold do under their purple coverlets. No mean anxiety disturbs them, no conscience pricked by its crimes. Keep in your heart, in your conscience, the riches which the poverty of your Lord has bestowed on you. What's more, take him on your payroll as their custodian. To stop what he has given you vanishing from your conscience, let him who gave it keep it safe.⁵

So they are all rich, all the faithful who are also good, but they are not the rich of this world. In fact, not even they themselves are aware of their riches; they will become aware of them afterward. The root is alive, but in winter time even the green tree is like the withered one. In winter time, of course, both the tree that's dead and the tree that's alive are each stripped bare of the dignity of leaves, each devoid of the dignity of fruit. Summer will come and tell the difference between the trees. The living root produces leaves and fills up the fruit; the withered one will remain as empty in summer as in winter. For that one a storeroom is prepared, to this one an axe is applied, and when it's cut down it's thrown on the fire.⁶

In the same way, our summer is the coming of Christ. Our winter is when Christ is hidden, our summer when he is revealed. In short, it is to good and faithful trees that the apostle addresses these consoling words: *For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Dead for sure, but dead in appearance, alive in the root. Now observe the approaching time of summer, as he goes on to say, But when Christ appears, your life, then you too will appear with him in glory* (Col 3:4). These are the rich, but not of this world.

Do not set your hopes on the uncertainty of riches

5. Note that even the rich of the world were ignored. They too were won by the poverty of him who, *though he was rich, became poor for us* (2 Cor 8:9). If he had disregarded them and not wanted to count them among his own, the apostle would not have commanded Timothy, as I said earlier, to command in his turn – *Command*, he says, *the rich of this world* (1 Tm 6:17). Among those who are rich in faith, some are the rich of this world. Command them, because they too have become members of that poor man. Command them about what you are afraid they may catch from riches: *not to have proud thoughts, nor set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches* (1 Tm 6:17).

That's why the rich man grows proud, you see, because he sets his hopes on the uncertainty of riches. If he were sensible enough to take the uncertainty of riches into consideration, he would never grow proud, but always be afraid. The richer he was, the more anxious he would become, and with reference to this life, not only to the next. You see, many people, who have been most at ease amid the changes and chances of this world,

have been poor. Many, on the other hand, have been investigated and prosecuted⁷ because of their riches. Many have bitterly regretted ever having what they certainly couldn't have for ever. Many have been sorry they didn't take the advice of their Lord, who said, *Do not put by for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and corrosion spoil, and where thieves dig up and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven* (Mt 6:19-20).⁸

I am not telling you to do away with your wealth, but to transfer it,⁹ because there are many people who have refused to do this, and have been very sorry indeed that they didn't obey, when they not only lost their wealth but on account of it lost themselves too. So, *command the rich of this world not to have proud thoughts*, and there will happen in them what we have heard in Solomon's proverb: *There are those who humble themselves though they are rich* (Prv 13:7). It can happen even with these temporal riches. Let him be humble. Let him be more glad that he's a Christian than that he's rich. Don't let him be puffed up or become high and mighty. Let him take notice of the poor man his brother, and not refuse to be called the poor man's brother. After all, however rich he may be, Christ is richer, and he wanted all for whom he shed his blood to be his brethren.

6. But in case the rich should say they didn't know what to do with their riches, he advised Timothy to suggest some guidelines to them as well as laying a command on them. After saying . . . *nor set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches*, he added, in case they should conclude they had been robbed of hope, *but on the living God, who provides us abundantly with everything for our enjoyment* (1 Tm 6:17)—temporal things for employment, eternal things for enjoyment.¹⁰ But what are they to do with their riches? *Let them be rich*, he says, *in good works, giving readily*. That's really what riches are good for, so that you won't have any difficulty in giving. The poor man, you see, wants to give and he can't. The rich man wants to, and can, *giving readily, sharing, laying down for themselves a good foundation for the future, that they may take hold of the true life* (1 Tm 6:19).

Because this life is false, isn't it? The falsity of this life took in that fellow in purple and fine linen, who disdained the poor man lying at his gate covered with sores. But he, licked by the dogs, was earning for himself an eternal treasure in Abraham's bosom, not indeed by the abundance of his means, but by the piety and excellence of his will. That rich man, for his part, with such a sense of his own importance in his purple and fine linen, died and was buried. And what did he find? Everlasting thirst, never-ending flames. Purple and fine linen were followed by fire. He was burning in the shirt he had been unable to strip himself of.¹¹ Instead of the feasting, a drying up, and a longing for a drop from the poor man's finger, just as *he* had done for crumbs from the rich man's table. But his destitution had been temporary, this one's

punishment is permanent. Let *the rich of this world* take note of this, and *not have proud thoughts, Let them give readily, let them share. Let them lay down for themselves a good foundation for the future*, where the truly rich are, not those of this world, *that they may take hold of the true life.*

Who are the poor? The rich?

7. So perhaps the divine scripture had a similar admonition in mind when it said, *There are those who affect to be rich, though they have nothing* (Prv 13:7), one aimed at people in rags who are proud. If a proud rich person is hard to put up with, who can bear a proud poor person? So the better ones are those who humble themselves, though they are rich.

However, scripture signifies that it is talking about another kind of riches, because it goes on to add, *The redemption of a man's soul is his riches; but the poor man does not endure threats* (Prv 13:8). We should take it as referring to someone poor with goodness knows what other kind of poverty, and someone rich with goodness knows what other kind of riches. You see, the more profoundly rich, rich in heart and mind, staunchness being their capital, commitment their fat rents, charity their dividends, are rich in themselves, their riches are within. But there are those who affect to be rich, while they are poor; they consider themselves just, while in fact they are wicked. Clearly, we have to understand riches of that sort, since the scripture has provided the key to what it was saying: *The redemption of a man's soul is his riches.* "Understand," it says, "what kind of riches I am commending to you. Because I said, *There are those who affect to be rich though they have nothing, and there are those who humble themselves though they are rich*, you started thinking about these temporal and earthly and visible riches. But I'm not talking about them; I go on to advise you what sort I am talking about: *the redemption of a man's soul are his riches.*"

Therefore those who cannot afford the redemption of their souls, because they are wicked and affect to consider themselves just, because they are hypocrites, they are the ones about whom it says, *There are those who affect to be rich though they have nothing.* They wish to appear just, though in the coffers of conscience they do not have any gold of justice. And there are the affluent, all the humbler, the richer they are, of whom it is said, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven* (Mt 5:3).

Gold may glitter, but faith gleams more brightly

8. So why do you go for the riches that wheedle our human eyes of flesh? Gold may glitter, but faith gleams more brightly. Choose what you ought to have in your heart. Invest your capital inside you, where God can see, man cannot see. And just because man cannot see, that's no

reason for disregarding what you have inside. Do you want me to prove that even in the eyes of the wicked faith gleams more brightly than gold? Notice how a miserly master praises a faithful slave. He says he has nothing more valuable than him, indeed he avers that he cannot put a price on him at all. "I've a slave," he says; "he's quite priceless." You wait for the reason why; perhaps he's a fine juggler, or else he's the best of cooks. No. Observe his praise of an inward quality: "Nothing could be more faithful," he says.¹²

You, a man, are pleased with a faithful slave,¹³ and are you unwilling to be yourself a faithful slave of God's? You are aware of having a slave; you should also be aware of having a master. You were able to buy your slave, not to create him. Your master both created you with his Word and bought you back with his blood. If you have grown cheap in your own estimation, recall the price paid for you. If you've forgotten that too, read the gospel, your invoice. You appreciate fidelity in your slave; is your master not also to look for it in his? Pay back the same as you exact from others. What you are delighted to be paid by one beneath you, pay yourself to the one above you. You love the slave who faithfully guards your gold. Don't disdain the master who mercifully guards your heart.

Everyone, then, has an eye and a good word for faithfulness, when they demand it as owed to themselves, of course. When it's demanded of them, they shut their eyes, and refuse to see how beautiful it is. Or could it possibly be, do you think, that in their crazy folly they refuse to pay it in case they lose it; like someone afraid to pay money: when he's paid it, he won't still keep it. That's not how faith is paid. It's both paid and kept at the same time. What an extraordinary thing! In fact if it isn't paid, it isn't kept.

Redeem your soul by giving alms

9. *The redemption of a man's soul is his riches* (Prv 13:8). How right God was to make fun of that silliest of rich men — he was warning us not to follow his example — the one whose land bore good crops, and the man was more worried about plenty than about poverty. You see, *he thought to himself, saying, What shall I do, where shall I accumulate my crops?* (Lk 12:17) And after he'd sweated and fretted about his lack of space, he finally thought he had hit on a good plan. But it was a silly plan. It was a plan devised not by good sense but by greed. *I will pull down, he says, my old, small barns, and put up new and larger ones, and I will fill them; and I will say to my soul, Soul, you have heaps of good things; take your fill, enjoy yourself. He said to him, Fool* precisely where you thought you were being clever, what's this foolish thing you've said. "I will say to my soul, You have heaps of good things; take your fill"? *This night shall your soul be taken away. These things you have prepared, whose will they be?* (Lk 12:20). *For what does it profit a man if he gains*

the whole world, but suffers the ruin of his own soul (Mt 16:26)?

That's why *the redemption of a man's soul is his riches*. That kind of riches this silly fool of a man did not have. Obviously, he wasn't redeeming his soul by giving alms, he was hoarding perishable crops. I repeat, he was hoarding perishable crops, himself on the point of perishing because he had handed out nothing to the Lord¹⁴ before whom he had been due to appear. How will he know where to look at that trial, when he starts hearing the words, *I was hungry and you did not give me to eat* (Mt 25:42)? He was planning to sate his soul with excessive and unnecessary feasting, and proudly disregarding all those empty bellies of the poor. He didn't realize that the bellies of the poor were much safer storerooms than his barns. What he was stowing away in those barns was perhaps even then being stolen away by thieves.¹⁵ But if he stowed it away in the bellies of the poor, it would of course be digested on earth, but in heaven it would be kept all the more safely. So then, *the redemption of a man's soul is his riches* (Prv 13:8).

Resisting threats

10. And how does it go on? *But the poor man does not endure threats* (Prv 13:8). The poor man—namely the man emptied of justice, having no capital of the spirit within him, no spiritual ornaments, no spiritual furniture, none of those things which the eyes do not see but the mind values all the more. As he doesn't have any of this inside him, he doesn't endure threats. When some powerful man says to him, "Make this statement against my enemy, give false evidence so that I can put the squeeze on the man I want and bring him to heel," perhaps he makes an effort—"I won't do it, I won't bring such a sin on my head." He only refuses until the rich man starts threatening. But because he is poor, he cannot endure threats. What does it mean, he's poor? He doesn't have those inner riches that the martyrs had, who for the sake of the truth and of faithfulness to Christ disregarded all the threats of this age. They lost nothing of what they had in their hearts, and how much they found in heaven!

So then, *the poor man does not endure threats*. He cannot say to the rich man who is forcing him to injure someone or to give false evidence, "I won't." He has no inner resources to reply from, he isn't solidly based on inner capital; he is not the sort of man to say, because he hasn't got the means to say—he's not the sort of man to say, "What are you going to do to me, you and your threats? At the most, you're going to take away what I have. You take what I'm leaving behind in any case; you take what perhaps I'm going to lose in my lifetime, even if you don't take it. I'm losing nothing from my inner strong-room. When you threaten to take away what I have,¹⁶ do you really want to take away what I have within? You are able to take that other stuff away and keep it. But if by your threats you take away my faithfulness, I for sure will lose it but you

won't get it. So I'm not going to do what you urge me to, and I don't care what threats you make. Sure, by your violence you can even have me driven from my country. But you will only have done me harm if you have driven me where I cannot find my God. Perhaps you will even be able to kill me. My house of flesh demolished, I who live in it shall withdraw unharmed and go off without a care to him with whom I keep faith, and have nothing more to fear from you. I mean, just consider what you are threatening me with, to make me give false evidence. You are threatening me with death—but only the body's. I'm more afraid of him who said, *the mouth that lies kills the soul* (Wis 1:11)." Having the capital sum and the rentroll of such riches within him, he can make that sort of answer, or an even better one to anyone who threatens him. *But the poor man does not endure threats.*

The Pharisee and the publican

11. So let us be rich then, and be afraid of being poor. But let us seek to get him who is truly rich to make a rich capital investment in our hearts. And if it should happen that any of you enters into his heart and doesn't find this sort of riches there, let him knock at that millionaire's door, let him become an earnest beggar at that millionaire's gate, and so with a donation from him become a rich capitalist himself.

And indeed, my brothers, we really ought to confess our poverty, our destitution to the Lord our God. This is what the tax collector confessed, who did not so much as dare to raise his eyes to heaven. As a man and a sinner he didn't have the wherewithal to lift up his eyes. He was looking at his own emptiness, but he knew what ample wealth the Lord disposed of. He knew that he was coming, thirsty, to the fountain. He indicated his parched gullet, he earnestly beat the breasts he wanted filling. *Lord*, he said, beating his breast, lowering his eyes to the ground, *be gracious to me, a sinner* (Lk 18:13).

What I say is, that he was already to some extent rich, since he had the idea of making such a request. After all, if he had still been completely poor, where would he have been able to produce these gems of confession from? All the same, it was a better endowed and wealthier man who went down justified from the temple. The Pharisee, though, went up to pray and didn't ask for anything. *They went up to the temple*, he says, *to worship* (Lk 18:10). One asks, the other doesn't. And where did this other belong? *There are those who think themselves rich though they have nothing* (Prv 13:7). *Lord*, he said, *I thank you that I am not like other men, unjust, extortioners, adulterers, like this tax collector here, for example. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of everything I possess* (Lk 18:11-12). He was being boastful, but it was all hot air, no solid substance. He thought himself rich though he had nothing. The other man admitted he was poor, though he already had something. To say nothing else, he had the earnestness to confess. And they both went down. *But that tax*

collector, he says, was justified more than that Pharisee. For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, and who humbles himself shall be exalted (Lk 18:14).

NOTES

1. The only rather vague date suggested for this sermon is "before 410." But really there is nothing in the sermon to point to one period in Augustine's career more than another. It is vintage Augustine, Augustine the bishop already at ease in his *extempore* style rather than Augustine the priest still wedded to careful rhetorical composition. What one simply does not know is what the occasion was for reading such a text from Proverbs. Were these two verses the only ones read? If not, why particularly did he choose these alone to hang a sermon on from this chapter 13?

2. In fact, of course, the author of Proverbs is talking about such riches, as Augustine, I am pretty sure, knows perfectly well. But he starts from the characteristic assumption that the spiritual sense of scripture is more valuable than the literal and goes on immediately with rhetorical exaggeration to try and prove that it really is the literal sense, intended by the author, anyway. His argument, however, is extremely ragged, and in the next section he will tacitly admit it has not worked. Here, I think, he begins with an attempt at a *reductio ad absurdum*—that's where the interjection by "someone" in the next sentence seems to be leading. The sentence after that, however, appears to negate this, and then the following paragraph to take it up again rather half-heartedly. He is in fact just toying very tentatively with an idea.

3. *Accipiamus ergo et hoc*. What I see behind this phrase that is at first sight as meaningless as it is colorless is some hint of protest from his audience, some murmurs or disagreement with the rather feeble argument dissected in the previous note. The congregation does think scripture is saying something about these earthly, visible riches, and so the preacher gives in and goes along with them for the moment.

4. There is a whole conglomerate of images here. The word *saccus* (sacking) means a sack or bag before it means sacking or sackcloth. I think it can mean both here. The "sacking of our sins" is not merely parallel to the "rags of iniquity"; it is also the sack or bag we carry our sins in, the opposite of the purse of the heart of Christ from which the price of our redemption, his blood, was poured out.

5. An idea that perhaps needed developing further; the idea that Christ, as well as the riches he bestows on you, is in your heart. He is in fact identical with his riches.

6. There is a double allusion here: to Mt 3:10 (= Lk 3:9) and to Jn 15:6.

7. *Quaesiti et correpti*; terms that have overtones of legal procedures, so I think he is referring to the unscrupulous use of authority to extort money from the rich.

8. The word translated "corrosion" is *comestura* (Vulgate, *aerugo*, rust), a very literal rendering of the Greek *broxis*, which does not appear in Lewis & Short's Dictionary.

9. To the heavenly bank account, by giving it to the poor.

10. Here he is making a favorite contrast between *uti* and *frui*, using and enjoying, which figures largely in the first books of his *Christian Instruction*. These were written fairly soon after he had become bishop of Hippo (about 400), though the work was not completed until about 25 years later (Revisions 2, 4). This is possibly a reason for dating the sermon before 410.

11. An allusion, I imagine, to the shirt of Nessus. Augustine, I presume, considers it to symbolize greed and pride. See Lk 16:19-31.

12. Notice the slave being put in the neuter, treated precisely as a chattel, or thing. Not

Augustine's view, of course, but that of the miserly master he is evoking.

13. *Placet tibi homo servus fidelis*. I take *homo* as a vocative, addressed to the miserly master, not as a nominative in apposition to *servus fidelis*; or else as ungrammatically in apposition to *tibi*. It is clearly being contrasted with *deo* (God's) in the second half of the sentence.

14. In the person of the poor.

15. *A furibus*. But I wonder if Augustine did not actually say *a muribus*, "by mice."

16. Omitting *intus*; reading *auferre quod habeo*, instead of *auferre quod intus habeo*, with two manuscripts. The word does rather spoil the whole line of argument; the whole point is that the threatener cannot touch what I have "within."

SERMON 37

SERMON PREACHED ON THE BIRTHDAY OF THE SCILLITAN MARTYRS,
IN THE NEW MARKET BASILICA, WHERE IT SAYS:
A VALIANT WOMAN, WHO SHALL FIND?

Date: 410¹

The Church, mother of martyrs

1. He that has made this a special day for us through his saints, will ensure that my voice, though weak, reaches your ears and rewards your attention. I bring this to your notice, so that you may be good enough to assist me by keeping quiet. The spirit, you see, is willing toward you, but the flesh is weak.² And the spirit itself is in labor with whatever joys it has conceived from God's scriptures, and anxious to give birth to them in your ears and your minds. So please provide my sermon with a nest among you. In the scriptures too we are told about the turtle-dove seeking a nest where she may lay her chicks.

And this I'm holding in my hands, this book of scripture which you see,³ commends a certain woman to us, to be sought after and praised, whom you heard about a short while ago when it was read.⁴ She's a great woman and has a great husband, the husband who found her when she was lost and adorned her once she was found.⁵ About her I shall say a few things in the time available, as the Lord suggests to me,⁶ according to the drift of the lesson which you see me holding. It's the feast day of the martyrs, after all, and that's all the more reason for praising the mother of martyrs.

You have already grasped who this woman is from these opening remarks of mine. Just see also if you recognize her as I expound the text.⁷ Now all of you listeners, it's quite clear from your response, are saying to yourselves, "She must be the Church." I support this idea. Who else, after all, could be the mother of martyrs? That's the truth. It's just as you have understood it. The woman I want to say something about is the Church. After all, it wouldn't be proper, would it, for me to talk about any other woman. Though as a matter of fact we did hear women mentioned in the solemn reading of the passion of the martyrs and I

could quite properly talk about them, but we are not overlooking them when we praise their mother.

The Church redeemed by Christ

2. Pay attention to whose members you are; observe carefully whose children you are. *A valiant woman who shall find* (Prv 31:10)? The woman's valor fits the martyrs' feast day very well. If she hadn't been valiant, those members of hers would have broken down under their sufferings.

A valiant woman who shall find? She's difficult to find—or rather she's difficult to be ignorant of. Isn't she the city on the hill, which cannot be hidden?⁸ So why does it say "Who shall find?" when it ought to have said "Who shall not find?" Oh, but you can see the city set on a hill. In order, though, to be set on a hill, she had to be found because she had got lost. When she's floodlit, who fails to see her? When she was hidden away, who could find her? You see, she is the city, and she is that one sheep which the shepherd went looking for when it was lost, and when he found it brought it home on his shoulder rejoicing.⁹ The shepherd himself is the hill, the mountain;¹⁰ the sheep on his shoulder is the city on the mountain. You can easily see her once she is placed on the mountain; could you ever have found her when she was hidden in the briar patch, in the thorns I mean, of course, of her own transgression?¹¹ To have looked for her there is a great thing; to have found her there is a miracle. This is the difficult discovery of her which is being indicated when it says, *A valiant woman who shall find?*

It asks who, because there's only one who does, not because there's not even one. The same kind of question is asked about her husband, the lion of Judah,¹² and about him it had been foretold in prophecy, *You have gone up lying down* (Gn 49:9),¹³ on the cross, of course. *You have gone up*—that's the cross; *lying down*—that's his death. What can *You have gone up* be, but the same as *And they crucified him* (Lk 24:20)? That's why he says himself, *Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may not perish, but may have eternal life* (Jn 3:14-15). What is *lying down* the same as? *And bowing his head, he gave up the spirit* (Jn 19:30). So after saying in that text *You have gone up lying down*, he continued, *You have slept like a lion* (Gn 49:9). You have slept like a lion, not slunk away like a jackal. How do you sleep like a lion? By doing so because you can, not because you must.¹⁴ And after saying *You have slept like a lion*, he continued, *Who has roused him* (Gn 49:9)? Who did rouse him? It's not that nobody did, but who did so among men? Because it was no one but God, who *has exalted him* from the dead, *and has given him a name that is above every name* (Phil 2:9). He also roused himself; that's why he says, *Pull down this temple, and in three days I will raise it up* (Jn 2:19).¹⁵

So now, having heard the words *A valiant woman who shall find*, you

mustn't think they are said about a Church that is hidden away, but about that Church which was found by one man, so that nobody now can possibly miss her. So let her be described, then, let her be praised, let her be commended, to be loved by all of us as our mother, because she is the wife of one man.¹⁶ *A valiant woman who shall find?* This so valiant woman who can fail to see? But now she has been found, now she is prominent, now she's conspicuous, now she's glorious, now she's adorned, now she's full of light, now — as I shall soon be explaining — she is spread throughout the whole world.¹⁷

Precious stones in the Church

3. *She is more precious than precious stones, whoever is like that* (Prv 31:10). What's so great about this woman being more precious than precious stones? If you are thinking in terms of human cupidities, if you are taking "precious stones" literally, what's great about the Church being found to be more precious than any stones you can think of? There's really no comparison. But there are precious stones in her. So precious are these stones that they are called living ones.¹⁸ So there are precious stones adorning her, but she herself is more precious still.

I want to put something seriously to your charity about these precious stones, as far as I can understand it and as far as you can — something of my fears and of what should be your fears too. There are precious stones in the Church, and always have been, learned, well endowed with knowledge and eloquence and all the teaching of the law. Precious indeed are these stones. But of their number there are some who have gone astray from the jewelry of this woman. In terms of his brilliant doctrine and eloquence such a precious stone — he shines so brilliantly, doesn't he, with the doctrine of the Lord — such a precious stone was Cyprian; but he was one that remained among this woman's jewels. Such a precious stone, too, was Donatus — but he burst out of this collection of jewelry.¹⁹ The one who remained wanted to be loved in her. The one who shook himself loose sought a name for himself apart from her. The one who remained with her gathered others to her; the one who popped out was eager not to gather but to scatter.²⁰

Bad children, why follow the precious stone that has shaken itself loose from the jewelry of this woman? You answer me, "What of it? Are you as intelligent as he was? Or do you speak as well as he did? Or are you as learned as he was?" Granted he's intelligent — *Intelligence is good for those who practice it* (Ps 111:10) — granted he's learned, granted he's educated in the liberal arts and the mysteries of the law, he is certainly a precious stone. Now turn from him to her: *She is more precious than precious stones* (Prv 31:10). If a precious stone is not part of this lady's jewelry, it lies in darkness. Wherever a precious stone may lie, if it is not part of this lady's jewelry, it lies in darkness. What he needed to do was stay part of this lady's jewelry, go on being in her collection of jewels.

I, as a matter of fact, will confidently make this assertion. Stones are only called precious because they are dear in value; one which has no dearness (that is, charity) is already cheap, it has lost its price. Let him boast all he likes of his learning, let him boast all he likes of his eloquent tongue, but let him listen to the valuer of this married lady's genuine stones. Let him listen, I say, to a particular craftsman, a connoisseur of jewelry. Why does he boast of his honeyed tongue, this stone no longer precious but base? *If I should speak with the tongues of men, he says, and of angels, but not have charity, I have become like bronze booming, or a cymbal clashing* (1 Cor 13:1).²¹ Where is that stone now? It's not flashing, it's only clashing. So learn how to assess the value of stones, you merchants of the kingdom of heaven.²² No stone should take your fancy apart from this lady's jewelry. She, being more precious than precious stones, is herself the price and value of her jewelry.

4. *The heart of her husband is confident about her* (Prv 31:11). He certainly is confident, and he has taught us to be confident too. He commissioned the Church, you see, to the ends of the earth, among all nations, from sea to sea.²³ If she wasn't going to persevere to the end,²⁴ her husband's heart would not be confident about her. *The heart of her husband is confident about her*. With foreknowledge he is confident, he cannot be mistaken in his confidence. It didn't say, "The heart of her children is confident about her"; her small children after all, could be mistaken. No, his heart is confident about her, whose heart no lie can deceive. So what he is confident about is true.

Such a one will not want spoils (Prv 31:11). It's not because she won't seek spoils that she won't want, but because she will have such heaps of them. So she despoils the world,²⁵ spread throughout it everywhere; on all sides she plunders trophies from the devil. This is also what her husband promised, to whom she says in another psalm, *I exult in your words, as one who finds many spoils* (Ps 119:162). How can she want for spoils, seeing that she plunders in all directions, hauls them in from every quarter, collects them in every quarter?

5. *For she works for her husband's good and not his harm, all the time* (Prv 31:12). That's why this lady despoils the nations, working for her husband's good and not his harm. All the time she does good and not harm: not for herself either, but for her husband, *that whoever lives may live no longer for himself, but for the one who died and rose again for all* (2 Cor 5:15). So she does good work for her husband, good work in the presence of God.²⁶ It's him she serves, him she is devoted to, him she loves, him she is always thinking how to please. She doesn't deck herself out either for her own eyes or for the eyes of others. She is not one of those who think only of pleasing themselves, not one of those who seek their own advantage. *For she works for her husband*. Those who work for themselves, on the other hand, *seek their own advantage, not that of Jesus Christ* (Phil 2:21).

Spiritual and fleshly works

6. *Finding wool and flax, she has wrought usefully with her hands* (Prv 31:13). The sacred text describes this housewife as a weaver of woolens and linen. But what we want to find out is what wool represents and what linen does. I think wool means something of the flesh, linen something of the spirit. I hazard this conjecture from the order we wear our clothes in; our underclothes or inner garments are linen, our outer garments woolen. Now everything we do in the flesh is public, whatever we do in the spirit is private. Now to act in the flesh and not to act in spirit may seem good but is in fact worthless, whereas to act in spirit and not act in the flesh is downright laziness. Thus you will find a man stretching out his hand in alms to a beggar, and yet without any thought of God but just eager to make a good impression on people. His woolen tunic can be seen, he's not wearing any linen underclothes. You find another man saying to himself, "It's enough for me to worship God, to adore God in my conscience. What's the point either of my going to church or of mixing openly with Christians?" He wants to wear linen underclothes, without a tunic.

This lady knows nothing of such works, nor does she recommend them. Spiritual things are indeed to be spoken and taught apart from things of the flesh,²⁷ but those who receive them ought not only to hold on to the things of the spirit, but also to act in the flesh in a non-fleshly manner. This lady found wool and flax, and wrought usefully with her hands. This wool and this flax are to be found in the holy scriptures. Many people find them, but are unwilling to make anything useful out of them with their hands. She found, and she wrought. When you hear, you have found; when you lead a good life, you have wrought.

Finding wool and flax, she has wrought usefully with her hands. See her in this other place, where she is told, *Spread abroad to the right and to the left, for your seed shall inherit the nations; there is no reason for you to hold back, lengthen your tent-cords further* (Is 54:3). Now look at her in our text here: *she has become like a merchant ship, she reaps riches to herself from afar* (Prv 31:4). The riches of this wife are the praises of her husband. Notice from how far afield she heaps riches to herself: *From the rising of the sun to its setting, praise the name of the Lord* (Ps 113:3).

The Church, zealous maidservant of the Lord

7. *She rises at night, and has given food to the household, and tasks to the maidservants* (Prv 31:15). She rises at night. What are nights good for? They don't inhibit her, they don't force her to lie idle in the dark. And at night she rises. Nights are afflictions. But for whom does this

woman rise at night and make progress in her afflictions? *And has given food to the household*; during the nights she has herself set an example to be imitated. By doing it she has taught what she said was to be done, and thereby she has given food to the household during the nights. Who ever eats in the night? And yet that's precisely when she has given out food. Those she has given it to, you see, are always hungry: *Blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty for justice, because they shall be satisfied* (Mt 5:6). *At night my spirit watches for you, O God* (Is 26:9). *At midnight I will rise to praise you* (Ps 119:62). There is plenty of this nocturnal nourishment in the house of this lady. Nobody there suffers from night starvation. Nor does she grope about to find things to eat; the lamp of prophecy is alight.

But are people just to eat and be idle? No, as well as giving food to the household, she has also given *tasks to the maidservants*. Are these maidservants hers or her husband's? Or is she herself the many maids? You see, although she is the mother and mistress of the household, she isn't too proud also to be a maidservant.²⁸ Let her not forget her price, let her love her lord and master. Let her admit, I say, that she is a maidservant, and not shy away from her servile status. After all, he isn't too proud to make her his wife, after buying her for so much. And any good wife calls her husband her lord and master; in fact she doesn't only call him so, she really thinks so, she means it, she accepts it in her heart, she professes it with her lips, she regards her nuptial contract as the deed of her purchase.²⁹ So this lady is a maidservant, giving tasks to the maids. Yes, she's a maidservant; it's her son, you see, who says, *I am your slave and the son of your maidservant* (Ps 116:16).

8. You were going to ask what she hopes to achieve with these tasks performed even at night. Listen to what she achieves: *Being farsighted she has bought a field* (Prv 31:16). Being farsighted, concerned not for the present but the future, she has bought this field, farsighted in faith and hope. That's why even *at nights she rises* (Prv 31:15). *For if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it in patience* (Rom 8:25). In the nights³⁰ she patiently endures afflictions, for she is looking ahead to the field she is buying. That's why she's called a valiant woman. What are those nights anyway, compared with that field? *For what is at present the temporary and slight matter of our affliction—when we rise at nights—is working in us to an incredible degree an eternal weight of glory—drawing our hearts to that field—as we look not to the things that are seen but to those that are not seen. For the things that are seen are temporary, while those that are not seen are eternal* (2 Cor 4:17-18). What is that field like? What makes it beautiful? We should be on fire to possess it. May we not suppose it is the one of whom God said, *And the beauty of the field is with me* (Ps 50:11)?³¹

A field that is worth eternity

9. *Being farsighted she has bought a field.* Wherever she bought it, there she owns the field. Where did she buy the field? Where she also deposited her treasure, in order to make the words come true, *Where your treasure is, there is your heart also* (Mt 6:21). *Being farsighted she has bought a field.* What did she buy it with? In case you, perhaps, are just hoping and sighing and doing nothing, this field does not love a lazy lover. Certainly, when you actually come to it, you will maybe take your rest, and there will be no need for you to work. This field, you see, is not of the same sort as the one where Adam ate his bread in the sweat of his face.³² Meanwhile, however, in order to attain to the sight of that field, get yourself the means to get hold of it. Get busy there. At what? At putting the price together.

That's what this lady does, I tell you. Let's see if nothing is said about it. After saying, *Being farsighted she has bought a field*, as though you were to say, "What did she buy it with?" it adds, *With the fruit of her hands she has planted a property* (Prv 31:16). Those were the tasks she set her maidservants, in order from the fruit of her hands to plant a property for ever. The property it means, you see, lies in the future; that was suggested by the word "farsighted."³³

10. *Valiantly girding her loins, she has braced her arms* (Prv 31:17). Valiant she is indeed. Now see if she is not also a maidservant. With what devotion she serves, and how readily! To prevent the flapping folds of carnal desires from getting in the way of her work she girds her loins, and so avoids treading on overlong skirts as she hurries about her work. There lies the chastity of this lady, tightly bound by the girdle of the commandment, and always ready for every good work. *Valiantly girding her loins she has braced her arms*, and she isn't going to weaken.

How so? *She has tasted that it is good to work* (Prv 31:18). What kind of palate tastes that? People run away from work as something that tastes nasty. By being afraid to taste it they never learn what to love in it. Good work is performed by a good conscience. And what has a sweeter taste, brothers, than a good conscience? If it's lacking, and a bad one is pricking you, then everything tastes bitter. So taste, then, taste, and you will see what a flavor it has, how delicious you will find it, and finally you won't stop till you have eaten the lot. *She has tasted that it is good to work.*

Light of hope

11. *Her lamp is not put out all night long* (Prv 31:18). *Nobody lights a lamp and puts it under a bushel* (Mt 5:15). *You will light up my lamp, O Lord* (Ps 18:28). Her lamp is her hope. Everyone works by the light of it, at anything good they do by the light of hope. And this lamp burns in the night. But if we both do not see and also do not hope, then it's both night and the lamp is not burning. What could be more wretched

than such darkness? But to stop our hearts failing us in the dark, let our lamp go on burning all night long, and then we can wait in patience for what we hope for, though it cannot be seen.³⁴ The one who speaks the word to us every day, you see, is thereby as it were pouring in oil to save the lamp from going out.

12. *She has stretched out her hand to useful things* (Prv 31:19). How far has she stretched out these hands? *From sea to sea, and from the river, where she started from,*³⁵ *to the ends of the earth* (Ps 72:8), where she has got to. So not for nothing was it said, *Spread abroad to the right and to the left* (Is 54:3). *She has stretched out her hand—but to useful things.*

The distaff and the spindle

13. *She has also braced her arms on the spindle* (Prv 31:19).³⁶ About this spindle let me say what the Lord permits me to. After all, this business of spinning wool is not completely foreign to men. Listen to what it means to say, *She has braced her arms on the spindle*. It could have said “on the distaff.” It said spindle, not without reason, perhaps. Though you could, of course, take it, and it wouldn’t be at all absurd, that the spindle seems to signify spinning, and spinning signifies the good works of a chaste woman and a busy and careful housewife. All the same I, dearly beloved, will not keep from you what I understand by this spindle.

Everyone who lives in good works in holy Church, not neglecting but practicing God’s commandments, doesn’t know what he may do tomorrow, but knows what he has done today. About his future work he’s anxious, about his past he is happy. And he’s on the watch to persevere in good works, in case by neglecting the future he loses the past. Yet in his prayers to the Lord, in all his petitions he only has a clear conscience about his past work, not about the future; about what he has done, not about what he is going to do.

So now then, if you agree with me that this is true, look at these two instruments for spinning wool, the distaff and the spindle. The wool is wrapped round the distaff, and has to be drawn and spun in a thread and so pass onto the spindle. What’s wrapped on the distaff is the future; what’s collected by the spindle is already past.³⁷ So your good work is on the spindle, not on the distaff. On the distaff is what you are going to do, on the spindle what you have done. So see if you have anything on the spindle, that’s where your arms should be braced.

That’s where your conscience will find courage, that’s where you will say without any worry to God, “Give, because I have given; forgive, because I have forgiven; do something for me, because I have done something for others.” After all, you are only requesting a reward for work performed, not for work yet to be performed. So whatever work you do, give all your mind to the spindle. Because what is hanging from the distaff has to be wound onto the spindle; what has already been

collected on the spindle mustn't be hauled back to the distaff. So just see what you are about, in order to have something on the spindle, in order to brace your arms on the spindle, in order to apply all your effort to the spindle, so that the spindle may have something to comfort you with, to encourage you with, to give you the confidence to pray, and to hope for what has been promised.

14. "And what am I to do," you say, perhaps, "what are you telling me to have on the spindle?" Listen to what follows: *She has opened her hands to the poor person* (Prv 31:20). Hey ho! I'm not ashamed to teach you the holy art of spinning wool. Look, if anyone has a full purse, a full barn, a full storeroom, all that is on the distaff; get it wound onto the spindle.

Look how this lady has spun — if you like, look how she's spinned³⁸ — as long as everyone learns the lesson, don't let's fear the grammarians. *She has opened her hands to the poor person, she has spread out fruit³⁹ to the needy.* Hands to the poor, fruit to the needy. There's someone poor with eyes on your hands, there's someone needy with eyes on your fruit.⁴⁰ Whoever really and truly only wants from you what will meet his want is a poor man with eyes on your hands. But there is another needy person who says, *As having nothing and possessing everything* (2 Cor 6:10). It's not as if he wants his want to be met by your giving him something, but as though he is looking for fruit on the Lord's tree which he has planted and watered.⁴¹ Listen to what he says himself to some people, when talking about such matters: *Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit* (Phil 4:17).⁴²

The Lord knows his own

15. *Her husband is not anxious about things at home, when he is staying somewhere else* (Prv 31:21). Her husband is not anxious about things at home, because *the Lord knows those who are his* (2 Tm 2:19). How could he be anxious, when *those whom he predestined he also called; those whom he called he also justified; those whom he justified he also glorified? If God is for us, who is against us* (Rom 8:31)? *Her husband is not anxious:* he knows his own, his own know him. *When he is staying somewhere else.* Where is he staying? Where he is going to come from, surely. He is staying there, taking his time about it, so to say. You see, many are longing for him to come now, and what they long for is put off until the number of the members of this married lady is completed.⁴³

On the other hand, many people abuse his tardiness in coming for their own impious purposes. And the bad slave says, *My master is taking his time;* and he starts beating his fellow slaves, and getting drunk with the bad ones. *His master will come on a day he does not know, and at an hour he is unaware of, and will divide him.* You see, it's the body of ministers and prelates who give their fellow slaves their food in due

season. *He will divide him*, it says; he has good ones and bad ones—he separates the good from the bad.⁴⁴ And will assign his portion with the hypocrites.⁴⁵ Not the whole ministry, because in it too there are those who are longing for the Lord to come. In its ranks are also to be found the group of which it is said, *Blessed is that slave whom his master, when he comes, finds so doing* (Lk 12:43). So then, *he will come and divide him* (Lk 12:46).

16. Meanwhile he is staying elsewhere for the time being, but he is not anxious about what is happening at home. *For all in her household are clothed* (Prv 31:21). Will he be anxious, when he's staying somewhere else, about his slaves going naked, seeing that he has a wife like that? They are clothed, and extremely well. Do you want to know how well? *All you who have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ* (Gal 3:27). Both good servants and bad servants are clothed. But the good servants are clothed by putting on Christ, not only in the celebration of the sacrament but also in acting out the role, treading in their master's footsteps.⁴⁶ Others, though, just to the extent of the sacrament, and they are going to have to give an account of their clothes.⁴⁷ In any case this lady never ceases, this lady never ceases to clothe them all, so that no one can complain and say, "It's because I haven't been clothed that I haven't worked well." So just notice, please, how you ought to be clothed. Let's work also for our clothing. *For all in her household are clothed*.

Christ, God and man

17. What about her husband? She clothes her servants, does she do nothing for her husband? *She has made double cloaks for her husband* (Prv 31:22). Indeed she does something; she has made double cloaks for her husband. You're all applauding. I think you recognize what the double cloaks are that the Church has made for her husband, Christ. The cloaks she makes for him are praises, praises of faith, praises of faith professed, of faith proclaimed. Why double cloaks for Christ? You praise him as God, you praise him as man. Praise him doubly, and praise him simply: doubly, because he is both man and God; simply, to avoid duplicity.

There was some other woman or other, living with a certain Photinus,⁴⁸ and he was a kind of precious stone that had shaken loose from the jewelry of this woman of ours, and was now cheap and worthless (the Photinian heretics are called after him), and this other woman chose, you might say, to make a simple or single cloak for her man. Of course he doesn't accept it, as he receives double cloaks, as we have just read, from his wife—his real one. Photinus, you see, said that Christ is only man.

Again, there came along some other dreadful woman or other, who also, in a manner of speaking, wove a cloak for her man—wove it out of moth-eaten fables. She said, "Christ is only God, and has nothing of a man about him at all." That's what the Manichees say. The Photinians—

only man; the Manichees—only God. The first lot allow nothing divine in the Lord. The second appear to say he is all divine, and yet such a deceitful divinity that it doesn't even reach the human level. You see, if he wasn't a man, then he didn't die, then he wasn't crucified, then he didn't rise again either, because only someone who had died could rise again. So then, he also showed the doubting disciple false scars.⁴⁹ Obviously the scars were false, if genuine wounds hadn't preceded them.

If, however, genuine, real wounds did precede them, then it was real flesh, a real death, a real cross, a real man—and he is all reality, wholly truth. Abundant praise indeed from the loom of this lady of ours. But those who have recoiled from this praiseworthy doubling of cloaks⁵⁰ have remained double-minded with their lies.⁵¹ *She has made double cloaks for her husband.* Without a shadow of doubt, she has made double cloaks, we confess him to be God, we confess him to be man. Praise God in the man, the man in God. She has woven that most precious cloak of praise, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God* (Jn 1:1-2). She has also woven that other cloak, because of his everyday dealings among men: *the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us* (Jn 1:14). *She has made double cloaks for her husband.*

18. *Garments for herself of fine linen and purple* (Prv 31:22). It wouldn't have been proper, of course, for the consort of so great a husband to go about naked or in rags. She has made *garments for herself of fine linen and purple*; of fine linen—shining white with her confession; of purple, glorious with her sufferings. Her fine linen we acknowledge when we pray; her purple we praised this morning in the martyrs.

The Son of Man will come in glory

19. *Her husband becomes conspicuous at the gates* (Prv 31:23). The man that stays somewhere else, the man that because of such a wife is not anxious about his house, the man whom nobody sees now while he is staying somewhere else—he becomes conspicuous at the gates. Notice when. See how it goes on: *when he has taken his seat in council with the elders of the land* (Prv 31:23). It could scarcely be clearer. Read another prophecy: *He will come to judgment with the elders of his people* (Is 3:14). In that council, that is to say in that judgment, the saints sitting in judgment with him, as they were told: *You shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel* (Mt 19:28)—that is when he will be conspicuous.

For the Son of man will come, as he said, *in his majesty, and all his angels with him* (Mt 25:31). All the angels there, both the angels of heaven and the angels who have announced the word of God. After all, a prophet too is called an angel;⁵² “angel” means a messenger. And the words, *Behold, I am sending my angel before your face* (Mt 11:10), were spoken

about John. And, *You received me like an angel of God* (Gal 4:14)—it's the apostle speaking. So he then, he that is now staying somewhere else, about whom so many people say, "When is he going to come, or who is going to come?"—he will be *conspicuous in the gates*, that is to say in the open, for all to see. But some he lets in, against others he shuts the gates.⁵³ *Her husband will be conspicuous at the gates, when he has taken his seat in council with the elders of the land.*

Until that happens, let her meanwhile go on doing what she has been doing. Let her go on working, and not give up. Let her wait for him who is going to be conspicuous at the gates, and not tremble at the holy council of the judgment of God. Let her come to it with a good conscience, let her come to it glorying and glorious,⁵⁴ because it will also be her own members and her own children who are going to sit in judgment with her husband.

*Buy yourself the living bread
which came down from heaven*

20. *She has made muslins and sold them* (Prv 31:24).⁵⁵ A jolly good thing that she made muslins; why did she sell them? Not because she is seeking gain, but because she requires some fruit. To start with, brothers, you must understand this particular sale as being gratuitous, for nothing. Well, who ever bought anything for nothing? If you get it for nothing, you don't buy it. If you buy it, you pay for it; if you pay for it, you don't get it for nothing. But then, what about, *Ho, all who thirst, come to the waters; buy for yourselves without money* (Is 55:1)? When you buy in this case, you don't hand over any money, and yet you buy. If you are buying, you hand over something—but you don't hand over money, you hand over yourself.

Muslins, you see, must be referred back to those linen garments—they are spiritual realities⁵⁶—which this lady makes and proclaims in every country of the world. And perhaps she is said to sell them because the apostle said, *If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it all that much if we reap your material benefits* (1 Cor 9:11)? It's the bookkeeping language, you see, of payments and receipts. Every sale involves an entry in the books of payment and receipt. Now the apostle feels rather sad about some markets where he hasn't succeeded in selling muslins. *No church*, he says, *has shared with me an account of payments and receipts* (Phil 4:15). But the man who is selling in this way is not seeking gain, but requiring fruit, in case you should think of him as really selling the gospel. Though as a matter of fact he is a trader for his master, but he is looking for a better price. Yes, of course he's selling, he's distributing spiritual goods. And what's he looking for in return? Material benefits, perhaps? They too are certainly owing, but that is not what the apostle was looking for, since what he says is, *I seek not what is yours, but you yourselves* (2 Cor 12:14).

So hand over the price, hand over yourselves. Because you can't say of Joseph in Egypt either that he wasn't selling, and yet what he did was to make royal slaves of those who were buying. They wanted to live in that time of famine, and so they received the corn and became slaves.⁵⁷ Are we afraid of becoming slaves? Woe to us if we never become his slaves. What do we get from refusing to have such a master? We shall only remain under the devil, and also suffer from the famine, and still not escape from the authority of our true Lord. Hand yourself over, and buy yourself a muslin, that is to say, a spiritual shawl or wrap.

Or again, you yourself are the price of a special sort of bread. What do I mean? Well, when you surrender to pleasure, don't you hand yourself over, for mere carnal lust, as the price, so to say, to buy a harlot with? Is it too much then to hand yourself over to God, and buy yourself the living bread which came down from heaven, and at the very same price, which is yourself? The price of a harlot, you see, is the same as the price of one loaf of bread.⁵⁸ *She has made muslins and sold them.*

21. *And girdles for the Canaanites* (Prv 31:24). She has made girdles for Canaanites. Let them gird themselves, let them work, let them come, let them be slaves of this household so that they may all be clothed, all be fed; because she has made girdles or belts—for work of course, seeing that she herself, as she went about her work, valiantly girded her loins.⁵⁹

Who are the Canaanites? Neighboring nations, alien though to the people of Israel. *You who once upon a time were afar off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. You who were once strangers to the covenants, not enjoying the hope of the promise, and without God in this world, but now are citizens of the saints and God's household servants* (Eph 2:13.12), take your girdles, your belts, and work in the Lord's house, now that you have been changed into God's domestics from being Canaanites. That woman whose story we have just been told in the gospel was one of them. She was a Canaanite, she didn't dare approach the children's table, but only expected the scraps, like a dog. Look how she had girded herself for work. Her apron was faith; that's precisely what he praises: *O woman, great is your faith* (Mt 15:28).

22. Let's look at the rest.⁶⁰ *She is clothed with valor and elegance* (Prv 31:25). With elegance, as if with fine linen; with valor, as if with purple.⁶¹ It's because she is valiant that suffering clothes her in the color of blood. *And she has rejoiced in the last days* (Prv 31:25). In the last days she has rejoiced; so here she has long been afflicted. How else, after all, would she have empurpled garments, without affliction?

Don't confuse what God has arranged in order

23. *She has opened her mouth with care* (Prv 31:26). May the Lord grant us who are firmly established in her, and are praising her, cleaving

to her, with her and in her waiting for her husband, may he grant that we too shall open our mouths with care. Not rashly, but carefully, warily, considerately. *With fear and much trembling was I among you* (1 Cor 2:3), said the apostle, as though to say, "I opened my mouth with care"; *our mouth is open to you, O Corinthians* (2 Cor 6:11).⁶²

She has opened her mouth with care, and imposed order on her tongue (Prv 31:26), praising creatures as creatures, the creator as creator, angels as angels, heavenly things as heavenly, earthly things as earthly, men as men, animals as animals. Nothing mixed up, nothing out of order. Not taking the name of the Lord her God in vain, not attributing the nature of a creature to the creator, speaking about everything so methodically that she doesn't put lesser things above the more important, nor subordinate the more important to the lesser.⁶³ *She has disposed order for her tongue.*

There is nothing more lovely than this order. That is why she herself says, "*Set love in order toward me* (Sg 2:4). Don't get things back to front, the cart before the horse, don't muddle up and confuse what God has arranged in order. *Set love in order toward me.* Love me as me, love God as God, and don't offend God on my account and don't offend me on account of anyone else except me. *Set love in order toward me.*" It is a blessed daughter of this lady, firmly settled in this order, whose martyrdom along with others we are celebrating today and whose confession of faith we heard a little while ago, in which she set her tongue in order: "Honor," she said, "to Caesar as Caesar, but worship to God."⁶⁴ *So she opened her mouth with care, and imposed order on her tongue.*

24. *Strictly regulated are the employments of her houses* (Prv 31:27). Strictly, sternly, severely. No room there for dissipation, she doesn't love frivolity. *And she has not eaten the food of idleness* (Prv 31:27). She thoroughly deserves to have got so rich.

True riches

25. So here we have this woman, hardworking, watchful, painstaking, strict in the running of her household, getting up at night, seeing the lamp doesn't go out, valiant in affliction, patient with promises not yet honored, bracing her arms on the spindle, not eating the bread of idleness—but after these labors that are the mark of what is in fact the poverty and destitution of this life, what will it be that has her rejoicing in the last days? What will it be—do you really want to know? Listen what hope it is for which our lamp should be burning all night. Here it is—listen. *Her children have risen up and been enriched* (Prv 31:28). Here and now we live in poverty, we keep awake in poverty. And when we die we sleep in poverty. But we shall rise up and be enriched. That's when her children will be enriched. *Her children have risen up and been enriched.*

Amass here and now whatever riches you like of this earth, subject to thieves and to moths.⁶⁵ What are you boasting about? It's because you're weak that you need so many things. You need to wear a lot of clothes, because you can't put up with the cold; you make use of animals, because you can't walk on your feet. All these things are the crutches of weakness, not the badges of power. But what are those riches of the angels? They have one garment—light. It never wears out, it never gets dirty. Those are the true riches, where there will be no want, no destitution. Why do you look for this here and now, before you rise and shine?⁶⁶ If you are a child of this woman, notice when riches are promised you: *Her children have risen up and been enriched*. Get yourself ready to receive the riches of the resurrection. Don't love these riches, and you will deserve to attain to those. *Her children have risen up and been enriched*.

26. *And her husband has praised her* (Prv 31:28). We too praise her, but not from our own resources. When her children have risen up and been enriched, he has turned to her, and gazed at her, and praised her. Could anyone not want to hear how he has praised her? If you have listened so happily while she was being praised by me, how do you imagine we would listen if we could hear just how her husband has praised her? He has praised her in the resurrection. When we have risen, we shall hear. Or perhaps even now he hasn't kept this praise a secret. Here it is, this very praise; it follows next. Let's listen—may you live like this in her, and with her may we hear how her husband has praised her when he sees her finally with that stupendous blessing of children, rich in the resurrection of the dead.⁶⁷

There are bad daughters, namely heresies

27. *Many daughters*, he says, *have done mightily*. (These are the praises her husband is praising her with.) *Many daughters have done mightily*. Who are the daughters this one is being compared with—or rather, not being compared with? *Many daughters have done mightily, but you have surpassed*—pay attention, please, I beg you. I'm afraid I've tired you out just at the point where I require your closest attention. Let's listen to his praises.⁶⁸

Many daughters have done mightily, but you have surpassed and outdone them all (Prv 31:29). You, he says, have surpassed them all, you have outdone them all. So who are these other daughters who have done mightily, whom this one has surpassed, and whom this one has outdone? And again, how have they done mightily, and in what way has this one surpassed them? There are, you see, bad daughters, namely heresies. Why are they daughters? Because they too were born of this woman. But bad daughters, daughters, not in the family likeness of their behavior, but in the likeness of their sacraments. They too have our sacraments, they have our scriptures, they have our Amen and Alleluia, most of them have our

creed, many of them have our baptism. That's why they are daughters.⁶⁹

But would you like to know what is said to this lady somewhere else, in the Song of Songs? *Like a lily in the midst of thorns, so is my darling in the midst of the daughters* (Sg 2:2). An extraordinary saying — he called the same people both thorns and daughters. And do those thorns do mightily? They do indeed. Can't you see how these heresies too pray, fast, give alms, praise Christ? I could say that among them there are the kind of false prophets of whom it was said, *They perform signs and many wonders in order to deceive, if it were possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you beforehand* (Mt 24:24-25). The thorns also do mightily.

About this mighty doing it says, *Did we not eat and drink in your name, and in your name perform many deeds of power* (Mt 7:22)? We ate and drank — he would not have meant any sort of food. You know what sort he could have meant, whether food or drink.⁷⁰ And performed many deeds of power. Many daughters do mightily, we don't deny it. Even thorns have flowers, but they don't have any fruit. But this lady is told, *You have surpassed and outdone them all*; and how has she surpassed them if not by having fruit as well as flower?

The fruit of the Spirit is charity

28. What fruit does she have? What does she surpass them with? I hope someone can tell me. *I am showing you*, he says, *a superlative way*. What superlative way? Because that's how this lady has surpassed, how this lady has outdone them all. *If I should speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but not have charity, I have become bronze booming, or a cymbal clashing*. Someone speaks with tongues; it belongs to the might of the flower. *If I were to know all sacraments⁷¹ and all knowledge, and have all prophecy and all faith, so as to move mountains* — what stupendous might that would be! — *but not to have charity, I am nothing*. Listen to still more mighty doings, belonging to the flower, not the fruit: *If I distribute all my goods to the poor, and hand over my body to burn, but do not have charity, it does me no good at all* (1 Cor 13:1-3).

That's the superlative way that this lady has, because of which she is told, *Many daughters have done mightily* — many have spoken with tongues, have known all sacraments, have performed many deeds of power, have cast out demons, have distributed their goods to the poor, have handed over their bodies to the flames; they are inferior to you because they haven't had charity — *but you have surpassed and outdone them all*, being loaded not only with flowers but with fruit, masses of fruit.

Now see where this bunch of grapes starts from. After listing the works of the flesh: *Fornications, he says, uncleannesses, lechery, worship of idols, sorceries, enmities, quarrels, jealousies, animosities, dissensions, heresies, envies, guzzlings, drunken orgies, and things like that, about which I warn you, as I have warned you before, that those who do such*

things will not possess the kingdom of God—after listing all the thorns that are to be thrown on the fire, he goes on, *But the fruit of the spirit is charity*—and from this starting point, from this kind of root, the others are fitted in together—*joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, self-control* (Gal 5:19-22). What makes this bunch beautiful? Its springing from charity. *Many daughters have done mightily, but you have surpassed and outdone them all.*

A wise woman will be blessed

29. What's left for the others? *Charm is deceitful, and vain the beauty of a woman* (Prv 31:30). Why is charm deceitful and beauty vain? Because if I do not have charity, I have become bronze booming and cymbal clashing, I am nothing, it does me no good at all. That's why grace is deceitful and vain the beauty of a woman. A wise woman, on the other hand, will be blessed. This one who sought to understand things, who cherished her understanding, this wise woman, she is the one who will be blessed, not those deceitful beauties, not that vain charm. *The wise woman will be blessed, and she herself will praise the fear of the Lord* (Prv 31:30). The one who is blessed will praise something she is blessed for, because she is wise. What will she praise? The fear of the Lord, by which she has been introduced to wisdom. *For the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord* (Ps 111:10). And she herself will praise the fear of the Lord.

Hardworking for so many nights, patient amid so many scandals, farsighted in her calculations, valiant in her endurance, constant in her perseverance, her labors ended—*Give her of the fruits of her hands* (Prv 31:31). She's done it, she's done it! She deserves to get something: give her of the fruits of her hands. Give her what? *Come, you blessed of my Father.* Give her of the fruits of her hands. Give her what? *Receive the kingdom which has been prepared for you from the origins of the world.* There you have what to give her. From which fruits of her hands is it? *For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat* (Mt 25:34-35). *Give her of the fruits of her hands.*

The haven of our labors, to see God and praise God

30. And what occupation will she have from then on, her labors being ended? *And her husband will be praised in the gates* (Prv 31:31). That will be the haven of our labors, to see God and praise God. They won't say there, "Get up, toil, clothe the servants, clothe yourself too, put on your best purple, give food to the maids, see the lamp doesn't go out, be painstaking, get up at night, open your hand to the poor, draw the thread from the distaff to the spindle." There won't be any works of necessity, because there won't be any necessity. There won't be any works of mercy, because there won't be any misery.⁷² You won't break your bread to the

poor, because nobody will be begging. You won't take in the stranger, because everyone will be living in their own home country. You won't visit the sick, because everyone will be for ever in good health. You won't clothe the naked, because everyone will be clothed in eternal light. You won't bury the dead, because everyone will be living life without end.

You won't, however, be doing nothing, just because you aren't doing any of this. For you will see the one you have desired, and you will praise him without flagging. That is the fruit you will receive. Then will come to pass that one thing you have asked for: *One thing I have asked from the Lord, this will I seek: to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.* — And what will you do there? — *to contemplate the delight of the Lord* (Ps 27:4). And her husband will be praised in the gates. *Blessed are those who dwell in your house, they will praise you for ever and ever* (Ps 84:4).

NOTES

1. On the New Market Basilica (*Basilica Novarum*), see Sermon 14, note 1.

The Scillitan martyrs appears to have been the proto-martyrs of Africa; at least their *acta* are the earliest of the Church in that region. These *acta* are certainly authentic—little more, in fact, than a transcription of the proceedings of their trial and execution from the official court records. There were twelve of them, seven men and five women, Speratus, Narzalus, Cittinus, Veturius, Felix, Aquilinus, Laetantius, Januaria, Generosa, Vestia, Donata, and Secunda. It is not known for certain where Scillum was, the place they came from; but they were brought to Carthage for trial in the year 180, and it is the proceedings of this trial before the proconsul Saturninus that we have in their *acta*. The charge was simply that of being Christians, and hence of refusing to worship the gods of the Romans and to swear by the Emperor's "genius." The proconsul offered to pardon them if they would do this; he offered them an adjournment of thirty days to deliberate on the matter, but they declined these offers and said they were quite determined to abide by their Christian commitment. So he sentenced them to death by beheading, and the sentence was carried out forthwith. A brief account of these martyrs is to be found in Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, edited by Thurston and Attwater (1932), under 17 July. There reference is made to an English translation of the "passion" of these martyrs, in *Acts of the Early Martyrs* by E.C.E. Owen (1927).

I presume the psalm in Prv 31 in praise of the valiant woman was read on their feast day because several of them were women. Careful reading of the sermon will uncover a number of veiled allusions to the names of several of these martyrs: Speratus (Hoped-for)—the preacher has something to say about hope under the image of a lamp burning at night (Prv 31:18); Laetantius (Rejoicing One)—the rejoicings of the last days (Prv 31:25 in Augustine's text) and of the world to come provide the theme on which the sermon ends; Generosa—the generosity of the valiant woman, and the generosity expected of the good Christian, features naturally in his comments on Prv 31:20: *She opens her hand to the poor*; Vestia—though the name derived from the goddess Vesta, the goddess of the family hearth, it suggests the word *vestis*, a garment, and there is plenty said about clothing in the text and about its symbolic spiritual significance in the sermon; and finally, the actual words of Donata at the trial are quoted in section 23.

But Augustine, to the entire satisfaction of his audience, treats the valiant woman

throughout as a figure of the Church, and so is involved all the time in an allegorical interpretation of the text. About this I think a word needs to be said. The most important thing is to understand what he was actually about, what he thought he was doing. Now the obvious thing he was doing was preaching; and for Augustine, this meant he was acting, acting a part with his congregation, engaging not only their attention (which as the reader will observe sometimes wandered), but also their participation. And to do this he quite unashamedly used all the powers of his very vivid imagination. As exegesis of the inspired text, I am quite certain he himself did not take his off-the-cuff allegorical interpretations very seriously. He is engaging in a marvelous game, a very important game certainly, but still a game: to be played with all the skill and panache at one's command (the skills of poetry and rhetoric above all), but with enjoyment, light-heartedly, in a spirit of experimentation, of trial and error. He certainly offers explanations of words and phrases at times that he could not possibly have sustained if he had had a more accurate text, or if he himself had been more professionally grounded in the science of biblical exegesis. That's where he did not take himself too seriously, as I read him, and where we do not have to do so either. But all the same, I suggest that readers will be making a big mistake if they refuse, with a kind of intellectual primness, to allow Augustine's flights of fancy, absurd or extravagant as they may sometimes be, to kindle their own imaginations. Imagination is a faculty very seriously underrated by professional theologians and exegetes.

Now a word or two about Augustine's doctrine, or perhaps we should say his picture, of the Church as it emerges from this sermon. Undoubtedly the key notion, which he introduced near the beginning and emphasizes strongly at the end, is that Church and charity go together: no charity, no Church; no Church, no charity. I think the substance of his teaching is that to be the genuine article, the love of God and of neighbor which we correctly equate with charity must, at least implicitly, have an ecclesial context; to put it slightly differently, it must be "in Christ," who has identified himself with his Church. It is a point we tend to miss nowadays, because we have for a number of reasons, some valid, some less so, relegated the word "charity" to the theological attic, and confined ourselves to the word "love" which does not of itself have an ecclesial, or even a Christian, context.

Augustine develops his ideas on this point in a distinctly polemical, even intolerant, tone. He assumes, in almost so many words, that true charity is not to be found outside the Catholic Church in any of the heretical or schismatical Christian sects that had broken away from her communion. Even less is it to be found among Jews and pagans. His tone is to be regretted, and this is not the place to plead whatever extenuating circumstances there were. But his essential point is that charity of its nature builds unity, and any breach of unity can only be a sin against charity. To transpose this basic idea into our own contemporary context, into which the ecumenical movement has been introduced, I would say that Augustine's notion of charity as the ecclesial virtue positively obliges all Christians, Catholics included—Catholics especially included—to devote themselves in one way or another to the cause of Christian unity, and to the support of the ecumenical movement, and that nowadays opposition to the ecumenical movement, open or covert, is as much a sin against charity the ecclesial virtue as is the setting up of a schismatical body or sect.

Another valuable point Augustine makes about the Church—rather in the teeth of his text, one might think—is that it must be a "servant" Church. He is of course insistent, against the Donatists, that it is a worldwide Church, a Church for all nations and sorts and conditions of men. One element in his ecclesiology, as presented in this sermon, that presents some difficulty is the frequent suggestion that the Church is some kind of entity or being over above and independent of its members. The most striking instance of this is at the end of section 19, where he invites the Church (under the figure of the valiant woman, of course) to come without trepidation, and with complete confidence and pride, to the last judgment, because she is going to be judged there not only by her husband (Christ) but also by her members and sons, the saints.

Has he just been carried away by his typology here, a typology of course that he did not invent, but found strongly entrenched and hallowed in the tradition, a typology genuinely derived from both Old and New Testaments? Possibly; if you try to unpack such an imaginative picture into non-symbolic, non-figurative component parts, there does not seem

to be anything at all substantial that you are left with. But here I think it is important for us to ask what concrete reality Augustine and his hearers spontaneously identified this mystical "Church" with. When Catholics nowadays hear a phrase like that, I am willing to bet that a vague picture of the dome of Saint Peter's in Rome flickers through the minds of most of them. We naturally identify "Church" with that imposing institution centrally controlled by pope and Roman curia, and under them the bishops. Now neither Augustine nor his hearers could have had quite that picture, not because there wasn't a pope (bishop of Rome) and a Catholic Church, worldwide, but because it simply was not organized and structured the way it is now. I think this mystical figure of "the Church," this lady, this valiant woman, was still for them more mystical, less concretely identifiable, than it is for us today. They knew perfectly well that they belonged to it, together with all the other Christians of Churches overseas with whom they were in communion, especially the Christians of the Church of Rome in Italy just across the Mediterranean there. And they knew (rather too definitely, we might think) that the Donatists and such like did not belong to it. And they knew that it was a highly visible institution or set of institutions in the world. But I don't think they yet made the assumption that is too easily made nowadays that "the Church" is to all intents and purposes identical with the hierarchy, with the pope and the bishops. What I am suggesting is that it is important not to bring our uncriticized twentieth century assumptions about a word like "Church" to our reading of this sermon.

Finally, to return to the text he was commenting on. His Latin version was a translation from the Greek Septuagint, not from the Hebrew, and so it often differs fairly widely from the text as we find it in contemporary English translations. So for the convenience of readers I here give the whole passage in my translation of Augustine's Latin version.

Proverbs 31:10-31

10. A valiant woman who shall find?
She is more precious than precious stones, whoever
is like that.
11. The heart of her husband is confident about her,
such a one will not want spoils.
12. For she works for her husband's good and not his harm,
all the time.
13. Finding wool and flax, she has wrought usefully
with her hands.
14. She has become like a merchant ship,
she heaps riches to herself from afar.
15. She rises at nights, and has given food to the household,
and tasks to the maidservants.
16. Being farsighted, she has bought a field,
with the fruit of her hands she has planted a property.
17. Valiantly girding her loins, she has braced her arms;
18. She has tasted it is good to work;
her lamp is not put out all night long.
19. She has stretched out her hand to useful things,
she has also braced her arms on the spindle.
20. She has opened her hands to the poor person,
she has spread out fruit to the needy.
21. Her husband is not anxious about things at home,
when he is staying somewhere else,
for all in her household are clothed.
22. She has made double cloaks for her husband;
garments for herself of fine linen and purple.
23. Her husband becomes conspicuous at the gates,
when he has taken his seat in council with the
elders of the land.
24. She has made muslins and sold them,
and girdles for the Canaanites.

25. She is clothed with valor and elegance,
and she has rejoiced in the last days.
26. She has opened her mouth with care,
and imposed order on her tongue.
27. Strictly regulated are the employments of her houses,
and she has not eaten the food of idleness.
28. Her children have risen up and been enriched,
and her husband has praised her:
29. "Many daughters have done mightily,
but you have surpassed and outdone them all."
30. Charm is deceitful, and vain the beauty of a woman.
The wise woman will be blessed,
and she herself will praise the fear of the Lord.
31. Give her the fruits of her hands,
and her husband will be praised in the gates.

2. See Mt 26:41. Presumably he had a bad cold—or else he had also been preaching in the morning. His request that they should keep very quiet suggests that normally African congregations were rather restless, and perpetually keeping up a low hum or buzz of conversation and comment.

3. Not a complete bible but probably just the book of Proverbs, perhaps bound together with another Old Testament book; or just possibly it was a lectionary, a volume of liturgical readings.

4. It was presumably chosen as a reading for the feast of the martyrs, though from a later allusion (section 18) it seems that the martyrs had been celebrated more specifically in the morning, presumably in their own basilica on the site of their martyrdom. This New Market Basilica was in another suburb, and it seems as if we are attending an afternoon service.

5. See Ez 16:1-14, remembered through a veil of Eph 5:25-27.

6. The time available was evidently ample enough, because he went on for a good hour, in spite of his cold in the head. This is one of the longest of his sermons. As we shall see, the congregation got rather restless toward the end.

7. *Me legente*; the next stage after *me proloquente*, his introductory remarks. *Me legente* (literally, "me reading") means that his sermon is going to be a *lectio*, a lecture, that is to say, a reading with explanatory remarks; exactly what it is, in fact.

8. See Mt 5:14.

9. See Lk 15:4-6.

10. Augustine is not only thinking of a text like Mt 5:14 (where the English has "hill," but the Latin has *mons*, "mountain"), but also of the exceedingly high mountain of Rv 21:10, on which the new Jerusalem comes down from heaven. This seems clear from his reference in the next paragraph to the lion of Judah.

11. A slight echo of Gn 22:13, the ram caught in a thicket on Mount Moriah.

12. See Rv 5:5.

13. Note this positive relish in an apparently nonsensical text, which he could quite easily have made more obviously (but less interestingly) meaningful by simply changing the punctuation.

14. See Jn 10:17-18.

15. The word for "raise up" is the same as the word for "rouse" in the lion text—*suscito*.

16. See 2 Cor 11:2.

17. He is getting ready to attack the Donatists.

18. See 1 Pet 2:5.

19. He compares Cyprian with Donatus simply because the Donatists always appealed to the authority of Cyprian to support the stand they took. Augustine rules the appeal out of order precisely because Cyprian remained within Catholic unity and Donatus and his followers did not, but broke with it. The fact that they derived their doctrine on baptism

from Cyprian was for him neither here nor there. He simply said Cyprian was mistaken on that point.

20. See Lk 11:23.

21. If you lack *caritas*, you are not *carus* (dear) but base.

22. See Mt 13:45.

23. "From sea to sea" in the Old Testament meant from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean, that is, the whole land of Israel. For Augustine the phrase clearly indicates the whole inhabited world, but it isn't clear what seas he had in mind. Perhaps he thought still of the world's land mass surrounded by "the river of Ocean," and so from sea to sea means from the eastern to the western ocean.

24. See Mt 10:22.

25. See Ex 12:37.

26. See Rom 12:17, 2 Cor 8:21 both quoting Prv 3:4.

27. See 1 Cor 2:6.

28. Here he is making the point of the servant Church. We miss the full flavor of the point unless we bear in mind that the maidservants are *slaves*.

29. He is certainly beating the patriarchal drum in this passage. It would have seemed perfectly natural to his audience.

30. Reading *In noctibus* instead of *In omnibus*, "in all things." There is no manuscript support for my suggestion, and I have no doubt that the stenographers wrote *in omnibus*. But we must remember that Augustine had a heavy cold and I am equally convinced that he said (or tried to say) *in noctibus*. He has said not long before, at the beginning of section 7, "Nights are afflictions." That is what he is thinking of here.

31. That is, God speaking about God.

32. See Gn 3:19.

33. His line of thought peters out ineffectively, because he ends by identifying the "property" with the "field." For his argument to work, he should have treated the property as something in this world, in this life.

34. See Rom 8:25.

35. The river, in the Old Testament, without further qualification, means the Euphrates, and perhaps that is what Augustine means too, having Abraham in mind as the beginning, in one sense, of the Church. Or else he may have thought it was referring to the Jordan, and saw the Church as being born there, with the baptism of Christ.

36. "On the spindle" is "*in fusum*" in the Latin. This sounds just like *infusum*, "poured in." So Augustine explains that it is *in fusum* and not *infusum* in a sentence that it would be meaningless to include in the English. Here it is: *In fusum, non ab "infundendo," sed in illud instrumentum lanificii, quod vocatur fusum.*

37. He is clearly giving a variation on the theme of the three Fates, Clotho (the spinner), Lachesis, and Atropos. The last two represent quite different symbols or images of fate and destiny, the casting of lots and inexorable determinism. But in the no doubt late myth they have been assimilated to Clotho the spinner, and Atropos, I think it is, is the one who wields the shears that cut the thread of life. Their old Latin names, I learn from Lewis & Short's *Dictionary*, were Nona, Decuma, and Morta: Ninth, Tenth and Dead! Very suggestive.

38. The correct Latin word is *neat*, present subjunctive of *neo*; the local Carthaginian form is *neiat*, which I suspect was pronounced *nejat*.

39. A very literal, and here incorrect, translation of the Greek *karpon*, which as well as meaning fruit also means "palm" of the hand.

40. He takes "poor" as meaning the literally poor, who require literal, material generosity, and "needy" as representing Christ, or his agents like Paul, who are in need of our spiritual fruit.

41. See Lk 13:6-9; also 1 Cor 3:6ff.

42. The gift was the material aid the Philippians had given Paul; the fruit was their spiritual progress.

43. See Rv 6:9-11.

44. See Mt 25:32. A singularly forced passage altogether.

45. See Lk 12:46.

46. See 1 Pt 2:21.

47. See Mt 22:11ff—those who are lacking the wedding garment of charity.

48. Photinus was bishop of Sirmium (a town in what is nowadays Hungary) from 344 to 351, when he was deposed by a council assembled in his episcopal city. It seems to have been the general opinion that he denied the divinity of Christ, as Augustine says here. But what he was really involved in, like everyone else at that time, was the Arian controversy, which was not so much about the nature of Christ as about the nature of the Word, the second person of the Trinity. The Arians denied that the Word/Son was consubstantial with the Father. Some of their opponents, notably one Marcellus, bishop of Ancyra (Ankara in modern Turkey), went so far as to say that he is so consubstantial as to be identical with the Father, thus denying any distinction between the persons, and repeating the older heresy of Sabellius. Now Photinus was a friend and disciple of Marcellus. So if he went on also to deny any real incarnation of the Word, identical in his view with the Father, he was adding a further conclusion to the doctrine of Sabellius and Marcellus. Some people think he was anticipating the heresy of Nestorius, and denying not so much the divinity of Christ as the unity of his person, thus conceiving of the incarnation as the Word (not distinct in his view from the Father) coming and attaching to itself the already existing man, Jesus of Nazareth.

49. See Jn 20:27.

50. What people tended to recoil from in those days was “defiling” the divine by mixing it with the human—something very repugnant to the ultra-spiritual ideas of neo-Platonist philosophy. Such repugnance would account for each of the opposite errors Augustine mentions here, denying Christ’s divinity and denying his humanity.

51. See Jas 1:8.

52. For example, Hg 1:13; the name of the prophet Malachi means “My angel/messenger.”

53. See Rv 3:7.

54. Just *gloriosa* in the Latin, but this adjective can have these two meanings, and I think Augustine intends them both here.

55. “Muslins” translates *sindones*, a Greek word probably derived from the name Sind (India), and originally meaning fine cloth from India, which is what muslin originally was—cloth produced by Muslims, I suppose, when English merchants first encountered it.

56. See above, section 6 on verse 13.

57. See Gn 47:19.21.

58. A rather peculiar paragraph. It brings together images taken from Jn 6:41 and 1 Cor 6:13-20; see also 1 Cor 10:16-17. Can it actually have been that the going price for a prostitute’s services in Carthage at that time was the same as the price of a loaf of bread? In a time of food scarcity this would not have been improbable. But Augustine may be just thinking of this particular “loaf of bread,” that is, the body of Christ.

59. See above, section 10, on verse 17.

60. Why should there be any question of not doing so? Probably because the congregation was showing distinct signs of restlessness, and wanting to stop there and then.

61. See above, section 18, on verse 22.

62. 2 Cor 6:11, following 1 Cor 2:3. Augustine quoting from memory appears to assume they are one text.

63. He is speaking mainly against idolatry, or the idolatrous misuse of language.

64. The words of the martyr Donata at the trial of the Scillitan martyrs. See note 1 above.

65. See Lk 12:33.

66. Look for what? The robe of light or worldly wealth? He could mean either, but more likely the latter.

67. Some manuscripts and the Maurists leave out the phrase "may you live like this in her, and with her." This certainly simplifies the passage, but misses the point, I think, that Augustine is suggesting: we cannot yet hear the eternal praise her husband is praising her with in the resurrection of the dead, in eternity, but if we live in her we can hear a kind of pre-echo of it in the words that follow, suitably understood.

68. The signs of unrest have evidently now grown to almost rebellious proportions. And all the time he has a heavy cold!

69. Augustine wrote a little tract listing the heresies of his time—a fashion set by the rather unlikable heresy-hunter Saint Epiphanius of Salamis. The ones he would have had in mind here would have been the Manichees, the Donatists, the Arians—and of course the Photinians. The Pelagians had not yet appeared on the scene. Among these the Arians and Photinians do not have our creed, and the Manichees do not have our baptism; the Donatists have them all.

70. An oblique reference to the eucharist; he is still formally observing the *disciplina arcani*, the discipline of the secret, according to which the mystery of the sacraments, above all of the eucharist, was not to be divulged to the unbaptized. But by his time it had become the merest formality, though one that was still thought to have some value as distinguishing the initiated from the uninitiated.

71. The usual Latin translation for the Greek *mysteria*.

72. The Latin makes the point more effectively: there won't be any works of *miser cordia*, because there won't be any *miseria*.

SERMON 38

ON HOLDING BACK AND HOLDING OUT: OR ON RESTRAINT AND ENDURANCE

Date: before 411¹

Restraint and endurance

1. There are two things enjoined in this life by the Lord, which seem toilsome to us: to hold back and to hold out—restraint and endurance.² We are told to restrain ourselves or hold back from things that in this world are called good, and to hold out against or endure the things that abound in this world as bad. The first is called restraint, the second endurance—two virtues which purify the soul and make it capable of containing God.³ We need restraint for curbing lusts and restricting pleasures, in order not to be seduced by evil enticements or sapped by so-called prosperity; not to put our trust in worldly well-being, and to go on seeking right up to the end the well-being that has no end. And just as it is the task of restraint not to trust in the well-being of the world, so it is the task of endurance not to succumb to the ill-being of the world. So—whether we have never had it so good or never had it so bad, we must wait for the Lord,⁴ wait for him to give us what is truly good and pleasant, and to ward off from us what is truly evil.

The good and bad things mixed together

2. The good things of God which he promises the just are being kept for the end; and the bad thing which he threatens the wicked with are being kept for the end. The good and bad things which are mixed together in the brew of this age do not fall to the lot only of the good or only of the bad. Anything you may call good in this world, well the good person has it and the bad one has it. For example, both good and bad enjoy bodily health.⁵ You will find riches in the possession of both good people and bad. We observe progeny and children to be a gift common to the good and the bad alike. Or take a long life; some good people live a long time, some bad people live a long time. And anything else you want to count among the good things of this age, you will find it indiscriminately

among the good and the bad.

Again, all kinds of harsh and grievous conditions are suffered by both good and bad: hunger, disease, sorrows, losses, oppression, bereavements. All this is common matter for tears for everybody. So it's easy to see that both the goods of the world are enjoyed by good and bad people alike, and that the ills of the world are borne by good and bad alike. And that's why some people's feet begin to totter along the road of God, and attempt to turn aside. Many people in fact do turn aside and get lost, when they have decided and made up their minds to serve God precisely in order to have plenty of this world's goods and to be spared and avoid its ills.

You see, when they have decided on this course, and settled on this particular reward for their piety and religion, and then observe that they themselves are having a hard time of it while the wicked are flourishing, it's as though they have lost their reward, as though they have been cheated by the one who called them, as though the one who has done them out of their reward has set them to work for nothing—and they hand in their resignation to God. And who are these unfortunates to turn to, after turning away from the one who made them, and clinging to things that were made? When that which has been made begins to wither away, where will the lover of time be, who has lost eternity?

Time for faith, time for sight

3. Thus it is for the sake of those goods which God will only give to the good, and on account of those ills God will only give to the bad, each of which will only be experienced at the end, that God wishes to be believed in and trusted. What reward, after all, can there be for faith, can the word "faith" indeed have any meaning at all, if you want to see and hold it in your hands now? So you ought not to try and see what you are to believe, but rather believe what you are to see;⁶ believe as long as you don't yet see, in order not to be put to shame when you do.

So we believe, then, while it is the time for faith, before it becomes the time for sight. That's what the apostle says: *As long as we are in this body we are away abroad from the Lord. For we are walking by faith* (2 Cor 5:6). So it's by faith, as long as we believe what we cannot yet see. We shall get the sight when we see him face to face,⁷ just as he is. The apostle John also distinguishes the time of faith from the time of sight when he says in his letter, *Dearly beloved, we are now children of God, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be*. That's the time of faith; now look at the time of sight: *We know*, he says, *that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him just as he is* (1 Jn 3:2).

4. The time of faith is toilsome. Who ever says it isn't? It's toilsome, but this is the work for which that is the payment. Don't be lazy at the work you desire payment for. After all, if you yourself had hired a workman, you wouldn't count out his pay before you had put him to

work. You would say to him “Do it, then you’ll get it.” He wouldn’t say to you, “Give it, then I’ll do it.” So it’s the same with God. You, being a God-fearing man, don’t cheat your workman, and is God himself going to cheat you, after telling you not to cheat your workman? And yet it’s always possible that you won’t give what you’ve promised. Even if there’s no trickery and falsity in your heart, there is certainly the chance in our fragile human condition of financial difficulties and lack of funds. But what are we afraid about with God, who cannot cheat because he is Truth, and who has plenty of everything because he made everything?

Life shrinks, it doesn't grow

5. So let us trust God, brothers. This is the first commandment,⁸ this is the beginning of our religion and our journey, our road—to have our hearts fixed firmly in faith,⁹ and by fixing our hearts firmly in faith to live good lives, to abstain from seductive goods, to endure patiently temporal evils, and as long as the enticements of the first and the threats of the second persist, to keep our hearts steady and unshaken against each of them, so that you don’t sink into the former or break yourself on the latter. Thus by practicing restraint and practicing endurance, by holding back and holding out, when temporal goods have passed away and any evils that may be inflicted are no more, you shall hold God fast as your good, you shall have no evil to endure.

For that very reason—what is it we were told in the reading? *My son, as you come forward for the service of God, stand in justice and fear, and prepare your soul for temptation. Constrain your heart and endure, that your life may grow in the last days* (Sir 2:1-3).¹⁰ How much do we think it grows? To become eternal. Human life as it is now, you see, the longer it is drawn out and seems to be drawn out, in fact shrinks instead of growing. Just look at it and see, work it out and see that it shrinks. A person is born. Let’s suppose God has decided on a life of seventy years for him. Life is added to him, we say, as he grows. but is it added, or is it subtracted? Here he is, of those seventy years he has lived sixty years, ten are left. What was fixed upon has been diminished, and the more he lives the less he has left. That’s how, as we live here, life shrinks, it doesn’t grow. Hold onto what God has promised you, *that your life may grow in the last days*.

Hate avarice, love wisdom

6. There then follows a passage that was not read: *Everything that is brought upon you accept, and in sorrow endure, and in your humility have patience. Because gold is tried in the fire, and silver, but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation* (Sir 2:4-5). It seems so hard, you’ve given up, you have failed. Haven’t you thereby lost that which never fails? Why, in any case? Many people suffer many things for the sake of money

that's going to fade away, and are you not willing to suffer for the sake of life that's going to stay? And so you refuse to take pains for the sake of God's promises, as though you weren't taking pains for the sake of your own greedy ambitions!¹¹

Just think how much robbers are prepared to suffer for the sake of their wickedness, how much desperadoes are prepared to suffer for the sake of their enormities, or lechers for the sake of their loose living; or traders for the sake of their grasping greed, crossing the sea, committing themselves body and soul to wind and storm, leaving their homes, running off to unknown parts! If a judge pronounces sentence of exile, it's a punishment. If greed demands exile, it's cause for joy. So what great thing is wisdom ordering you to do, that you couldn't also be ordered to do by greed? And yet when greed gives the order, you jump to it.

And when you've done what greed orders, what will you have for it? A house full of gold and silver. Didn't you read just now, *Although man walks in the image, yet is he disturbed in vain. He stores up treasures, and does not know for whom he gathers them* (Ps 39:6)?¹² So why did you sing and say to God *Get an earful of my tears*,¹³ that is, *Perceive my tears with your ears*? So why don't you perceive his words with your ears, if you want your tears to be perceived by him? If you find fault with your greed, then he will invite you to share his wisdom.

"But when I shoulder the yoke of wisdom, will it be a hard grind?" Sure, a very hard grind. But notice to what end, for what fee. Can it be said of what you gather by wisdom that "you do not know for whom you gather them"? You gather for yourself. Stir yourself, wake up, have the spirit of the ant. It's summer time; gather what you will find useful in the winter. When all is well with you, it's summer. So when all is well with you, learn what's to support you when things go badly with you. All's well with you, it's summer. Don't be lazy, gather the grains from the Lord's threshing-floor, the words of God from the Church of God, gather them and store them away in your heart. You know that things are going well now; the time may come when they go badly. Distress is going to come to every single one of us. And even if all is serene, it's certain that when you come to die, you pass through distress to another life. Is there anyone who can say, "I'll be all right, and I'm not going to die"?¹⁴

*If you wish to attain to life,
keep the commandments*

7. Though as a matter of fact, if you love life and are afraid of death, the very fear of death is a daily winter for you. And the time when the fear of death is felt most keenly is when things are going well with us. When they are going badly, we are not afraid of death. When all is well with us, that's when we fear death all the more. That's why that rich man, who enjoyed his riches enormously—you see, he had great riches and

great possessions—I think that he was unsettled by the fear of death, so that he was pining away with all his enjoyment. He was thinking that he was going to leave those good things behind. He had amassed them, and he didn't know for whom, and he was longing for something eternal, and he came to the Lord and said to him, "*Good master, what good must I do in order to obtain eternal life?*" I'm doing well, but what I have is slipping away from me. I'm doing well, but all of a sudden what I have won't be there anymore. Tell me where I can get what will be there for ever. Tell me how I can reach something I won't ever lose." And the Lord told him, *If you wish to attain to life, keep the commandments* (Mt 19:16.17). He asked, what commandments. He was told. He answered that he had kept them all from his youth. The Lord said to him, as the counselor about eternal life, "*One thing you lack* (Mk 10:21). *If you wish to be perfect, go and sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven*"—you see, I haven't said "Lose it all," but "Keep it all"—*and come, follow me* (Mt 19:18-21).¹⁵

But he enjoyed his riches, and the reason he was asking the Lord what good he should do to obtain eternal life was that he desired to flit from one lot of enjoyment to another, and he dreaded giving up the wealth he was enjoying at the moment, and so he withdrew, a sad man, to his earthly treasures. He wouldn't trust the Lord that he can keep in heaven what is going to fade away on earth. He refused to be a true lover of his treasures. By clinging to them in the wrong way, he forfeited them; by loving them too much, he lost them. You see, if he loved all that in the right way, it too would do a flit and be transferred to heaven, where he would follow it himself later on. God showed him a home to transfer it to, not a place to lose it. For he went on to say, *Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also* (Mt 6:21).¹⁶

He's the benefactor, and he's destitute

8. But people (you say) want to see their riches. Very well, suppose they are piling up treasure on earth, aren't they in fact terrified their riches may be seen? So they've dug a hole and buried them and covered them up. Do they see what they have? He doesn't even see it himself. He prefers it to be hidden, he's afraid of its being seen openly. He wants to be rich in his own fancy, not in reality. As though it were enough to have in his consciousness what he has saved up in the ground!

Oh how much better a consciousness and clearer a conscience¹⁷ you will have if you have saved up your wealth in heaven! Here, when you bury it in the ground, you are afraid your slave may know about it and remove it and run away; here you are afraid your slave may remove it. There you have nothing to fear, because your master is keeping it safe for you. "But I've a faithful slave," you say, "who both knows about it and doesn't give away the secret, and doesn't steal it." Compare him with your lord and master. If you've found a faithful slave, when did

your lord and master ever cheat you? And even if your slave can't steal it, he can, however, lose it. Your Lord can neither steal it nor lose it nor allow it to be lost. He is keeping it for you, it's staying put for you; he's setting you free, he's arranging for you to stay put and abide for ever.¹⁸ He won't lose you, and he won't lose what you have entrusted to him. "Come," he says, "receive what you deposited with me."

It can't be true. God says nothing of the sort. "I am the one," he says to you, "who forbade you to lend at interest; well, I've borrowed at interest from you. You were hoping to grow richer by usury, and you were giving a man a loan so that he would pay you back more; it was all the same to you when he was receiving it with joy and when he was paying it back in tears. That's what you were hoping, and I was forbidding; I said, you see, . . . *who shall not put out his money at interest* (Ps 15:5). I was forbidding you to lend at interest. Now I order you to lend at interest; lend at interest to me."

This is what your Lord and master is saying to you: "Do you want to give little and get much? Then leave the man alone who cries when you exact repayment. Find me, because I positively enjoy paying back. Here," he says, "I am. Give and get. At the time for repayment I'll pay you back. And what will I pay back? You have little; get much. You gave earthly things, get eternal things; you gave what is mine, get me myself. What did you give, after all, but some of what you had received from me?"¹⁹ So then, is it likely I don't pay back what you have given, seeing that it's I who gave you the wherewithal to give? Seeing that it's I who gave you yourself, the one to do the giving? Seeing that it's I who gave you Christ, the one for you to give to, the one who said to you, *When you did it for one of these least of mine, you did it for me* (Mt 25:40)?" There, that's who you're giving to. He is the nourisher, and he goes hungry for your sake; he is the benefactor, and he's destitute. When he's the benefactor, you are willing to receive; when he's destitute, you are not willing to give. Christ is destitute when any poor person is destitute. He was ready to give eternal life to all who are his own, and he is pleased to receive temporal help in every single poor person.

I have made the poor your porters

9. And he gives you advice on how to get your money out. He has already advised you where you ought to transfer it to. Transfer it, of course, from earth to heaven, in order not to lose it. How many people there are who have lost their savings, and not even after being taught such a lesson as that have they learned to bank in heaven. Suppose he were to say to you something like this: "Transfer your assets from the west to the east if you don't want them to vanish," you would be in a fret and a sweat and a tizzy and a state of great agitation; you would work out how much you had, and you would see that with the great variety of your possessions it would be no easy matter to transfer them

a long way away. And as likely as not you would burst into tears, because you were being forced to go and could not find a way of taking along with you what you had amassed.

In fact, he ordered you to transfer it a much greater distance, since he did not say "Transfer it from the west to the east," but "Transfer it from earth to heaven." You are like a cat on hot bricks, it seems to you that you are in greater difficulties than ever, and you say to yourself, "If I couldn't find mules and ships to transfer my stuff from the west to the east, where am I to find ladders to transfer it from earth to heaven?" "Don't worry," God says to you, "don't worry. Seeing that I made you rich, that I gave you the stuff to give, I have made the poor your porters." If, for example, you found someone from overseas quite destitute, or let us say you found a citizen of the place you wanted to go to in dire need of funds, you would say to yourself, "This man is a citizen of the place I want to go to. He is in need here. I will give him something and he can pay me back there." Well there you are, here the poor man is in need. He is a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. Why hesitate to make the transfer? People who do that give in such a way that they get more back when they come to the place where the one who got something from them is from. Let's all do it too.

God is faithful and trustworthy

10. This happens if we trust him, if we arouse our faith. It is, after all, quite pointless for us to get upset. Why is it pointless for us to get upset? Because while Jesus was asleep in the boat, the disciples were almost shipwrecked. Jesus was sleeping and the disciples were in a state. The wind was howling, the waves were breaking, the boat was sinking. Why? Because Jesus was sleeping.²⁰ So also with you; when the storms of temptation are raging in this world, your mind, your boat so to say, is in a state. Why, if not because your faith is asleep? You see, that's what the apostle Paul says, that Christ lives in our hearts, or minds, through faith.²¹ So rouse Christ in your mind, get your faith awake, and let your conscience be calmed, your boat delivered.

Realize that the one who made you the promises is truthful and trustworthy. He hasn't yet shown you everything, because it isn't yet time for him to do so. He has already shown you a great many things, though. He promised you his Christ, and he gave him; he promised his resurrection, and he gave it; the very afflictions and disasters piled one on top of the other in human affairs, he foretold and has shown. How much is left? What was promised has been fulfilled, what was foretold has been fulfilled. And are you on tenterhooks that perhaps what's left may not happen?

What should really frighten you would be not seeing fulfilled what has been foretold. There are wars, there are famines, there are tribulations, there's kingdom against kingdom, there are earthquakes, there's

calamity piled on calamity, there's no lack of scandals, charity is cold, there's plenty of wickedness. Read all this up, it's been foretold.²² Read, observe that everything you see happening has been foretold, and believe that you are eventually going to see what hasn't yet come about, counting up all the things that have. And do you, when you see God presenting you with what he has foretold, refuse to believe that he is going to give you what he has promised? It's precisely what has got you upset that ought to give you grounds for trusting him.

Toil passes away, rest is coming

11. If it's the end of the world, then it's time to quit the world, not to love the world. Look, the world is in a state of turmoil, and everyone loves the world! Suppose the world were at peace? How you would cling to a beautiful world, seeing how fervently you embrace a world in a mess! How eagerly you would gather its flowers, seeing that you don't pull your hand back from its thorns! You don't want to leave the world, the world leaves you, and you follow the world.

So let us purify our hearts, dearly beloved, and not give up the virtue of endurance, but rather gain wisdom and hold on to the virtue of restraint. Toil passes away, rest is coming; deceptive delights pass away, and the good is coming which the faithful soul has been longing for, and for which every pilgrim exile in the world is fervently sighing: the good home country, our heavenly home, our home with the angelic peoples, our home country where no citizen ever dies, where no hostile alien gains admittance, our home where you will have God as your everlasting friend, and where you need fear no enemy.

NOTES

1. The Latin title is simply *De continentia et sustinentia*; I try to echo the word play in the first half of the translation, but add a more literal one in parallel, because there will be no avoiding these nouns in the text of the sermon. The Maurist editors prefixed to this title, "On the words of Ecclesiasticus 2:1-5, *My son, as you come forward for the service of God*, etc. And on the words of Psalm 39:6, *Although man walks in the image*, etc." These were texts that had been read or sung during the service.

Nobody has suggested a date for the sermon. I feel Augustine would not have preached section 4, for instance, without the slightest reference to divine grace, after the Pelagian controversy had begun to preoccupy his mind. So I would put the sermon before 411.

The sermon seems, if one may put it, even more extempore than most. Vivid ideas and images are thrown up, but then altered or adjusted a little, sometimes not with complete consistency. It is for that reason very revealing of Augustine's sermon-making processes at work.

2. He is using a Stoic proverbial maxim.

3. *Capax divinitatis*.

4. See Ps 40:1, 27:14.
5. *Salus*, the word for "health," also means "salvation"; that is why he specifies "bodily health."
6. *Credere quod videas*; not a very easy phrase, and it seems to have caused copyists (or even stenographers) quite a lot of difficulty, since there are a great many variants in the manuscripts.
7. See 1 Cor 13:12; 1 Jn 3:2.
8. Of the decalogue: *You shall have no other gods before me; you shall not make yourself a graven image*, etc. (Ex 19:3-4) interpreted as a commandment to believe.
9. We have to bear constantly in mind a point which has perhaps ceased to be immediately obvious in English: that faith means trusting God as well as "believing in" him. You cannot, in fact, be said really to believe in him if you do not trust him.
10. The last phrase, on which the preacher concentrates, comes at the end of verse 3. Augustine—or his text—leaves out 2b and 3a.
11. The Latin text is overloaded. It runs: *Sic recusas laborare pro dei promissis, quasi, si non laboras pro dei promissis, non laborabis pro cupidatibus tuis*. With the Maurists and one family of manuscripts I have omitted the clause *si non laboras pro dei promissis*, and with them in the last phrase I have read *labores* instead of *laborabis*.
12. The question, I suggest, should be taken as addressed personally to the cantor or reader, to whom Augustine turned at this point. The next question is addressed to the congregation at large. Though why they should sing a response from one psalm to the recitation of another is not quite clear.
13. The text uses a very unusual word, *inaurire*—at least Augustine evidently thinks it is odd and in need of paraphrase. See Sermon 16A, note 4. In that sermon it was construed with "my tears" in the accusative instead of the genitive as it is here, and I translated it differently.
14. The point seems to have changed from when he began his parable of the ant. What he is explaining, the yoke of wisdom, begins and ends, reasonably enough, as the patience to endure troubles; but in the middle it becomes rather the grains, or pearls, of wisdom, to be collected from scripture.
15. He mixes Mt's and Mk's versions of the story.
16. The saying, of course, comes from quite a different place in the gospel; Augustine is thinking of the words Jesus addressed to the man, *you shall have treasure in heaven*, and rephrasing them in the form of this saying from the sermon on the mount.
17. A double translation of the one word *conscientia*, which means both "consciousness" and "conscience."
18. Another double translation of *manentem*. The conventional translation "abiding" has all the religious and biblical resonances, especially, for example, to Jn 15:3-7, but has rather ceased to be an ordinary colloquial English word.
19. See 1 Cor 4:7.
20. See Mk 4:36-41.
21. See Eph 3:17.
22. See Mt 24:6-10.

SERMON 39

ON THE TEXT IN SIRACH: *DO NOT DELAY TO TURN TO THE LORD,
NOR PUT IT OFF FROM DAY TO DAY*

Date: 405-420¹

The last day is hidden from us

1. We have heard God, brothers, saying through the prophet,² *Do not delay to turn to the Lord, nor put it off from day to day. For suddenly his wrath will come, and in the time of vengeance he will destroy you* (Sir 5:7). He has promised you that on the day you turn to him and are converted he forgets your past badness.³ But did he ever promise you life for tomorrow? Or perhaps God didn't promise you that, and some astrologer did, so that God may condemn both you and him? God very beneficially leaves the day of death uncertain; we should all very beneficially think about our own last day. It's by the mercy of God that a man doesn't know when he is going to die. The last day is hidden from us, in order that every day may be taken seriously.

2. But the world retains its hold on us, on all sides its charms decoy us. We like lots of money, we like splendid honors, we like power to overawe others. We like all these things, but let's listen to the apostle: *We brought nothing into this world, neither can we take anything out* (1 Tm 6:7). Honor should be looking for you, not you for it. You, after all, should sit down in the humbler place, so he that invited you may make you go up to a more honored place.⁴ But if he doesn't wish to, eat where you are sitting, because you brought nothing into this world. Do you think it's a small matter that you are eating someone else's food? Sit down anywhere and eat. Are you going to say, "It's my food"? Listen to the apostle: *We brought nothing into this world*. You have come to the world, you have found a full table spread for you. But *the Lord's is the earth and its fullness* (Ps 24:1).

3. *For those*, he says, *who wish to get rich*—he didn't say "who are rich," but "who wish to get rich"; he was reproaching greed, not means—*who wish to get rich fall into temptation and desires many and*

harmful, which plunge people into destruction and ruin (1 Tm 6:9). You like money. Aren't you afraid of these things? "Money's a good thing, lots of money's a good thing." *They fall into temptation*; aren't you afraid? *They fall into desires many and harmful*; aren't you afraid? What do such desires lead to? *Which plunge people into destruction and ruin*; and are you still deaf: Aren't you afraid of destruction and ruin? God's thundering away like this, and are you snoring?

The worm in the apple of riches is pride

4. However, to those who are already rich the apostle still had some advice to give: *Command*, he says, *the rich of this world not to have proud thoughts*. The worm in the apple of riches is pride. It's difficult for someone who's rich not to be proud. Take away pride, and riches will do no harm. But pay attention to what you should do with them, in case what God has lavished on you should remain idle in your hands. *Not to have proud thoughts*; take that vice away. *Nor set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches* (1 Tm 6:17); take that vice away too. When you've taken these things away, practice the good works you now hear about. *Let them be rich*, he says, *in good works* (1 Tm 6:18). Let them not set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but what should they set them on? *On the living God, who provides us abundantly with everything for our enjoyment* (1 Tm 6:17). God bestows the world on the poor, he bestows it on the rich. Does it mean that, just because he's rich, he's got two bellies to fill? Attend to it, all of you, and see that the poor sleep having taken their fill from the gifts of God. The one who feeds you feeds them through you.

With death all riches are lost

5. So, let us not love money. But if you already have it, this is what should be done with it. Be rich, you people who have it. But rich in what way? *In good works*. *Let them give readily*, he says, *let them share* (1 Tm 6:18). At this, avarice is already pulling in its horns. Listen to what follows: *Let them give readily, let them share* . . .

It's just as if you'd drenched him with a bucket of cold water; he goes numb, he shivers, he clasps his arms to himself, and he says, "I'm not going to throw away all my work." You poor fish, do you want to throw away your work? You're going to die, see? And just as you brought nothing here, so you can take nothing away from here. Since you've taken nothing away with you, won't you have thrown all your work? So listen to God's advice. Don't panic because he said, *Let them give readily, let them share*. Listen to what follows. Wait for it, don't shut the door in my face, don't bang down the receiver of your mind; wait for it. Do you want to see why *Let them give readily, let them share* doesn't mean you will throw everything away, and in fact is the only way to avoid throwing everything away?

Let them lay down for themselves, he says, a good foundation for the future, that they may take hold of the true life (1 Tm 6:19). So this one you take pleasure in is a false life. It's as if you were living here in a dream. If you are living here in a dream, you are going to wake up when you die, and the way you're going, you'll find you've got nothing in your hands. It's like a beggar sleeping, and in a dream he comes into a legacy, and no one could be happier than he before he gets up. He sees himself in his dream handling marvelous clothes, gold and silver plates, strolling into lovely, spacious parks, waited on by a bevy of servants. He wakes up, and he bursts into tears. And just as when he is awake he rails at the man who cleaned him out, so now he rails at the one who woke him up. There's a psalm which has spoken very clearly about this: *They slept their sleep, it says, and all the men of wealth found nothing in their hands* (Ps 76:5), after they had finished their sleep.

Christ wanted to be destitute for our sakes

6. So because you brought nothing with you, you are going to take nothing away from here. Send up above what you have acquired, and it won't be thrown away. Give to Christ; you see, Christ wanted to get something from you here. You give something to Christ, and are you throwing it away? You are not throwing it away if you entrust it to your slave, and are you throwing it away if you entrust it to your master? You are not throwing it away if you entrust your slave with what you have earned, and will you be throwing it away if you entrust your master with what you have got from your master in the first place?

Christ wanted to be destitute here—but for our sakes. All the poor people you see—Christ was well able to feed them all, just as he fed Elijah, using the crow.⁵ Yet eventually he withdrew the crow even from Elijah. That Elijah should be fed by the widow was a favor he granted the widow, not Elijah. So when God makes people poor, because he doesn't want them to have anything, when he makes people poor he is testing the rich. That's what's written, after all: *The poor man and the rich have met each other* (Prv 22:2). Where have they met each other? In this life. This one was born, that one was born, their lives have crossed, they have met each other. And who made them? The Lord.⁶ The rich man, to help the poor; the poor man, to test the rich.

Let everyone do it according to his means. You should not do it to the extent of going broke yourself. That's not what I'm saying. Your extras are someone else's necessities. You heard just now, when the gospel was being read, *Whoever gives a cup of cold water to one of my little ones for my sake shall not lose his reward* (Mt 10:42).⁷ He has put the kingdom of heaven up for sale, and fixed the price of it at a cup of cold water. But only when it's a poor person giving alms—then his alms should be a cup of cold water. If you've got more you should give more. That

widow did it with two farthings.⁸ Zacchaeus gave half his goods, and kept back the other half to pay back the people he had cheated.⁹

Almsgiving is of use to those who have changed their manner of life. You are giving to Christ in need in order to make up for your past sins. After all, if the reason you give is in order to be allowed to sin any time you like with impunity, you are not feeding Christ, but trying to bribe the judge. So give alms with the purpose of getting your prayers heard and getting God to help you change your manner of life for the better. And those of you who are changing your way of life, see that you change it for the better. And by almsgiving and prayers may past evils be blotted out and future good things come that are everlasting.

NOTES

1. No date has been suggested for this sermon, and indeed it provides not the slightest internal evidence which would enable us to date it. It is indeed Augustine at his very best as what I call a comic dramatic preacher; section 3, for example—God shouting his head off and the rich man just snoring; or section 5, the miser dowsed with a bucket of cold water, stiff with the shock and shivering—Augustine, one imagines, acting it all out in the pulpit. This is certainly not the novice preacher, not the priest who is still taking himself rather seriously as the professional rhetorician. It's the seasoned preacher, the bishop who is completely sure of himself and quite at ease, with years of experience behind him—any time, let us say between 405 and 420.

2. For Augustine, any Old Testament writer is a prophet. But the writer of Sirach was not in fact and formally a prophet; he was a wise man or sage, modeling himself on Proverbs.

3. For example, Ez 18:12-22.

4. See Lk 14:7-11.

5. See 1 Kgs 17:3-16.

6. See Prv 22:2.

7. A mixture of Mt 10:42 and Mk 9:40, with an echo of Mt 25:40.

8. See Mk 12:42.

9. See Lk 19:8.

SERMON 40

ON THE SAME TEXT OF ECCLESIASTICUS: *DO NOT BE SLOW TO TURN TO THE LORD, NOR PUT IT OFF FROM DAY TO DAY*

Date: 396 - 400¹

Wait patiently

1. We have frequently sung along with the psalmist, brothers and sisters, *Wait for the Lord, do manfully, and let your heart be strengthened, and wait for the Lord* (Ps 27:14). What does *Wait for the Lord* mean? Receive only when he gives, don't demand whenever you want. It's not yet the time for giving. He has waited for you, now wait for him. What's that I've just said, he has waited for you, now you wait for him? If you are now leading an upright life, if you have already turned back to him, if you are displeased with what you have done in the past, if you have now determined to choose a good new way of life—then don't be in a hurry to make demands of him. He waited patiently for you to change your bad way of life; now you just wait patiently for him to give you the prize for a good way of life. After all, if he hadn't waited patiently too, there wouldn't be anybody for him to give it to. So wait patiently, because you have been patiently waited for.

Put yourself right

2. You though, who don't want to straighten yourself out, any of you there who still don't want to straighten yourself out—as though there were only one of you. I should rather have said, Whoever of you don't want to straighten yourselves out. You though, standing there, having made no decision to put yourself right - let me speak like this as though to a single person. Whoever you are, you don't want to put yourself right; what are you promising yourself?

Are you perishing of despair or of hope? If you're perishing of despair, this is what you say to yourself: "My iniquity is overwhelming me, I'm wasting away in my sins. What hope have I got of living?" Listen to the prophet saying, *I have no wish for the death of the ungodly; only let the ungodly turn from his very evil way and live* (Ez 33:11). If you're perishing

of hope, this is what you say to yourself: "God is good, God is merciful. God forgives everything, he doesn't pay back evil for evil." Listen to the apostle saying, *Do you not know that God's patience is drawing you to repentance?* (Rom 2:4).

A little time left

3. So where are we? If I've made any impression on you, if what I've said has struck home, I see how you are going to answer me. "It's true, I'm not despairing and so perishing of despair; nor am I hoping in a bad way so as to perish of hope. I don't say to myself, 'My iniquity is overwhelming me, I haven't any hope any more.' Nor do I say to myself, 'God is good, he doesn't pay back evil to anyone.' The prophet carries weight with me, so does the apostle."

So what do you say next? "I've still got a little time left to live how I like. These people are such a bore—so many of them, always pestering us. I've still got a little time to live as I like; later, when I've put myself straight, what the prophet said will of course be true: *I have no wish for the death of the ungodly; only let the ungodly turn from his very evil way and live.* When I have been converted, he will wipe out all my evil deeds. Why shouldn't I add something to my pleasure, and live how I like as much as I like, and turn back to God later on?"

Don't put it off

4. Why do you say this? Why? "Because God has promised me pardon if I change my ways." I'm well aware, I know God has promised pardon. He promised it through the holy prophet, and he promises it through me, the least of his servants. It's perfectly true that he promises it, he has promised it through his only Son. But why do you want to pile evil days on evil days? Sufficient unto the day be the evil thereof.² Yesterday a bad day, today as well a bad day, tomorrow too a bad day. Or do you think they are good days when you pander to your pleasures, when you pamper your heart with dissipation, when you set traps for another person's virtue, when you grieve your neighbor by cheating him, when you refuse to give back what has been entrusted to you, when you perjure yourself for cash?

When you've indulged yourself in a good dinner, is that sufficient reason for thinking you've had a good day? Can the day possibly turn out good when the person spending it is bad? So you do want to pile bad days on bad days, don't you?

The uncertainty of tomorrow

5. "I'm only asking," he says, "to be allowed a little more time." Why? "Because God has promised me pardon. But no one has promised

you that you are going to be alive tomorrow. Or else, just as you have read in the prophet, the gospel, the apostle, that when you have turned back to him God will blot out all your iniquities, read out to me where a tomorrow is promised you, and then live in an evil way tomorrow.

Though of course, my brother or sister, I shouldn't really have said that to you. Perhaps you have a long life ahead of you. If it's a long one, let it be a good one. Why do you want to have a long, and bad, life? Either it won't be a long one, and you should be taking delight in that other long one which has no end; or else it will be a long one—and what harm will it do you to have lived a long life well? Do you really want to live a long life badly, don't you want to live it well? And for all that, nobody has promised you tomorrow.

Put yourself straight, listen to the scripture: *Do not be slow to turn to the Lord* (Sir 5:8). Those aren't my words—though yes, they are my words too. If I love, they are mine. You try loving too, and they are yours. This sermon I'm now preaching comes from holy scripture. If you ignore it, it becomes your adversary. But now listen to the Lord saying, *Come to terms with your adversary quickly* (Mt 5:25).

Let it be heard by all of you—I'm reciting the words of God's scripture. You in particular, you bad procrastinator with your bad longing for tomorrow, listen to the Lord speaking, listen to holy scripture preaching. I from this place of mine am only playing the part of a look-out.³ *Do not be slow to turn to the Lord, nor put it off from day to day.* See if he hasn't marked those people, see if he hasn't observed those people who say, "Tomorrow I'll live a good life, today let me live a bad one." And when tomorrow comes, you'll say the same thing again. *Do not be slow to turn to the Lord, nor put it off from day to day. For suddenly his wrath will come, and at the time for vengeance he will destroy you* (Sir 5:8).

Did I write that? Can I cross it out? If I cross it out, I'm afraid of being crossed out myself. I could keep quiet about it; I'm afraid of keeping quiet about it! I'm compelled to preach it. In terror I aim to terrify. Be afraid with me, in order to rejoice with me. *Do not be slow to turn to the Lord.*

Lord, please note that I'm saying it. Lord, you know how you frightened me when your prophet was read. Here I am, saying it: *Do not be slow to turn to the Lord, nor put it off from day to day. For suddenly his wrath will come, and at the time for vengeance he will destroy you.* But I don't want him to destroy you.

The need for vigilance

6. Nor do I want you to say to me, "I want to perish." Because I, Augustine, don't want it. So my "I don't want it" is better than your "I do." If your old father in your care had gone down with sleeping sickness, and you, a young man, were there with the sick old man, and the doctor

said, "Your father's dangerously ill; this sleepiness is a mortal heaviness. Watch him, don't let him go to sleep. If you see him nodding off, shake him; if shaking's not enough, pinch him, and if even pinching's not enough, poke him, or you father may die."

There you would be, a young man extremely troublesome to the old man. He would be relaxing and sinking into his pleasant disease; his eyes would be heavy with it—and he would close them—and you on the other hand would be shouting at your father, "Don't sleep!" But he would say, "Leave me alone. I want to sleep." And you would tell him, "But the doctor said, if he wants to sleep, don't let him." And he would say, "Please leave me alone, I want to die." "But I don't want it," says the son to his father. To whom? Clearly, to someone choosing to die. And still you want to postpone your father's death, and to live just a little longer with your old father, who is going to die soon anyway.

Well, the Lord is shouting at you, "Don't go to sleep, or you may sleep for ever. Wake up, to live with me, and to have a Father you will never have to carry to the grave." You hear—and you remain deaf.

Listening to the Lord

7. So what have I been doing as a look-out? I'm free, I'm not really being a burden to you.⁴ I know what some of you are going to say. "What did he want to tell us? He scared us, coming down on us like a ton of bricks, making us guilty." On the contrary, I've been wanting to set you free from guilt. It's disgraceful it's dishonorable—I won't say it's *wrong*, I won't say it's *dangerous*, I won't say it's *deadly*⁵—it's dishonorable for me to deceive you, if God doesn't deceive me.

It's the Lord who threatens the godless, the evildoers, cheats, rogues, scoundrels, the adulterers, pleasure seekers, those who ignore him, who complain about the times and don't mend their own ways; it's the Lord who threatens them with death, threatens them with hell, threatens them with everlasting destruction. What do they want? Me to promise them what he doesn't promise? Look here; an attorney gives you a guarantee; what use is it to you if his principal doesn't honor it? I'm just an attorney, just a servant. Do you want me to say to you, "Live how you like, the Lord won't destroy you"? The attorney has given you a guarantee; the attorney's guarantee is worthless. If only the Lord were giving it himself, and I were just trying to get you worried! After all, the Lord's guarantee would be worth something, even if I were against it; mine's worth nothing at all, if he's against it.

But what guarantee is there for any of us, brothers and sisters, for me or for you, except to listen seriously and carefully to the Lord's commands, and trustingly to wait for his promises? We grow tired of this, of course, being human; let us implore his help, let us send up our sighs to plead with him. We should not be praying for passing, worldly things, things that are come and gone and vanish like smoke. What we should

be praying for is the fulfillment of justice, and the hallowing of God's name, not for getting the better of the person next door, but for getting the better of the lust and greed inside; not for the healing of the flesh, but for the taming of avarice. That what our prayers should be about: helping us in our inner struggles, till they crown us in our final victory.

NOTES

1. The sermon was preached at Hippo, on the anniversary of Augustine's episcopal ordination. This sermon forms the second part of Sermon 339, sections 7-9 (Frangipane 2). Part of Sermon 339 is printed here under Sermon 40 since this section coincides with the scriptural passage (Sir 5:8) treated in Sermon 39 and since Sermon 40 is listed in the Maurist edition. The full sermon will be printed in its place—Sermon 339.

2. See Mt 6:34.

3. He has the model of Ezekiel in mind, 3:16-24.

4. Like Ezekiel, he has done his duty, so he is free from his responsibility, he has "delivered (freed) his soul." He isn't being a burden to them; that is, it isn't his intention to be so. He is merely an instrument of the Lord.

5. Of course, he means it is all these things; but he confines himself with heavy irony to the worldly standards of "honor" and "conduct unbecoming to officers and gentlemen."

SERMON 41

ON THE TEXT IN SIRACH: *HOLD FAITH WITH A NEIGHBOR IN HIS POVERTY, SO THAT YOU MAY ALSO ENJOY HIS GOOD TIMES*

Date: uncertain¹

*When a friend is poor,
you shouldn't break faith with him*

1. I cannot possibly speak now about all the maxims contained in that passage of the divine scriptures; so while they were being read, I made a note in my mind of one little saying, very short in the number of its words, but more than enough for us in its weight of meaning. From this I decided to serve something up to this avid expectation of your charity,² with the Lord's help and to the best of my modest ability: to serve you, in fact, from that same pantry of the Lord's which keeps me as well as you alive. So this is the maxim I am speaking about: *Hold faith with a neighbor in his poverty, so that you may also enjoy his good times* (Sir 22:23).

Let's take it first in its simple plain meaning so that everyone can understand it, even those who never rummage about in the more hidden mysteries of the divine scriptures. *Hold faith*, it says, *with a neighbor, so that you may also enjoy his good times*. "That's true," says the person who takes it in its simple meaning; "when a friend³ is poor you shouldn't break faith with him. You must stand by him, and not change friendship just because his circumstances have changed for the worse; you must keep faith with determined constancy. After all, if my friend was a friend when he was rich but is not a friend when he's poor, then it wasn't him that was my friend, but his money. But if it's the man who was my friend, then he is the one who was so both when the money was there and when it was gone. So why shouldn't he be my friend now, since even if he has lost his fortune he hasn't lost his identity? If I bought a horse, and you took off its trappings and its saddle, I wouldn't scorn it, presumably, just because it was bare. And will my friend, whom I took pleasure in when he was well dressed, displease me now he has been stripped of everything? So the divine scripture is instructing us very well, in a way altogether salutary and adapted to human relations, when it tells us, *Hold faith with a neighbor in his poverty.*"

2. *That you may also enjoy his good times.* So, what now? Let's come to the second part of this maxim, and then shall we have thoughts such as these about our friend, as though to say, "We must stick to him and keep faith with him in his poverty, so that we may also enjoy his good times"? The one who is now poor, you see, will be rich one day, and he won't admit you to a share in his riches, if you proudly turned up your nose at his poverty before. So hold faith with him even when he's poor, so that you may also enjoy his good times when riches come his way, and may rejoice in them with him. Hold faith with him. He's poor, but he has a big holding in faith. You were ready and willing to hold some land with him, if he had any land you could hold together; how much more securely you can hold faith with him! After all, your friend may be the sort of person whom any trickster could do out of his holding. But could he do him out of faith? So what's the meaning of, *so that you may also enjoy his good times*? Presumably that from being poor he can become rich anytime, and then you will enjoy his riches since you didn't spurn his poverty.

Sirach 22:23

3. Certainly the first part of this maxim, according to this common understanding of it, I find acceptable. But the second part, I must confess to you, I find objectionable. If the reason you stick by your friend in his poverty is in order, when he's rich again, to enjoy his riches, then it's still the case that it's not the friend you love, but something else in the friend. Faith and hope are two good friends, and greater than these is charity. Among divine things these remain, says the apostle, *these three, faith, hope, charity. But the greatest of these is charity. Pursue charity* (1 Cor 13:13–14:1).

So now I'm going to question a friend about his friend: "Tell me, if you would be so kind, do you hold faith with this man in his poverty?" "Of course," he says. "You see, I heard I should in holy scripture, and I took it to heart and committed it to memory. I am happy to recall it, and happier still to practice it, because I heard the holy saying, *Hold faith with a neighbor in his poverty.*" Then I say, "Why do you do this? Is it because of what follows: *so that you may also enjoy his good times*? So what are you hoping for?" "That when he becomes rich," he answers, "and good times are his again, he will let me in on his good times because I didn't disdain his bad ones." So permit me, please, to question you a little further. What if this poor man with whom you are holding faith never becomes rich? What if he goes on being poor till he dies? Is faith to perish because hope has been disappointed? Because you will not be able to share his gold holdings with him when he's rich, will you be sorry for having held faith with poverty?

If he's any sense of humanity, if he's any sense of truth, he will find these questions disturbing, and he will say to me, "You're right. It's a good thing to hold faith with a neighbor. But if we hold faith with a poor neighbor in hopes of getting at his riches and having a share in them with him, then undoubtedly when he dies poor and the riches we were hoping for haven't materialized, we will be sorry for all that good work, and our assiduous milking will end in a pail of spilt milk."

So you see that we must pry into this maxim rather more deeply, and discover not how it can be popularly understood, but how it has been laid down by divine authority to suggest something important, to instruct and direct us to it, something which will not disappoint our hope or make us sorry for having held onto faith. You won't be able to get at the true meaning along this road, after all.

The poor man and rich man in Luke 16

4. So take a look at that poor man Lazarus, lying at the rich man's gate. This poor man was wretchedly ill, and he didn't even enjoy good physical health, which is the poor man's patrimony.⁴ He was also covered with sores, the dogs used to lick his sores. Now in that house there was a rich man. He used to wear purple and fine linen, and feast sumptuously every day, and he refused to hold faith with the poor man. Rightly did the Lord Jesus, the lover and giver of faith, pay more attention to faith in the poor man than to the gold and luxuries of the rich man. He paid more attention to the poor man's holding than to the rich man's pomp.⁵ That's why he named the poor man, isn't it, while he thought it better not to mention the other's name.

There was a certain rich man, he says, who used to wear purple and fine linen, and feast sumptuously every day. Now a certain poor man by the name of Lazarus (Lk 16:19-20). Doesn't it seem to you that he was reading out from a book, in which he found the poor man's name written, and didn't find the rich man's? That was the book of the living and of the just, not of the proud and the wicked.⁶ The rich man's name was on the lips of men, the poor man's never mentioned. The Lord, on the contrary, spoke the poor man's name, didn't mention the rich man's.

So that rich man refused to hold faith with the poor man. They both died. *It came to pass that this down-and-out died and was carried away by angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man died and was buried—because the other one, perhaps didn't even get a burial—and when in the netherworld, as we read, he was in torment, he lifted up his eyes from afar, and saw the poor man in Abraham's bosom (Lk 16:22-23), the very one he had disdained at his own gate. He could scarcely share a common rest with one he had refused to share a common faith with. Father Abraham, he said, send Lazarus to dip his finger in water and drip it on my tongue, because I am being crucified in this flame. The answer he got was, Remember, son, that you received your good things in your life, and*

Lazarus bad things. So now, he is at rest, while you are being tormented. And in addition to all that, there is a vast chasm between us and you, and no one can pass over from us to you, nor cross over from you to us (Lk 16:25-26). He saw himself refused mercy, because he himself had refused it. He saw the truth of the saying, Judgment without mercy to the one who has not shown mercy (Jas 2:13). And the one who refused in his proper time to take pity on a poor man took pity on his own brothers when it was too late. Then send Lazarus, he said. I have five brothers there. Let him tell them what goes on here, lest they too should come to this place of torment (Lk 16:27-28). And the answer he got to this was: "If they don't want to come to this place of torment, they have there Moses and the prophets; let them listen to them (Lk 16:29).

He had been in the habit of making fun of the prophets, together with his brothers, of course—for I imagine, indeed I have no doubt at all, that when he talked with his brothers about the prophets and their urging us to do good and forbidding us to do wrong, their frightening us with torments to come and promising rewards to come, he had made fun of all this, and said together with his brothers, "What life is there after death? What does rotteness in the grave remember, what do ashes feel? Everyone is carried there and buried. Who ever came back from there and got a hearing?" So that's the reason, as he recalled such words of his, that he wanted Lazarus to go back to his brothers, so that now they would not say, "Who ever came back from there?" This too got a very suitable, very proper answer. This man, you see, seems to have been a Jew, and that's why he said "Father Abraham." So it was a most excellent and apt answer that he got: *If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if one should rise from the dead (Lk 16:31).* This was fulfilled with the Jews, because they didn't listen to Moses and the prophets, nor did they believe Christ when he rose. Hadn't he foretold this to them beforehand: *If you believed Moses, you would also believe me (Jn 5:46)?*

The burden of Christ is a pair of wings

5. So that rich man remained in eternal punishment without relief, his temporal luxuries all finished and done with. He had not acted justly; he heard a fitting commentary: *"Remember, son, that you received your good things in your life (Lk 16:25).* So this life that you see from afar is not yours. You received your good things. So these good things, which you groan with desire for from afar, are not yours." Where are all the words of the rich and the flatterers of the rich, when they see someone wallowing in temporal luxuries, abounding in land, grabbing land and piling it up to have as his own, thereby attaching to himself the lead he is to be sunk with? It's an enormous weight, you see, that pulled that rich man down to hell, and a heavy burden that thrust him down to the depths. He hadn't heard the words, *Come to me, you who labor. My yoke is easy,*

my burden is light (Mt 11:28). The burden of Christ is a pair of wings. On such wings that poor man flew up to Abraham's bosom. The rich man, then, wouldn't hear those words. What he heard was the tongues of flatterers. Such tongues made him deaf to the prophets, tongues full of evil praises saying, "You are the only ones, the only ones who know how to live."

So: "*You received your good things in your life*; because all that is what you regarded as your good things. Other things you neither believed in nor hoped for. You receive all that in your life. That, after all, is the only life you thought of as yours, when you didn't hope there would be anything else after death, didn't fear anything harsh and unpleasant. So *you received your good things in your life, and Lazarus bad things.*" Notice, he didn't say "his," but just "bad things," what people regard as such, what people are afraid of, what people go to great trouble to avoid. These are the bad things that Lazarus received.

At that time he didn't receive his good things. Nor, however, did he forfeit them. Just as you didn't hear "his" just now, so neither did you hear "in his life." He had another life, which he was hoping for in the bosom of Abraham. Because here, you see, he was dead, here he wasn't alive. He was dead with the death which the apostle talks of: *For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God* (Col 3:3). The poor man was enduring bad things in time. But God was only putting off his good things, not cutting them off altogether.

Why then, rich man, do you desire too late in hell what you never hoped for while you were enjoying your luxuries? Aren't you the one who ignored the fellow lying at your gate? Aren't you the one who in your disdain for the poor man made fun of Moses and the prophets? So you refused to hold faith with a neighbor in his poverty, now you don't enjoy his good times. After all, you scoffed when you heard, *Hold faith with a neighbor in his poverty, so that you may also enjoy his good times* (Sir 22:23). Now you see his good things a long way away, and you don't hold them with him. Those good things were going to come, they were going to come invisibly. As long as they were not seen they were meant to be believed, otherwise when they are seen they would remain for you to grieve about and be unable to possess.

Don't disdain and ignore the poor

6. So then, brothers, as far as I can see, the meaning of this maxim has been clarified. It is to be understood, indeed, by Christians in a Christian way. We shouldn't hold faith with a poor neighbor in such a way that we hope riches are coming to him in due course, and so we keep faith with him in order to hold them with him. That's not the way, that's not the way at all. But what is the way, if not in line with our Lord's instruction, *Make friends for yourselves with the mammon of iniquity, so that they too may receive you in the eternal dwellings* (Lk 16:9)? Here,

you see, there are poor people who have no dwellings where they themselves can receive you. Make friends of them with the mammon of iniquity, that is with the profits which iniquity calls profits. Because there are profits which justice calls profits; they are in God's treasury.

Don't disdain and ignore the poor, who have nowhere to go home to, have nowhere to take shelter. They do have dwellings, they have eternal ones, what's more. They have ones where you will wish in vain to be received, like that rich man, if you don't now receive them into your dwellings; because *whoever receives a just man in the name of a just man will receive a just man's reward; whoever receives a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever gives one of my little ones a cup of cold water simply in the name of a disciple, amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward* (Mt 10:41-42). He holds faith with a neighbor in his poverty, and therefore he will enjoy his good things.

Take the word "neighbor" as meaning the name Christ

7. Your Lord also has something to say to you, your Lord and master himself, the very one who when he was rich became poor.⁸ He will explain this maxim to you much better and more soundly. Because perhaps you sometimes have some doubts in your mind about that poor man you have taken into your house, and you're not sure whether he's an honest man, or whether perhaps he's putting you on, just pretending, a con man. You are in two minds about showing mercy, because you cannot look into his heart. Well, if you cannot look into his heart, show mercy even to a bad man, to make sure of also reaching a good one. The man who was afraid of his seed falling on the path, among thorns, on the stones, being slow to sow in winter went hungry in summer.⁹

But in any case your Lord has something to say to you, about whom of course you have no doubts, if you are a Christian: "I for your sake became poor, though I was rich." Because *though he was in the form of God—what could be richer than such a form?—he did not count being equal with God something to be grabbed, but emptied himself, accepting the form of a slave—what could be richer than the form of God, what poorer than the form of a slave?—made in the likeness of men, found in condition as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient right up to death, the death, what's more, of the cross* (Phil 2:6-8). There's more to add yet; on the cross he was thirsty, he accepted a drink, not from someone being sorry for him but from someone mocking him—and the fountain of life¹⁰ drank vinegar in death. Don't brush it aside, don't disdain it, don't say, "So my God became man, did he? So my God was killed, was crucified, was he?" Yes; of course; just so; he was crucified. His poverty is being recommended to you. He was far away from you; he drew near to you by means of poverty. *Hold faith with a neighbor in his poverty.*

Certainly in this instance there can be no wavering about the applica-

tion, or blurring of the meaning, of that maxim. Take the word “neighbor” as meaning the name “Christ,” and take it so in humility. In humility, after all, you will match the humble and lowly one; in humility you will grasp him as the exalted one. Take him humbly and understand him as neighbor; for *the Lord is near to those who have crushed their hearts* (Ps 34:18), so that you may say in your prayer, *As a neighbor, as our brother, so I accepted him* (Ps 35:14).¹¹ So one word which the prophet added, mentioning a neighbor — prophetic speech, you see, sometimes had to be swathed in the veil of symbolism, to make the search for its meaning exciting and its discovery more satisfying — so where he mentioned a neighbor, see that you mention Christ, because he too mentioned Christ in that prophetic manner of speaking; then observe how limpidly that maxim runs and, so to say, waters your thirsty mind from the fountain of truth: “Hold faith with Christ in his poverty, so that you may also enjoy his good times.”

What does it mean, to hold faith with Christ? In his having become man for your sake, in his being born of the Virgin, in his suffering abuse, his being scourged, being hung on the tree, being wounded with a lance, being buried — don’t brush these things aside, don’t regard them as unbelievable, and in that way you hold faith with a neighbor. Because all that is his poverty.

And what does it mean, so that you may also enjoy his good times? Hear that this is what he wanted, that this is why he came to you in poverty, hear the voice of the poor-for-your-sake Lord your God enriching you, and see how you will enjoy his good times if you have kept faith with him in his poverty: *Father*, he says, *it is my wish that where I am, they too may be with me* (Jn 17:24).

NOTES

1. The sermon is dated by one scholar “after the year 400.” Taken as it stands, that means almost anytime during Augustine’s career (he became bishop in 396). But I imagine it is intended to mean within a few years of 400. There seems to be no internal evidence for any particular date. But I do find such evidence for inferring that it was not preached in Augustine’s own Church of Hippo. See the next note.

2. Presumably this expectation was vocally expressed — cries of “Speech, speech!” or “We want Augustine, we want Augustine,” perhaps? I presume that such “avid expectation” would not be expressed where he was as a matter of course the regular preacher, namely in Hippo itself.

3. It is interesting that the Vulgate, further from the Greek in this instance than Augustine’s text, reads “Hold faith with a friend in his poverty.” Is it possible that the later transmission of the Vulgate text was influenced here by Augustine’s commentary here? As a matter of fact, I find that the critical Stuttgart edition of the Vulgate reads *cum proximo*, and that the Clementine *cum amico* is supported by only one family of manuscripts, dating from the ninth century. This family could indeed have been influenced

by Augustine's sermon.

4. Is this an age-old cliché of the more affluent classes, that the lower orders are heftier and tougher and rougher and enjoy a ruder health than their more fragile (and better fed) social superiors? Or just a statement that good health, fitting them for manual labor, is the only capital asset the poor possess to live on?

5. *Elationem*. As well as meaning things like "haughtiness," this word also means, more literally, "a carrying out" — of a corpse, that is, a funeral cortege. Augustine may be playing on this meaning here, since the parable dismisses the rich man's funeral in two words, "was buried," while it says more expansively of Lazarus that he was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom. I translate with "pomp," which just possibly may evoke for some readers the French expression for funerals, "*pompes funèbres*."

6. See Jos 10:13, 2 Sm 1:18 for the book of the just (of Jashar), and Ps 69:28 for the book of the living. In Rv 13:8, 20:15, 21:27 we have the book of life.

7. See Wis 2:1-5.

8. See 2 Cor 8:9.

9. See Lk 8:6-7.

10. See Ps 36:9.

11. The text can hardly bear Augustine's construction of it, since the psalmist is in fact bemoaning false friends.

SERMON 42

ON WHAT THE PROPHET ISAIAH SAYS:
WHAT IS THE MULTITUDE OF YOUR SACRIFICES TO ME? AND ON
THE SECTION OF THE GOSPEL WHERE IT SAYS: *FORGIVE AND YOU
WILL BE FORGIVEN, GIVE AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU*

Date: 425¹

Giving and forgiving

1. My powers, brothers, are pretty puny, but infinitely great are those of God's word. Give it free rein in your hearts. Then what I say rather feebly you can hear strongly, if you carry it out. The Lord has thundered at us through the prophet Isaiah as from his storm cloud. If you have any sense, you were terrified. He spoke plainly enough, after all, and the passage doesn't require explanation, but action. *What use to me, the multitude of your sacrifices? For who ever required these things from your hands?* (Is 1:11-12). God seeks us, not what's ours. Anyway, the Christian's sacrifice is alms, or kindness to the poor. That's what makes God lenient toward sins. Unless God were somehow made lenient toward sins, who would remain anything except guilty? From those failings and sins without which this life is not in fact lived, people are cleansed by alms or kindness.

This is of two sorts, giving and forgiving; giving the good you have, forgiving the evil you suffer. These two sorts of kindness were put very shortly by the Lord, the good teacher, who shortened his word on the earth² that it might be fruitful and not painful; listen: *Forgive*, he says, *and you will be forgiven, give and it will be given to you* (Lk 6:37-38). *Forgive and you will be forgiven* refers to pardoning; *give and it will be given to you* refers to making donations. The kindness which has you forgiving people costs you nothing. They ask your pardon straightaway, you grant it, you lose nothing. You return home more affluent in charity. The other sort of kindness though, where we are told to spend money on the needy, seems tough, because what anyone gives, well you'll no longer have what you give.

*God gives from heaven;
he receives on earth*

2. Though as a matter of fact the apostle reassures us on this point, when he said, *According to what each of you has, not that easing others should mean squeezing you* (2 Cor 8:13). So everyone should assess what they are capable of, and not give their minds to laying up treasure on earth.³ Let them give; what they give isn't lost. I'm not just saying "It isn't lost"; I'm saying "It's the only thing that isn't lost." Other things you don't give and have plenty of, you either lose while you're alive, or leave behind when you die.

And another thing, my brothers, who could remain unmoved by such a tremendous promise? *Forgive, he says, and you will be forgiven; give and it will be given to you.* When he says *Give and it will be given to you*, observe who is saying it and who he's saying it to. God is saying it to man, the immortal one is saying it to mortals, the great landowner to a beggar. And he's not simply going to recover for us what we have given. We have found someone to lend to at interest. Let us lend at usurious rates, but to God, not to man. We are giving to one who has plenty, we are giving to one who gave us something to give. And in exchange for trivialities and trifles, for things that die and rot away, for earthly things, he pays back eternal, imperishable things, things that remain without ever coming to an end.

Why should I go through a long list? The one who is making the promise is promising himself. If you love him, buy him from him. And to make sure it's him you are giving to, listen to him saying, *I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in, naked and you clothed me, sick, you visited me, locked up, you came to me.* And they will say to him, "When did we see you in such straits and minister to you?" His answer, *When you did it for one of the least of mine, you did it for me* (Mt 25:35-40). He gives from heaven; he receives on earth. It's he that gives, he that receives. You are making a kind of mercantile loan or investment. You lend or invest here, you get paid back with interest there. Here you invest things that are going to perish, there you get back things that are going to remain without ever coming to an end.

Let God deliver you from yourself

3. And whenever you say to God, *Deliver me, Lord, from the bad man* (Ps 140:1)—that's what we've just been singing, isn't it? I know with what feeling you say *Deliver me, Lord, from the bad man*. Is there anyone, after all, who in this age doesn't have to put up with some bad man? So when you say this to God, *Deliver me, Lord, from the bad man*, just as you say it with all your heart, so also first take a shrewd and attentive look at yourself. *Deliver me, Lord, from the bad man*. Imagine God has answered you, "From which one?" You're going to say from Tom, Dick,

or Harry,⁴ from goodness knows who it is you are having to put up with. And he will reply, "Aren't you saying anything to me about yourself? If I am to deliver you from the bad man, you first have to be delivered from yourself. You are putting up with your bad self; don't put up with your bad self."

Let's see if he finds anything another bad man can do to you. What can a bad man do to you? Don't you be bad. Don't let your greed lord it over you, don't let your lust trample on you, don't let your anger thresh you. Who are these inner enemies of yours? They are you. Don't let them do anything to you, and then let's see what a bad neighbor can do to you, a bad employer,⁵ a bad strong man. Let's see what he can do to you. Let him find you to be just, let him find you to be faithful and trustworthy, let him find you to be a Christian—what is he going to do to you? What the Jews did to Stephen? By doing him something very bad, they dispatched him to the Good.⁶

So when you pray to God to deliver you from the bad man, look at yourself. Don't spare yourself. Let him deliver you from yourself. How does he deliver you from you? By forgiving your sins, endowing you with merits,⁷ giving you the strength to fight against your desires, breathing virtue into you, endowing your mind with heavenly delight to surpass all earthly delights. When God grants you all this, he delivers you from yourself, and in the midst of the evils of this world which are however going to pass away, you can wait without the slightest anxiety for the coming of your Lord with those good things that cannot pass away. Let them be enough for you.

Well, I don't know how it is, but you can certainly see that I step up here rather feeble, and by speaking I become strong. So great is my concern, so great my interest in your progress. You see, the worker in the field who is hoping for a good crop is scarcely aware of the toil. Please be my crop, my harvest, so that I may be with you, and all of us together may be the harvest of God. Amen.

NOTES

1. That manuscript collection of sermons upon which the other manuscript collections depend apparently indicates that the beginning of this sermon was lost at some stage, and what we have here was attached to sermon 107. Nonetheless, what we have here does make a complete whole, the opening sentence about his feebleness being echoed by his closing words. The scholars suggest no date, but the tone of these references to his health make me think we have an old man speaking here. Let us tentatively place the sermon then between 425 and his death in 431.

Our edition gives a shorter title to the psalm: simply "On the section of the gospel etc." I have given the longer form found in one manuscript, because it explains what this sermon is doing here among his sermons on the Old Testament. It does serve to show how

artificial, and indeed unsatisfactory, is this arrangement, which we owe to the Maurist editors.

2. See Is 10:23.

3. See Mt 6:19.

4. Gaius and Lucius in the Latin.

5. *Patronus* in the Latin. Here it seems to me already to have the sense of the French *patron*, meaning the boss, the employer. But the older connotations of the Roman patron-client relationship, and even of the patron as your advocate or lawyer, are no doubt still attached to the word.

6. See Acts 7:57-60.

7. Being granted or endowed with merits is a paradoxical idea. It is in fact the Catholic idea, as against (I believe) the views of Luther and Calvin that the notion of merit is simply incompatible with the notion of grace. Augustine evidently did not think so. We can indeed earn or merit our salvation (and must do so), but our earning or meriting is itself a gift of grace; it is in fact a divinely bestowed participation in the infinite saving merits of Christ himself.

SERMON 43

ON WHAT IS WRITTEN IN ISAIAH:
UNLESS YOU BELIEVE, YOU SHALL NOT UNDERSTAND

Date: 400¹

The starting point of a good life, right faith

1. The starting point of a good life, whose due what's more is eternal life, is right faith. Now faith means believing what you don't yet see, and the reward of this faith is to see what you believe. So in the season of faith, which is like the season for sowing, let us not falter, and right to the end let us not falter but persevere instead, until we reap what we have sown.² When the human race, you see, had turned away from God and was lying weltering in its transgressions, we needed a savior in order to come to life again, just as we needed a creator in order to exist. God in his justice condemned humanity; God in his mercy sets humanity free. *The God of Israel will himself give strength and courage to his people. Blessed be God (Ps 68:35).* But it's those who believe that receive this gift; those who disdain him don't.

2. Even about faith itself, however, we mustn't boast as though we could manage it on our own. Faith isn't a mere nothing, you know, it's something serious and important. If you possess it, then of course you have received it. *For what do you possess that you did not receive? (1 Cor 4:7).* Take note, dearly beloved, of what it is you give thanks for to the Lord God, in order not to be continuously ungrateful for any gift of his, and because you are ungrateful to lose what you have received. I cannot in any way at all unfold before you the priceless value of faith, but any believer can reflect upon it. On the other hand, if in some respect you can reflect upon it as it deserves, is there anyone who can adequately reflect on how many gifts of God himself faith is to be preferred to? And if we are in duty bound to acknowledge God's lesser gifts to us, how much more should we acknowledge the one that so surpasses them?

Made to the image of God

3. We owe it to God that we are what we are. From whom, if not from God, do we get it that we are not nothing? But sticks and stones also are, and from whom do they get it but God? Aren't we anything more, then? Sticks and stones aren't alive, but we are alive. Still, though, being alive is something we have in common with trees and shrubs. Vines too, after all, are said to be alive. If they weren't alive, it wouldn't have been written, *He slew their vines with hail (Ps 78:47)*. It's alive when it's green; when it dies it withers.

But this kind of life is without sensation. What more do we have? Senses. We all know the five senses of the body. We see, we hear, we smell, we taste, and by touch all over the body we distinguish soft from hard, rough from smooth, hot from cold. So we have a fivefold sensitivity. But so too do the animals. So we must have something more yet. Even so, my brothers, if we consider just these things we have listed, how many thanks, how much praise do we not owe for them to our creator?

However, what more have we got? Mind, reason, judgment, which animals haven't got, nor have birds, nor have fishes. It is in this respect that we were made to the image of God. What's more, when scripture relates that we were made, it adds that he not only puts us ahead of the beasts, but also puts us over them, that is to say that they have been subjected to us. *Let us make man, he says, to our own image and likeness, and let him have authority over the fishes of the sea and the birds of the sky and all cattle and creeping things that creep upon the earth (Gn 1:26)*. What gives him this authority? The image of God. Which is why he says to some people by way of rebuke, *Do not be like horse and mule, which have no understanding (Ps 32:9)*.

Understanding, though, is one thing, reason another. We've got reason even before we understand, but we wouldn't be able to understand unless we had got reason. So he's an animal capable of reason,³ or to put it better and more neatly, a rational animal, imbued with reason by nature, and he has already got reason before he understands. After all, that's why he wants to understand, because he surpasses other animals in reason.

Believe in order to understand

4. So we ought above all else to cultivate in ourselves this quality in which we excel the beasts, and somehow or other refashion it and chisel it afresh. But who ever will be able to do that, except the craftsman who fashioned it in the first place? We were able to distort God's image in us, we are not able to restore it.

So then, to run over it all again quickly, we have existence in common with sticks and stones, life in common with trees, sense in common with beasts, understanding in common with angels. So we distinguish colors with the eyes, sounds with the ears, smells with the nostrils, flavors with the sense of taste, temperatures with touch, conduct with the under-

standing. Everybody wants to be understood; there isn't anybody who doesn't want to understand; not everybody wants to believe.

Someone says to me, "Let me understand, in order to believe." I answer, "Believe in order to understand." So when an argument of this sort somehow starts between us, so that he says to me, "Let me understand in order to believe," and I answer him, "On the contrary, believe in order to understand," let us go with this argument to a judge, don't let either of us presume to give judgment for his own side. What judge are we going to find? After considering all sorts of men, I don't know whether we can find a better judge than a man through whom God speaks. So in this matter, over this argument, don't let's go to secular literature, don't let us have a poet judge between us, but a prophet.

The prophetic word

5. The blessed apostle Peter, with two other disciples of Christ the Lord, James and John, was up the mountain with the Lord himself, and heard a voice coming down from heaven, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him* (Mt 17:5). To remind us of this and draw it to our attention the same apostle said in his letter, *We heard this voice carried down from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain.* And after saying *We heard this voice carried down from heaven*, he went on to add, *And we have more certain the prophetic word* (2 Pt 1:18-19). That voice echoes from heaven, and the prophetic word is more certain.

Pay close attention, dearly beloved, may the Lord assist both my will and your expectation, so that I may say what I wish to and as I wish to. After all, can any of us fail to be astonished that the prophetic word was said by the apostle to be more certain than the voice carried down from heaven? Well sure, he said more certain, more certain, not better, not truer. That word from heaven was as true as the prophetic word, as good, as useful. So what can he mean by more certain, but what is more convincing to the hearer? And why should it be this? Because there are unbelieving people who disparage Christ by saying that he used the arts of magic to do what he did. So unbelievers, indulging in human guesswork and misplaced ingenuity, may also refer that voice carried down from heaven to magic arts. But the prophets lived before, I don't just say this voice, but before the incarnation of Christ. Christ was not yet man when he sent the prophets. So, anyone who says he was a wizard, if he employed magic arts to get himself worshiped even when he was dead, was he a wizard before he was even born? So there you have why the apostle Peter said *We have more certain the prophetic word.* The voice from heaven, to admonish believers; the prophetic word, to convince unbelievers. As far as I can see, beloved, we have achieved an understanding of why the apostle Peter said *We have more certain the prophetic word*, after mentioning the voice carried down from heaven.

The fisherman

6. And what extraordinary consideration on Christ's part! This Peter who speaks in this way was a fisherman, and nowadays a professional orator⁴ wins great acclaim if he is able to understand the fisherman. That's why the apostle Paul said, when speaking to the first Christians, *Consider your calling, brothers, that not many of you are wise according to the flesh, not many powerful, not many noble. But the weak things of the world God chose, to confound the strong; and the foolish things of the world God chose, to confound the wise; and the ignoble things of the world and the contemptible ones God chose, and things that are not, as though they were, that the things that are might be made void* (1 Cor 1:26-28).

You see, if Christ had begun by choosing an orator, the orator would say, "I was chosen for the sake of my eloquence." If he had chosen a senator, the senator would say, "I was chosen because of my rank." Finally, if he had first chosen the emperor, the emperor would have said, "I was chosen because of my authority." All these types have to keep quiet for a little while and be put on one side; let them keep quiet — they are not being left out, they are not being ignored, they are just being put on one side for a time, in that they are likely to boast about themselves in themselves.⁵

"Give me," he says, "that fisherman, give me a common man, give me an uneducated man, give me one whom the senator doesn't deign to talk to, not even when he's buying fish. That's the one to give me," he says. "If I fill that one, it will be obvious that it's I who am doing it. Though I am also going to do it with the senator and the orator and the emperor; some time or other I am going to do it with the senator, though it's more certainly me with the fisherman. The senator is in a position to boast about himself, so is the orator, so is the emperor. The fisherman isn't in a position to boast about anything except Christ. Let him come first, to give a salutary lesson in humility. Let the fisherman come first; the emperor is best brought along through him."

*Unless you believe,
you shall not understand*

7. So remember this fisherman, this holy, just and good man, filled with Christ, in whose nets cast throughout the world this people too, along with all the rest, was destined to be caught.⁶ So remember that he said, *We have more certain the prophetic word*. So therefore, give me a prophet to act as judge in that argument.

What were we arguing about? You were saying "Let me understand in order to believe"; I was saying "In order to understand, believe." An argument has arisen, let us put it before a judge, let a prophet judge, or rather let God judge through a prophet. Let's both of us keep silent. What we have each said has been heard: "Let me understand," you say, "in

order to believe.” “Believe,” say I, “in order to understand.” Let the prophet make his reply: “*Unless you believe, you shall not understand*” (Is 7:9).

8. Do you imagine, beloved, that the one who says “Let me understand, in order to believe” is really saying nothing very much? After all, what are we on about now, but getting people to believe—not those who don’t believe at all, but those who do, though still not enough. If they didn’t believe at all, they wouldn’t be here. It’s faith that brought them here, to listen. Faith brought them into the presence of the word of God, but this faith which has sprouted needs to be watered, nourished, strengthened. That’s what we are concerned with right now. *I*, he said, *planted, Apollo watered, but it is God who gave the increase. So neither the one who plants is anything, nor the one who waters, but God who gives the increase* (1 Cor 3:6-7). By speaking, exhorting, teaching, persuading I can plant and water, but I cannot give the increase. That man he was talking to, who asked him to help his faith, which was budding and still tender and still weak and really very hesitant, but some sort of faith for all that and not no faith at all—he knew who it was to whom he said, *I believe, Lord* (Mk 9:23).

Help my unbelief

9. Just now when the gospel was being read, you heard *If you can believe*—the Lord Jesus said to the boy’s father, *If you can believe, all things are possible to one who believes* (Mk 9:23).⁷ And the man took a look at himself, and standing in front of himself, not in a spirit of brash self-satisfaction but first examining his conscience, he saw that he did have some faith in him, and he also saw that it was tottering. He saw both things. He confessed he had one, and he begged for help for the other. *I believe, Lord*, he says. What was to follow, if not “Help my faith”? That’s not what he said. “*I believe, Lord*. I can see this something in me, which I’m not lying about. I believe; I’m telling the truth. But I also see this other heaven knows what, and I don’t like it. I want to stand, I’m still staggering. I’m standing and speaking, I haven’t fallen, because I believe. But yet I’m still staggering: *Help my unbelief!*” (Mk 9:24).

And so, beloved, that other man too whom I set up against myself, calling in the prophet as referee because of the argument that arose between us, he too isn’t saying just nothing when he says “Let me understand, in order to believe.” Of course, what I am now saying, I am saying to help those people believe who do not yet believe. And yet, unless they understand what I am saying, they cannot believe.⁸ So what this person says is partly true—“Let me understand, in order to believe”; and I on my side, when I say, just as the prophet says, “On the contrary, believe, in order to understand,” am speaking the truth. Let’s come to an agreement, then. So: understand, in order to believe; believe, in order to

understand. I'll put it in a nutshell, how we can accept both without argument: Understand, in order to believe, my word; believe, in order to understand, the word of God.

NOTES

1. This is the heading for the sermon given by the Maurist editors, and it explains why the sermon is included here among sermons on the Old Testament. However, the sermon survives primarily in a manuscript collection of sermons "On the words of the apostle" and so the editor of our text gives the heading in this collection (which, however, he declares to be not altogether genuine), "On the words of blessed Peter the apostle, We heard a voice carried down from heaven, This is my beloved son, and we have more certain the prophetic word." The Maurist heading represents a more just appreciation of the content of the sermon, which is in fact dealing with the question posed by the quotation from Isaiah — one of Augustine's favorite quotations.

The quotation follows the Septuagint text, and is slightly different in the Hebrew: "If you will not believe, surely you will not be established"; the words are addressed to King Ahaz, who was not showing sufficient trust (belief) in the Lord, when he was being threatened by an alliance of his northern neighbors against him. It concurs with Augustine's main point, that faith, or trust, must come first, and is the very basis and foundation of everything else.

No one has suggested any particular date for the sermon. The subject is one that was close to Augustine's heart throughout his life. It governs his exploration of the mystery of the Trinity. So one might plausibly date this sermon to the time when he embarked on his great work on that doctrine, that is, to about 400. Another little peculiarity of the sermon may support this guess: he addresses the congregation several times as "Beloved" (*carissimi*). This is, of course, a conventional mode of address in sermons, but not one, in fact, that Augustine used very commonly. Now it is my general impression of him that he grew less conventional, not more so, the older he got. So the frequent use of an ecclesiastical convention that is not in fact characteristic of him suggests an early rather than a late date. Furthermore, had he been preaching on this subject after 412 or so, I think he would almost certainly have brought in some reference to the Pelagian controversy. As it is, the only controversy he mentions here is one that he quite frankly manufactured himself.

2. See Gal 2:9.

3. That is, man, of course, though he doesn't actually say so. He just turns suddenly to this generalized manner of speaking, only to drop it again at the beginning of the next section.

4. He is referring, with ironic self-mockery, to himself. There is a rhyming cadence in the Latin impossible to reproduce in the English. *et modo magnam laudem habet orator, si potuerit ab illo intellegi piscator.*

5. See by contrast 1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17.

6. *This people too* — the Africans. He is taking a side swipe at the Donatists. Not that they denied that Africans had been caught in the net, but that they in effect maintained, according to Augustine's polemic, that only Africans were retained in the net.

7. The Latin (following indeed many Greek manuscripts) misses the full effect of Jesus' reply as given in the most authentic Greek text: "If you can? All things are possible etc.," echoing the man's plea, "Help us, if you can."

8. That is, of course, what I am saying cannot help them to believe.

SERMON 44

ON WHAT IS WRITTEN IN ISAIAH:
HE WILL COME UP LIKE A SAPLING, ETC. (IS 53:2)

Date: 399¹

Like a root

1. A prophecy, my dearest brothers and sisters, was made about our Lord and Savior a long time before him: *He will come up like a sapling, and like a root in thirsty ground.* Why like a root? For this reason: *He has no fine appearance, nor honor* (Is 53:2). He suffered, he was humiliated, he was spat upon; he had no beauty; he appeared as a mere man, though he was God. But in the same way as a root is not beautiful, but contains within itself the potentiality of its beauty. Consider, my friends, observe the mercy of God. You notice a beautiful tree, such a pleasure to look at with its thick foliage and abundant fruit, and you admire it. It's delightful to pick some of its fruit, to sit in its shade and rest from the heat. You admire that whole display of beauty.² If you are shown its roots, you don't find any beauty in them. Don't despise what has been tossed aside; that's where what you so admire comes from. *Like a root in thirsty ground.* Now observe the splendor of the tree.

The growth of the Church

2. The Church has grown, the nations have come to believe, the rulers of the earth have been conquered by the name of Christ, that they themselves may be conquerors in the whole wide world. They have placed their necks under the yoke of Christ.³ They used previously to persecute Christians on behalf of idols; now they persecute idols on behalf of Christ. Everyone is running to the Church for help, in all their afflictions, in all their distress. That grain of mustard seed has grown, it has become greater than all herbs. The birds of the sky, the high and mighty ones of the world, come and rest in its branches.⁴

Where does all this beauty come from? It has arisen from goodness knows what kind of root, and it's a beauty that is world famous. Let's look for its root. He was spat upon, he was humiliated, he was flogged,

he was crucified, he was wounded, he was despised. You can see there's no fine appearance here; but the glory of the root comes to the fore in the Church. So the prophet is describing the bridegroom in that despised, dishonored and rejected figure. But now you have the tree to look at, which has sprung up from that root and filled the wide world. *A root in thirsty ground.*

The interior beauty of Christ

3. *He has no fine appearance, nor honor; and we saw him, and he had no fine appearance nor comeliness (Is 53:2). Isn't this the carpenter's son? (Mk 6:3). How he had no comeliness is clear from their saying, Are we not right in saying that you have a demon? (Jn 8:48).⁵ Demons used to flee at his name; and he is objected to as having a demon. But why so? We saw him, and he had no fine appearance nor comeliness. What is his inner fine appearance, where it wasn't seen? In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (Jn 1:1). What is his fine appearance? Who being in the form of God thought it no robbery to be equal to God (Phil 2:6).*

The more deformed, the more lovely

4. *And when was he seen to have no fine appearance nor comeliness? And he had no fine appearance; but his features were abject, and his posture more deformed than that of all men. A man under blows. Under blows, a man; before the blows, God; after the blows, a man who is God.⁶ A man under blows, and one who knows how to bear infirmities (Is 53:3). Whose infirmities? Those people's at whose hands he suffered. The doctor was bearing the infirmities of people who had gone crazy, and when he was actually being crucified he prayed and said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing (Lk 23:34).*

Notice that, please; we must love the bridegroom. The more deformed he is presented to us as being, the dearer, the lovelier he has become to the bride. *Therefore he turned himself away.* He turned himself away, so that those who were crucifying him should not understand who he was. *His face was dishonored, and not valued highly (Is 53:3).*

Blindness of the Jews about Christ

5. *This man carries our infirmities, and is in sorrow for our sake; and we supposed him to be in sorrow, and under blows, and in pain. But he was wounded for our sins, and became weak for our iniquities. The instruction of our peace is upon him, by his bruises we have been healed. We all went astray like sheep, and the Lord handed him over for our sins (Is 53:46).⁷ Is this the gospel, or a prophecy?*

What have the Jews got to say against these words? Isn't it extraordi-

nary, that they hear these words, they have these words, they read these words, they can't find anyone else they apply to except that one man who is being proclaimed to the whole wide world in the gospel—and that still they don't become Christians, but continue to be blind in the face of the plainest utterances of the prophets? Don't be surprised, though, at the blindness of the Jews about Christ. Here you have the end of what is said about the bridegroom, and the beginning of what is said about the bride; and just as you were astonished, in the case of the bridegroom, at the blindness of the Jews, so in the case of the bride you will be astonished at the blindness of the heretics.⁸

Human and divine in Christ

6. But now for the time being let us concentrate on our astonishment at the blindness of the Jews. *The Lord handed him over for our sins; and he, being badly treated, did not open his mouth. Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb before its shearer he was voiceless, thus he did not open his mouth. In humility his judgment was taken away. And just in case you should despise him, Who will expound his begetting? (Is 53:7-8). Which begetting? Before the daystar I begot you (Ps 110:3).* There you have one begetting: *before the daystar*, before everything that has been made, before all the angels, before every creature. Why? Because *all things were made through him (Jn 1:3).*

But perhaps a second begetting of his can be set forth? Who can expound that one either? He is conceived by faith, no male is involved, the Virgin's womb grows big, he comes forth like a bridegroom from his chamber (Ps 19:5). This too is a wonderful begetting; the human one is wonderful, because it is without a father; that divine one is wonderful, because it is without a mother.

Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, like a lamb before its shearer, thus he did not open his mouth. In humility his judgment was taken away. Who will expound his begetting? Since his life will be lifted up from the earth. It is foretelling his resurrection. You can see how true what the Lord said is (as though Truth could say anything but the truth!): *What is written about me in the law and the prophets and the psalms, that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise again, as you heard.⁹ "And to rise again,"* you heard this very minute: *Since his life will be lifted up from the earth. And for repentance and the forgiveness of sins to be preached in his name among all nations, beginning from Jerusalem (Lk 24:44.46-47).* You will hear that too from this prophet.

Not that we should prefer the prophet to the Lord. The herald went first, the judge followed.¹⁰ The words spoken by the herald were the judge's, not his own, and the judge coming along afterward confirmed that his were the words which the herald had spoken.

Since his life will be lifted up from the earth. By the iniquities of my people he was led away to death (Is 53:8). You heard him just now saying

to them, "What have I done to you? If you have found any sin in me, prove it."¹¹ And they answered, *Crucify him, crucify him* (Lk 23:21); a mere man, as they thought, even though an innocent one. And so, *By the iniquities of my people he was led away to death.*

At the tomb

7. So, *I will give the wicked for his burial.* What does this mean, *I will give the wicked for his burial, and the rich for his death* (Is 53:9)? The wicked on account of burial, the rich on account of death. That rich man from Arimathea, Joseph, went to see Pilate while the Lord was hanging on the cross, and asked for his body; he obtained permission to bury him. The rich were given for his death; Joseph buried a poor man, in whom he was looking for riches. So, *the rich on account of his death.* What he said last, happened first; what he said first, happened later. *The wicked for his burial.* Where can we point to that? *The Jews went to see Pilate and said to him, Sir, we heard that that "planer"¹² (ho planos in the Greek, meaning "imposter") told his disciples he would rise again, once killed; give orders for the tomb to be guarded, or perhaps his disciples may come at night and take him away, and the error would become worse than it was before. Pilate said to them, You have soldiers; go, set a guard as you wish* (Mt 27:57-66). They took soldiers and stationed them there. These men were wicked; they were given on account of his burial, to guard him.

But how can we prove they are wicked? Perfectly innocent soldiers were sent; the magistrate gave them orders, they came to the tomb, they guarded it. Listen to how they are wicked; read the gospel. After the Lord had risen, and they saw the angel, they were terrified and dismayed. When others, the women, were told, *Do not be afraid* (Mt 28:5), these men were paralyzed with fear, because they weren't buoyed up by faith. And yet, knowing what had happened, they went to the Jews and told them everything.¹³ The Jews said, "We'll give you money." So they were wicked, you see; they hid the truth and sold a lie. And how did they sell a lie? It wasn't a very wonderful lie they sold, the blind selling a lie to the blind. *Say* (they were told) *that while we were asleep his disciples came and snatched him away* (Mt 28:13). Oh, vanity selling vanity to vanity!¹⁴ The vain, the lightweight, are going to hear the story and believe it. To this day that's the story among the Jews, vain, false and empty though it is. They refuse to listen to the testimony of the martyrs, and live; instead they listen to the testimony of sleepers, and perish.

If the guards were asleep, how could they know who took him from the tomb? Or else, why were you keeping watch, you wicked fellow? You wicked man, about whom the prophet had good reason to say, *I will give the wicked for his burial!* You wicked, you worst of men! Either you were keeping watch, and ought to have guarded the tomb; or you were asleep, and don't know what happened. What the Holy Spirit had foretold

long before through the psalmist was fulfilled: *They thought up a plan which they could not make work* (Ps 21:11).¹⁵

NOTES

1. This sermon consists of fragments of a lost sermon, put together by Saint Caesarius of Arles, who added a conclusion of his own, which is here omitted. The date is uncertain, but 399 or 400 has been suggested. It is possible that the sermon was preached on Good Friday (see note 11, below).

2. He probably had a fig tree in mind. It is hard to think of any really big shady tree, like an oak or a beech, outside the tropics, which is also a fruit tree.

3. An allusion to the ancient Roman practice of making conquered enemies pass under the yoke, as a symbol of their subjection and servitude, like draft oxen. Augustine is referring, of course, to the conversion of Constantine and his successors, especially Theodosius the Great, who had died only a few years previously, in 395. He, like Constantine, had been a victorious general, and had also initiated the policy of outlawing pagan worship.

4. See Mt 13:31-32; Lk 13:19.

5. Having a demon was doubtless often associated with the evil eye, regularly attributed to people with a squint, or in other ways ill-favored. Augustine is possibly suggesting, or assuming, that our Lord was in fact rather ugly, like Socrates.

6. A very peculiar statement, implying, if it is taken strictly, an incarnation by stages, stages moreover which begin with the passion of Christ, and an incarnation which would consist of a man gradually becoming God rather than of God becoming man. Clearly, such was never Augustine's belief or doctrine, so we have to interpret him rather more generously. First, while he does seem to take "under blows" as referring primarily to the scourging and crucifixion of Christ, the expression in Latin, *in plaga*, has wider connotations; it could be translated "with the plague." So it can refer, obliquely, to the whole course of Christ's human existence (see previous note). Secondly, Augustine is talking about appearances, about how Christ was seen. "Under blows," during his whole life indeed, he was seen as a man. Before that he was seen (at least by the angels) as God. After that, which is to say after the resurrection, he was seen as both man and God.

7. Augustine's text was not only a very literal translation of the Greek Septuagint, but also rather a bad one, and very possibly of a rather corrupt text of the Septuagint. So readers must not be surprised at its peculiarities, which are reproduced as faithfully as possible in this translation.

8. The heretics are the Donatists, and the passage he refers to about the bride is the next chapter of Isaiah 54, which begins *Sing, O barren one who did not bear*, referring to a restored Jerusalem and Israel. That part of the sermon which dealt with this topic does not survive.

9. Presumably when the passage from Lk 24 was read.

10. A Roman magistrate was always accompanied by a herald or crier, clearing the way before him as he went in a little procession to his tribunal in the forum. The herald also, later in the proceedings, read out the judgment in a suitably stentorian voice.

11. When did they hear him saying this? The words echo various places in the gospel, but are not a quotation of any particular place. Had, perhaps, a kind of harmony of the passion narrative been read? "What have I done to you?" echoes very clearly the Good Friday reproaches of the present Roman liturgy, taken largely from Micah 6:3-5. We would be justified, I think, in inferring from this whole section (whatever the readings at the service may have been) that this was a Good Friday sermon.

12. *Planus*, a mere transliteration of the Greek. Perhaps when the version Augustine used was first made, this Greek word was part of local Latin slang, at least among Christians. But clearly when he spoke it needed explanation. Whatever his text was, he was certainly quoting it very freely indeed.

13. This, in Augustine's eyes, was their first sin. Knowing what had happened, they ought to have believed, like the centurion beside the cross (Mk 15:39).

14. See Eccl 1:2.

15. Augustine returns to the theme of this plan that wouldn't hold water, the theme of sleeping witnesses, in his *Exposition of the Psalms* 64(63):6, which read in his version, "They failed, scrutinizing with scrutiny."

SERMON 45

ON WHAT IS WRITTEN IN ISAIAH: *BUT THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN THEMSELVES TO ME SHALL POSSESS THE LAND AND INHABIT MY HOLY MOUNTAIN*; AND FROM THE APOSTLE: *HAVING THEREFORE THESE PROMISES, BELOVED, LET US CLEANSE OURSELVES FROM EVERY DEFILEMENT OF FLESH AND SPIRIT, PERFECTING OUR SANCTIFICATION IN THE FEAR OF GOD*

Date: 400-405¹

Cleansing flesh and spirit

1. Among all the passages that we have heard read out to us, would your honors² cast your minds back to the first reading from the prophet Isaiah, because we can't possibly remember or talk about everything that has been read. I suppose the final words with which the reader concluded may still be sticking in your minds: *Those who have given themselves to me shall possess the land and inhabit my holy mountain* (Is 57:13). Then up comes a reading from the apostle, and it begins with these words: *Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting our sanctification in the fear of God* (2 Cor 7:1). It was taken care of by the divine mercy, which governs us and prepares food for us when we are hungry,³ not only restoring the tissues of our bodies, to which end it makes the sun rise on the good and the bad, and sends rain on the just and the unjust,⁴ but also because of the hunger of our minds which we suffer from in this desert and die from unless he rains down manna⁵—so it is the Lord preparing a table for us,⁶ and not deliberate human arrangement, as he himself knows, that it so happened that the readings followed each other in this way, that in Isaiah we are promised something, while in the apostle we are told, *Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting our sanctification in the fear of God*, as though it were only one reading from the prophet and the apostle.⁷

After all, what does the apostle say? *Having therefore these promises, beloved*, and it doesn't say here what promises—not that they aren't there in the text, but that the reader didn't begin with them,⁸ and it's as if the mind of the listener were to inquire what promises the apostle meant by

the words, *Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit.* A big job, you see, is being laid on us, and no small labor, to cleanse ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit. And nobody will undertake this job unless he gets the promise of a fee. So since nobody is likely to undertake the job of cleansing flesh and spirit unless attracted by the reward offered, I don't know how it happened that the reader began with the imposition of the labor and didn't begin with the promise of the fee.⁹ But God, who wasn't prepared to cheat the eager listener—if he was hesitating to undertake the labor of cleansing flesh and spirit, because he hadn't heard what the fee was, he should fortify himself with the opening words of the reading from the apostle; and if then he wants to know about the promises, he should turn his attention to the end of the reading from the prophet. The reading from the prophet ended with the promise; the reading from the apostle began with the imposition of the task.

Showing consideration

2. So let's straighten up, and cleanse ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit, having these promises. What promises? *Those who have given themselves to me, says the Lord through Isaiah, shall possess the land, and inhabit my holy mountain (Is 57:13). Having therefore these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit (2 Cor 7:1).* Someone is going to say, "And is that why I am to cleanse myself from defilement of flesh and spirit, just to possess land and inhabit a mountain?" Unquestionably we have to ask what is meant by possessing the land and inhabiting the mountain, or else people may possibly start hoping that they are going to receive vast possessions, and so they won't set limits to their greed but just defer it, or indeed increase it, and disdain little things on the supposition that they are going to get bigger ones of the same kind.

After all, who wouldn't pooh-pooh one hectare¹⁰ if he were assured that he was going to get a hundred? Or who wouldn't forego the pleasure of one lunch, of a rather simple and frugal kind perhaps, if he were told, "Unless you deny yourself this, you won't be admitted to that sumptuous and splendid dinner?" People who deny themselves something here and now in this way are not setting limits to their greed. It's because their greed is in fact limitless that for fear of losing the more ample object of their desires they decline lesser and more limited gains. But it's still the same greed. Isn't a man grasping when he disdains a hundred quid, in order to get his hands on a thousand? Don't imagine he has put bounds to his avarice just because you have found him declining a hundred quid. He's thinking of the thousand, that's why he's declined the hundred.

There are people who show great consideration to old men without children, and in doing so give up many advantages, but with the hope of getting more from them. Do we regard such people as kind, or as greedy?

That's why the children of poor people win readier approval for being considerate to their poor parents, because their inducement is their sense of duty, not profit. But when the children of rich people show consideration to their parents it doesn't prove that they are dutiful, and if they are it isn't obvious, because even if it is observed by God it cannot be observed by men. So much is this so that parents themselves are often suspicious of their children when they think that it's only for their money that their children are being considerate to them; so sometimes when it might suit their children to be emancipated from their parents—perhaps he's requiring an arrangement because he's going to marry a wife, or to obtain some preferment, and wants them to settle a property on him—they say, "I won't make any settlement, as then he won't take care of me." What an opinion he has formed of his own son, that he only shows consideration for the sake of money, ignoring his affection for his father!¹¹

So if you are afraid your son won't take care of you once he has his hands on the money, you are in fact making filial piety a commodity for sale, not a quality to be loved. How much better a poor man's son, the son, for instance, of an old man in the direst poverty, who expects nothing from his father because he hasn't got anything he can leave him, but who all the same supports his father with his labor and the sweat of his brow. Sometimes, of course, the children of rich people too take the fear of God seriously, and that's why they show consideration to their parents, not because they expect something from them, but because they are their parents who brought them into the world and brought them up, and God gave a commandment, which says *Honor your father and your mother* (Ex 20:12). But where the reward is there for all to see, the genuineness of their sentiments is not so obvious.

That, however, makes these ones all the more acceptable to God, because people cannot see their minds and God is the only one who does see; nor are they likely to be praised by other people—rather like Job who worshiped God. The demons, you see, thought that he worshiped God for what he got out of it. And how was it proved that he worshiped God freely, for nothing? By his saying, when he had lost everything, *The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away; as it pleased the Lord, so has it come to pass; blessed be the name of the Lord* (Jb 1:21).

The scriptures speak obscurely

3. Why have I been saying all this, brothers? Because scripture never stops warning us every day to disdain temporal things and love the things that are eternal. There is not a single divine page that refrains from speaking to us about this, sometimes openly, sometimes obscurely in a mystery.¹² But none should think they are being cheated, when the divine page speaks obscurely. Where you are being shown the will of God, that's where it is speaking openly—so cherish it there. Love it there, when it is advising you openly. It's exactly the same in the obscure passages as it is

in the open ones; exactly the same in the shadow as it is in the sun. You can carry it out as the same, if you read it as being the same.

This, as I have said, is obscure: *shall possess the land, and inhabit my holy mountain* (Is 57:13). After all, if we take it literally and materialistically,¹³ we won't be cleansing ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit; and God will have procured for us to no purpose the conjunction of the end of the reading from the prophet with the beginning of the reading from the apostle, if to possess some earthly mountain we start getting ourselves ready for avarice, not for godliness. Well, but what should we understand by the mountain? It's obscure what he meant by "mountain."

Yes, but if God had really let us down, he would nowhere say what mountain means. Where he does tell us openly, that's where you must love the mountain. Where he openly recommends a mountain to you, and scripture opens itself up to say what mountain means, that's where you must love it. Yes, wherever you hear such a mountain promised you, set your sights on it. As you have loved it in the open passage, take it in the same sense in the obscure one. Where do we suppose the mountain is mentioned clearly, so that we really can cleanse ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit? What sort of mountain really has been promised us?

Land of the living

4. First of all we have to know what sort of land is being promised us, which the prophet David sighs for in some place, when he says, *My hope are you, my portion in the land of the living* (Ps 142:5). So without a doubt there is some land of the living, because this earth is the land of the dying. Well, if anyone could be born on this earth who wasn't going to die, he wouldn't call that one the land of the living, not unless he were comparing this earth with it, and finding it to be the land of the dying. So there is a land of the living, then. As it is eternal and heavenly, it is called a land because it is possessed, not because it is ploughed. It can be possessed without toil, because this one exercises its possessor in toil, and wearies him with anxiety. What is it they say to you? "Get up and plough your land, that you may have something to live on."¹⁴ And willy-nilly, grunting and groaning you get up and go to work, because you are haunted by the sentence passed on Adam when he was condemned: *In the toiling of your brow you shall eat your bread* (Gn 3:19).¹⁵

But when all toiling and groaning is over and done with, we shall be in the land of the living. Nothing is sown and grows there. Everything there is always just what it is, just as it is. There is no alternation there of winter and summer, night and day. We sow here in order to reap there, provided, that is, that we do sow. Who does sow here, after all, in order to reap there? The one who is generous to the poor. Generosity to the poor is sowing seed in the soil. You sow here, and you will find a harvest

there. It isn't cut in the summer, to be used up in due course, but it is both eaten, and it remains with joy. There, you see, you are fattened on justice. That land has its own proper bread. What is this bread? The one who came here to us from there: *I am the living bread, I who came down from heaven* (Jn 6:51). What is this bread like? *Blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty for justice, because they shall be satisfied* (Mt 5:6).

The mountain of God is Christ

5. We have heard about the bread from that land; now let us hear about the mountain. *They shall dwell*, he says, *on my holy mountain* (Is 57:13). I think, you see, we have found in another text of holy scripture that the mountain too is Christ himself. The one who is the bread is also the mountain. Bread because he feeds the Church, mountain because the Church is his body. The Church itself is the mountain. And what is the Church, actually? The body of Christ. Add the head to it, and it makes one person; head and body, one person. Who's the head? The one who was born of the virgin Mary, who took to himself mortal flesh without sin, who was beaten by the Jews, scourged, despised, crucified, *who was handed over because of our transgressions, and rose again because of our justification* (Rom 4:25). He is the head of the Church, he is the bread from that land.

And what is his body? His consort, that is the Church. For *they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great sacrament; I, however, mean it in Christ and in the Church* (Eph 5:31-32). So too the Lord in the gospel, when he was talking about husband and wife: *Therefore they are not two, but one flesh* (Mt 19:6). So he wished God, Christ and Church to be one person.¹⁶ The head is there, the members here. He did not wish to rise again with his members, but before his members, so that the members might have something to hope for. That's why he wished to die as head, that he might be the first to rise again as head, the first to go to heaven as head, so that the other members might have hope in their head, and wait confidently for that to be fulfilled in their regard which had been pre-enacted in the head.

What need, after all, was there for Christ to die, the Word of God through which all things were made, of which it is said, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made through him* (Jn 1:1-3)? He is both crucified, and mocked, and struck with a lance, and buried. And *all things were made through him*. But because he agreed to be head of the Church, the Church would despair of itself rising again, unless it saw that its head had risen again. So the head did rise again, and was seen to rise again. It was first seen by women, and was announced to men. Women were the first to see the Lord rising again, and the evangel was announced by women to the apostles who were going to be evangelists. Evangel is in English¹⁷ "good news." Those who know Greek know what evangel means. So

the evangel or gospel is good news. What can we possibly say is such good news as that our savior has risen again? Or what greater message were they going to preach than what the women announced to them?

But why was it a woman who announced the gospel? Because it was by a woman that death was perfected.¹⁸ Indeed, the woman who announced death was consoled by the woman who announced life, because she had died as she administered death. It was by a woman that Adam was seduced, and so lapsed into death; it was by a woman that Christ was proclaimed, now rising again to die no more.

In this manner we too are going to rise again,¹⁹ and we shall be the holy mountain of God. On this mountain dwells whoever has given himself to God. *But those who have given themselves to me shall possess the land, and inhabit my holy mountain* (Is 57:13), that is, they shall not depart from the Church. At the present time, then, let us toil away in the Church, afterward we shall inherit the Church. When we get there, you see, we shall have everlasting joy, and so we shall simply be possessors there, but we shall have no toil or labor.

The Church itself is a mountain

6. But let's find this mountain somewhere else clearly, because it still seems pretty obscure. Someone may say, "Where is the Church a mountain? And when is Christ a mountain? And when is the body of Christ a mountain?"²⁰ Daniel says it as clearly as can be, no one can have any doubt about it. Daniel saw a vision²¹—does it still need explaining? May your honors see it too. Well perhaps some words there need explanation, and they shall be openly explained to you in the name of Christ. Just see if it can be said of anyone but Christ. *I saw, said Daniel, and behold a stone cut from a mountain without hands* (Dn 2:34).²² He didn't mean that the stone was without hands, but that the stone was cut from the mountain without human action; no human hands came along to cut the stone from the mountain. Your honors will be aware that stones are not cut from mountains unless human hands come along to do it. But that one was cut from a mountain without hands, and it came and broke all the kingdoms of the earth into pieces. I don't know if it conjures up before your eyes a picture of anything but Christ, of whom it is said, *All the kings of the earth shall worship him* (Ps 72:11). He is the one who broke all the kingdoms of the earth into pieces. A proud king won't have any other king ahead of him. Now all kings have Christ as their king. So he has broken in pieces all the kingdoms of the earth, that he himself may reign.

And what does it say? *This stone grew, and became a great mountain, such that it filled the whole face of the earth* (Dn 2:35). Now I imagine that you recognize Christ. You have heard about the land: *Those who have given themselves to me shall possess the land* (Is 57:13). You have also heard about the mountain: *And shall inhabit my holy mountain* (Is

57:13). *Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit (2 Cor 7:1).*

But perhaps you want to know what being cut out without hands means. As put here, it is rather obscure, but some people have already guessed, even before I tell you. I hope they will be patient with a little delay, for the sake of the others who can't think what it means unless they are given a lead by me. What is meant by without hands? Without human agency. And your honors, brothers, should notice this, that the stone was cut from a mountain and became a mountain. Cut from a mountain, and it became a mountain by growing. But what sort of mountain? Not one like the mountain it was cut from. You see, about the mountain it was cut from it doesn't say, "It grew and filled the whole earth." So there are two mountains. The first mountain is the Synagogue, the second the Church. The first is the Jewish people, the second mountain the Christian people. But in order that the Christian people might become a great mountain and fill the whole earth, a stone was cut from that other mountain, because Christ came from the Jews. So why without hands? Without human agency. Christ, you see, was born of a virgin, he was conceived apart from any conjugal embrace.

*Those who have formed a party
are not on this mountain*

7. So now we have got this mountain cleared up. Don't let us set before ourselves mountains like Giddava,²³ or any other mountains we are told the names of. Sometimes, you see, people take it literally when they read, for example, *He will listen to him from his holy heaven (Ps 20:6),*²⁴ and well, they think sometimes of a mountain, and it's talking about Christ. And people run off to a mountain to pray, as though God will be able to hear them better from there. Do you want to make contact with God in your prayer? Humble yourself. But again, just because I have said "Do you want to make contact with God? Humble yourself," don't take it literally and materialistically, and go off down to underground vaults and there start beseeching God.²⁵ Don't go seeking either caverns or mountains. Have lowliness in your heart, and God will give you all the high altitude you want. He will come to you and be with you in your bedroom.

So that's the mountain we have in Christ; we have the Church, let us love the Church. This mountain grew and filled the whole wide world. It's obvious that those who have formed a party²⁶ are not in this mountain, and don't hold the whole earth with us. Bear in mind, brothers, that every page²⁷ arms us completely against the tongues of people which we daily have to put up with. If it had said "That mountain grew and filled the whole of Africa," wouldn't those people be saying that it can only be the party of Donatus? It curbed their tongues by growing. It grew so big that

it covered the mouths of the wordy. Where, after all, did it get to by growing? All over the whole earth.

Because, you see, that mountain which it was quarried from did not grow and fill the whole earth. Because even if the Jews have filled the whole earth, because they were conquered and lost their own land, they have been scattered all over the earth as a punishment they deserved, not by increasing in numbers. But Christ the Lord, the cornerstone, has subdued the kingdoms of men, broken the kingdoms of demons, humbled all kings that he may grow, has grown and filled the whole face of the earth. I make bold to say, he is still growing, there are still places which he is filling.

Every defilement of flesh and spirit

8. So you there, love this mountain and make yourself ready to inhabit this mountain for ever. And cleanse yourself from every defilement of flesh and spirit, having such promises. What promises? If you want to possess the land and inhabit the holy mountain, cleanse yourself from every defilement of flesh and spirit. What are the defilements of the flesh? Would your graces²⁸ please pay attention — this is something we also have to say. What are the defilements of the flesh? Not when a person is going along and accidentally touches something with his foot or even his face, or if a person's foot happens to slip so he falls and comes a cropper in the mud or the mire and his face is befouled. That kind of defilement is easy to deal with, as it's commonly said, "It washes off and comes out, it's nothing."²⁹ But the defilement of the flesh which you have to beware of only comes out here from the defilement of the spirit, and that's how it defiles the flesh.

What is the defilement of the spirit? Lust. The defilement of the flesh? Adultery committed. You have got two things. Lust stirs, the spirit is already defiled. But he hasn't yet gone as far as adultery, the flesh is not yet defiled. But what's the good of the flesh being clean, and the inhabitant of the flesh dirty? Perhaps a man who is clean in the flesh is regarded by God as an adulterer in the heart, not yet married; as the Lord says, *Amen I tell you, whoever looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart* (Mt 5:28). That's the defilement of the spirit.

And when is sanctification perfected? When it is of flesh and spirit. There are people, you see, who refrain from bad deeds and don't refrain from bad thoughts. They perform the cleansing of the flesh, and don't perform the cleansing of the spirit. The reason why they don't actually do bad things is their fear of people. Lust is blazing, fear is restraining. What are you afraid of? Of being found out and condemned, found out and drummed out.³⁰ So the flesh seems to be undefiled, but sanctification has not been perfected, because what does the apostle say? *Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit* (2 Cor 7:1), so you should refrain from bad will and bad thoughts just as much as you refrain

from bad deeds. Refrain from a bad deed, and you are cleansing yourself from defilement of the flesh: abstain from a bad will, and you are cleansing yourself from defilement of the spirit.

The fear of God sanctifies us

9. And it goes on, *perfecting our sanctification in the fear of God* (2 Cor 7:1). That was a splendid addition, "in the fear of God." This is why a person doesn't perfect sanctification except in the fear of God. What is perfect sanctification? That of both body and spirit. If it's of the body and not of the spirit, then it's imperfect. You can't have the other, sanctification of the spirit and not of the body. It can be of the body and not of the spirit. It cannot be of the spirit and not of the body. After all, someone who is pure in spirit cannot perform disgraceful deeds. Why is this? *For from the heart*, says the Lord, *proceed adulteries, murders* (Mt 15:19). A man cannot perpetrate with his members what he has not said to himself in his heart. He has conceived a word in his heart, and it has been commissioned to act.

That's why the Lord says somewhere, *Clean what is inside, and what is outside will also be clean* (Mt 23:26). He didn't say "Clean what is outside." If he had begun with the body, it would have remained for him also to warn us about cleaning the mind; but since he begins with the mind, there is no need for us to clean the body, because cleanliness of mind is followed by cleanliness of body. So because the apostle Paul began with the flesh, he had to go on to talk about the spirit, perfecting our sanctification. *Let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit*, because it is possible for the flesh to be undefiled, not committing adulteries, fornications, and so forth: and yet for there to be lusts and bad thoughts and wishes in the soul. And he added, *perfecting our sanctification in the fear of God* (2 Cor 7:1).

So who is it that performs the sanctification of the body, and not of the soul? The one who fears people, and not God. For surely the one who acts in the fear of God perfects his sanctification. That's certainly why you wouldn't commit adultery, in case people should know about it. You checked your flesh from doing wrong for fear of people. That's why you wouldn't commit it where people can see. Well, if you also fear God, don't do it where God can see,³¹ and you have perfected your sanctification.

Look: "Oh if only," someone says, "I could get to that woman! But I can't, she's carefully guarded, she has a watchful husband, I haven't got an accomplice. If I took the risk, I'd be caught." He performs a kind of cleansing of the body, but because he wants it inwardly, he doesn't perform a cleansing of the spirit. He was afraid of doing it in the body in case people should see, and he is not afraid of doing it inwardly where God can see. He avoids the eyes of people, and he doesn't fear God. So who is it that perfects his sanctification? The one that lives in the fear

of God. *Perfecting our sanctification in the fear of God.* The fear of people may perhaps be able to restrain the body from uncleanness; only the fear of God can do this for the mind. Has he sanctified his mind? He needn't worry about his body. Let the one who is clothed be clean, and the clothing too will be clean. Let the inhabitant be good and sound, and he need not fear the ruin of his house.

People becoming angels

10. What, after all, is this flesh? We mustn't despise it. What is it? Grass, but it's going to be gold. Don't despise it as grass,³² it will be changed into gold. After all, he had the power to change water into wine,³³ so he has the power to change grass into gold, and of the flesh to make an angel. If he made man from dirt,³⁴ can't he make an angel from man? Your graces should observe what man was made from, and see whether we even want to think about it. He made man from this dirt, and set him over the other animals. Can't he make an angel from man? He can and he most certainly does.

He made human beings into his friends, won't he be making them angels? *I no longer call you slaves, but friends* (Jn 15:15). It was to people still carrying flesh, still subject to death, still living this poor fragile life that he said that. *I no longer call you slaves but friends.* And what is he going to give his friends? What he manifested in himself as he rose again. They shall be crowned and transfigured into heavenly glory and shall be equal to the angels of God.³⁵

There will be no corruption, no tickling and teasing of the senses. We won't be told there, "Cleanse yourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit." We won't toil, and we won't be promised a reward, because we shall already have received it. We shall not be told to sigh, because we are already singing praises. That's how mortal flesh will be transfigured into an angel's body. That too is how sighs will be transformed into praises. Here there is being sorry and being afflicted and groans. There, there is praising and being happy and joy. Afterward, then, not now, is there any happiness. Where is it now? It's in hope. You don't yet hold it in your hand, but you can rejoice by hoping, because the one who promised it cannot disappoint, because the one who promised it has it and gives it.

NOTES

1. This sermon comes to us in an ancient collection, probably formed by our friend Caesarius of Arles. And in that collection it is one of four sermons, which are placed together, which figure together in the Index drawn up by Augustine's friend and executor,

Possidius. It is thus likely that they were preached about the same time, and very probably in the same place. At least, if Augustine stayed for several weeks or so in one place, other than his own city of Hippo, and there preached several sermons, it is extremely probable that his stenographers and secretaries would have kept those sermons together in one volume.

The four sermons in question are, in our present arrangement, 5, 6, 45 (this one), and 137. Of this one, one scholar dates it to the years 408–411. Of 5, no date is suggested, but it is clear from the text that it was preached during Lent, two or three weeks before Easter (see Sermon 5, note 1). Nothing permits us to date Sermon 6, even approximately. As for 137, we have not reached it yet. But consulting it in the Maurist edition, I find it contains, *inter alia*, an attack on the Donatists of a kind that most probably puts it before 411.

Now, given the evidence of Possidius' index, and the inference about date etc. to be legitimately drawn from it, if we can date this sermon 45 to the years 408–411, then we can place all four sermons in the same period. In my own notes (Sermon 5, note 1; Sermon 6, note 1) I tentatively date the former to the second half of the first decade of the fifth century, and the latter to the first half of that decade. Well, we simply have to choose. At the moment, in view of his remarks about the Donatists in three of these sermons, which indicate that this sect was still very much a force to be reckoned with, still full of vigor, I think I prefer the earlier date.

This sermon 45 also gives us a clue about the place where it was preached. In section 7 (note 23 below) he mentions a particular mountain called "Giddava." This is probably the mountain now known as Djebel Chettaba in Algeria in the department of Constantine. The present Constantine is very near, if not actually identical with, the ancient city of Cirta in Numidia, about 100 miles southwest of Hippo. So, to conclude, we may reasonably guess that all four sermons were preached during Lent, in Cirta, some year between 400 and 405 (or between 408 and 411 if you prefer it).

2. *Caritas vestra*.

3. See Ps 46:7.

4. See Mt 5:45.

5. See Dt 8:16.

6. See Ps 78:19.

7. It is an extraordinarily incoherent sentence, in the Latin as well as the English.

8. The reader evidently began with 2 Cor 7:1, which according to nearly all modern translations and editions really belongs to the previous section. Augustine evidently thought so too. The promises Paul means are presumably the ones he quotes from the prophets (Jer 9 etc. — but the editors do not seem to be in complete agreement about which texts he is quoting) in 6:18.

The division of the Bible into the chapters and verses we know was undertaken centuries after Augustine's time—in the early thirteenth century in fact, being mainly the work of the Dominican Hugh of Saint-Cher. But he and his assistants were no doubt guided to some extent by the passages chosen for reading in services in the lectionaries, and many of these would have dated back to much earlier times. Perhaps the odd choice of the reader at Cirta in Augustine's day is ultimately responsible for 2 Cor 7 beginning where it does to this day.

9. The choice of reading does seem to have been left to the reader or lector after all. Augustine is clearly making a mild criticism of it. I think this is another indication that he was not preaching this sermon in his own church at Hippo, where I imagine he would have exercised a more personal supervision over what was read in church. At the beginning of the sermon we gathered there had been a great many readings. That perhaps supports the idea that the sermon was preached during Lent.

10. *Centuria* in Latin—a century of some measurement. As a hectare is 100 meters square, it seems the best equivalent. Perhaps a *centuria* was nearer in size to an acre.

11. I take it that the old man ignores his son's genuine affection for him, but it could mean that in the old man's opinion the son takes no account of the affection he ought to

have for his father. Here is the Latin: *Qualem sententiam tulit de filio suo, quia ad pecuniam illi obsequitur, non attendens paternam caritatem!*

12. See 1 Cor 2:7: *loquimur Dei sapientiam in mysterio*. The allusion will not be clear in the RSV translation. My New Testament Greek lexicon suggests that the “in” should be taken as meaning “as,” so that Paul is calling God’s wisdom a mystery, namely the mystery of Christ; he has already identified Christ with the wisdom of God in 1:24.

Augustine takes it in a less profound sense; the mystery is a kind of riddle (he often calls such things “sacraments”) for exercising or training our minds in faith. But these biblical sacraments, mysteries or riddles, usually focus for him on Christ.

13. *Carnaliter*.

14. Presumably this was a local saying or proverb. See Prv 20:4.

15. I imagine his misquotation, “toiling” for “sweat,” was a slip of the tongue.

16. *Ergo unum voluit esse hominem Deum Christum et ecclesiam*. A strange sentence; I think *Deum Christum* are almost to be taken as the word: “God-Christ.” I must confess I was tempted to emend *Deum* into *Deus*, which would then read very straightforwardly, “So God wished Christ and Church to be one person.” There is, however, no manuscript support for this.

17. *Latine*, of course. As “evangel” is a word hardly ever used in English, this passage sounds a little odd. But in English it is equally necessary to explain that “gospel” means “good news.” I couldn’t use it here, however, because “those who know Greek *don’t* know what gospel means.”

18. *Quia per feminam mors emendata est*. It is not easy to see what this means. *Emendata est* would normally mean “was put right”; but this is not in fact true—or at least Augustine would not have thought so. One manuscript substitutes *nuntiata est*, on the natural assumption that the woman being referred to is Eve. On the same assumption, I have translated *emendata* as “perfected,” because as an adjective it does often mean “perfect” or “first class,” “excellent.”

But the woman referred to could be the same one as in the previous sentence, and then one would be practically forced to emend *emendata* to *emendanda*, and it would mean “Because it was by a woman that death had to be put right”—and this sentence would then be explained by the next sentence.

19. A strange grammatical construction for the long future: *futuri sumus resurgere*, instead of *resurrecturi sumus*.

20. He has been keeping them on tenterhooks from the beginning of section 3.

21. At this point, it would seem, several people in the congregation began clapping and “oh-yes-ing.”

22. Actually, it was King Nebuchadnezzar who saw the vision in a dream, and Daniel is telling him what he had seen.

23. Probably the same as Djebel Chettaba in Algeria, in the department of Constantine, near, if not identical with, the city of Cirta in Augustine’s time, about 100 miles southwest of Hippo.

24. An odd text to choose to illustrate his point; the point is, evidently, that these literal-minded people assume that mountaintops are nearer to the sky where God lives.

25. In actual fact, the most ancient holy places of prehistoric palaeo- and neolithic cultures were both caverns and mountaintops. And in spite of Augustine and other like-minded Fathers of the Church, they have continued to be so in popular Christianity. Thus in Ireland Patrick has his holy mountain, Croagh Patrick, and his holy cave in Lough Derg. Saint Michael is honored on island mounts off the coasts of Brittany and Cornwall, and in a cave near Monte Gargano in Italy. Nor, *pace* Augustine, have people been merely simple-minded in finding such places holy; their symbolic numinosity, or numinous symbolism, is very powerful.

26. He means the Donatists, for whom his most common appellation is *pars Donati*, the party of Donatus, as in the next sentence or two.

27. That is, of the scriptures.

28. *Caritas vestra*; I think this is now my definitive translation of this mode of address. Augustine would have approved of making "grace" synonymous with "charity."

29. *Facilis est ista coinquinatio, quomodo solet dici, "Lavatur et exit, nil est."* I have given one interpretation of his laconic "That kind of defilement is easy." But it could equally well mean, I suppose, "It's easy to come by; it can happen to anyone." In that case the common saying would mean "A man washes and goes out, and all for nothing," that is, he immediately gets dirty again by slipping in the mud.

30. *Expompari*. The word is not given in Lewis and Short. According to the meanings given for *pompa*, it could also perhaps mean "deprived of dignity," "stripped of honor."

31. That is, in the heart, in desire.

32. See Is 40:6.

33. See Jn 2:1-11.

34. See Gn 2:7. But with his word *sordibus*, I suspect he is also thinking of semen and blood.

35. See Lk 20:36. In this whole passage it is to be noted that he takes it for granted that the pair "flesh" and "spirit" are the same as the pair "body" and "soul." This was the Platonist or Neoplatonist in him. Saint Paul and the scriptures generally do not regard them at all as synonymous terms.

Secondly, when he talks about people becoming angels, he is not thinking of our becoming disembodied souls at death. He is equating it with the transformation of the flesh he has mentioned shortly before, with the transformation of grass into gold. He is referring all the time, in fact, to the resurrection of the dead, the resurrection of the flesh, as the Latin of the Apostles' Creed has it. It must be remembered that he assumed that angels too have bodies, but "airy" bodies of a much subtler, finer sort than our gross, earthly bodies.

SERMON 46

ON THE SHEPHERDS

Date: 414¹

1. That all our hope is in Christ, and that he is all our true glory and salvation, is not something that your graces have just now learned for the first time. After all, you belong to his flock, and he is the one who hearkens and pastures Israel.² But because there are shepherds who are willing enough to hear themselves called shepherds and not at all willing to carry out the duties of shepherds, let us go over what is said to them through the prophet, as we have just heard in the reading. You, then, listen with care and attention, while we bishops³ should listen with fear and apprehension.

Being Christians is for our sake

2. *And the word of the Lord came to me saying, Son of man, prophesy over the shepherds of Israel, and say to the shepherds of Israel (Ez 34:1-2).* We heard this lesson when it was read just now; I have decided to say a few things about it to your holinesses. He himself will help me to say true things, if I don't just say my own thing. If I do just say my own thing, I shall be a shepherd feeding myself, not the sheep; but if what I say is his thing, then it is he who is feeding you, whoever may be speaking.

Thus says the Lord God: Oh the shepherds of Israel, who feed themselves alone! Do not shepherds feed sheep? (Ez 34:2). That is, shepherds don't feed themselves, but sheep. That's the first cause of complaint against these shepherds, that they do feed themselves, and not the sheep. Who are the ones that feed themselves? Those about whom the apostle says, *For all seek their own advantage, not that of Jesus Christ (Phil 2:21)*. You see, we whom the Lord has deigned, thanks to no merits of ours, to set in this high station (about which a very strict account indeed has to be rendered) have two things about us that must be clearly distinguished: one, that we are Christians, the other, that we are placed in charge. *Being Christians is for our sake; being in charge is for yours.* It is to our advantage that we are Christians, only to yours that we are in charge. And there are many people who reach God as Christians

without being in charge of anything, and no doubt have all the easier a journey for traveling light, and carrying less of a burden. But we bishops, apart from being Christians, as which we shall render God an account of our manner of life, are also in charge of you, and as such will render God an account of our stewardship.⁴

The reason I set this difficulty before you is so that you may have some sympathy for us, and pray for us. The day is coming, after all, when everything will be brought to judgment. And that day, even if it's a long way off for the world, is for every individual the last day of their life. In any case, God has wished each to be unknown, both when the end of the world is going to be, and when for each person the end of this life is going to be. Do you want to be unafraid of this hidden day? When it comes, let it find you all prepared.

So since the sole reason people are put in charge is to consider the interests of those they are in charge of, and not at all to attend to their own advantage but only that of those they are in service of—anyone put in charge who just enjoys being the boss and seeks his own honor and looks to his own convenience is feeding himself, not the sheep. These are the ones being got at.⁵ Listen like God's sheep, and observe how well God has ensured your safety, whatever those in charge of you may be like; that is, whatever we bishops may be like, he that feeds Israel⁶ has ensured your security. Surely, if God doesn't desert his sheep, then not only will bad shepherds pay the penalty they deserve, but the sheep will also obtain what they have been promised.

Being in charge is for yours

3. So let's see what the divine word has to say to the shepherds who feed themselves and not the sheep; it's certainly not buttering anyone up. *Behold, you consume the milk, and clothe yourselves with the wool, and what is fat you kill, and my sheep you do not feed. What is enfeebled you have not strengthened, and what is sick you have not nursed back to health, and what has been bruised you have not bandaged; and what was going astray you have not called back, and what was lost you have not sought; and what was strong you have finished off. And my sheep have been scattered just because there is no shepherd* (Ez 34:3-5). The shepherds who feed themselves and not the sheep are being told what they are diligent about and what they are negligent about.

So what are they diligent about? *You consume the milk, and clothe yourselves with the wool.* It's what the apostle is talking about when he says, *Who ever plants a vineyard, and does not take of its fruits? Who ever feeds a flock, and does not receive of its milk?* (1 Cor 9:7). So we find that the milk of the flock means whatever is contributed by the people of God to those in charge of them for their temporal support and sustenance. That's what the apostle was talking about, you see, when he said what I have just quoted.

The apostle managed for himself

4. It's true, the apostle chose to manage for himself with his own hands, and not require milk from the sheep; but all the same he said he had the right to receive the milk,⁷ and that the Lord had laid down that those who proclaim the gospel might get their living from the gospel.⁸ And he says his other fellow apostles had made use of this right which was given them, not arrogated by them. He did more by not even taking what he was owed. He waived what was owing, but the other man did not exact what was not owing; Paul did more. You may say, perhaps, he was representing the one who said, when he brought the wounded man to the inn, *If you spend any more, I will pay you back when I return* (Lk 10:35).⁹

So what more can we say about those who don't require the milk of the flock? They are the kinder ones, or rather they discharge their duty of kindness with greater liberality. They are in a position to do this, and because they can, they do it. Let's praise them without condemning the others. The apostle himself, you see, wasn't looking for a gift. But all the same, he wanted the sheep to be productive, not barren and yielding no milk. And so when at one time he was in great straits, in prison for confessing the truth, he was sent something by the brethren to ease his straits and relieve his needs. He wrote to thank them and said, *You have done well to share in my plight* (Phil 4:14). *For I have learned to manage, in whatever state I am in. I know how to abound and how to suffer want. I can do all things in him who strengthens me. Yet you, all the same, did well to send something for my needs* (Phil 4:11). But he wanted to show them what it was he was really looking for in their having done well by him, and he didn't want to be one of those who feed themselves and not the sheep; so he doesn't so much rejoice at his needs being met as congratulate them for being so productive. So what was he looking for in this instance? *Not*, he says, *that I am looking for a gift, but I seek the interest* (Phil 4:17).¹⁰ Not, he is saying, that I should be filled up, but that you should not remain empty.

Receive from the milk of the sheep

5. So those who cannot do what Paul did and support themselves with their own hands may receive from the milk of the sheep, may meet their needs in this way, but must not ignore the infirmities of the sheep. They must not be concerned in this matter just to further their own interests, and give the impression of preaching the gospel because forced to it by poverty, but they should see themselves as trimming the light of the word of truth in order to enlighten other people. Because they are like lamps, as it says: *Let your loins be girt and lamps burning* (Lk 12:35); and, *No one lights a lamp and puts it under a bushel, but on a lampstand, that it may give light to everyone in the house; so let your light give light in the presence of men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven* (Mt 5:15-16). So then, if a lamp were lit for you in the

house, wouldn't you add oil to stop it going out? And then if the lamp didn't give light after getting the oil, it wouldn't be fit to put on the lampstand, but only to smash straightaway. So what you live on, it's a matter of necessity to receive and a matter of charity to bestow.¹¹

Don't let the gospel look as if it were up for sale, its price being what those who preach it receive to live on. If they sell it like that, they are selling something marvelous very cheap. Let them receive the supply of their needs from the people, the reward of their stewardship from the Lord. The people, you see, are simply not in a position to give those who serve them in the charity of the gospel their due reward. Let these look for their reward to the same source as the people look to for their salvation. What fault, when all is said and done, is being found with these bad shepherds, what are they being rebuked for? Because, while they were taking the milk and clothing themselves with the wool, they were neglecting the sheep. So they were only seeking their own advantage, not that of Jesus Christ.¹²

6. Now we have said what taking the milk means, let us ask what it means to clothe oneself with the wool. To provide milk is to provide a living, to provide wool is to provide honor. These are the two things which those who feed themselves and not the sheep look for from their people: the convenience of having their wants supplied, the privilege of being honored and praised. The reason clothing is rightly understood to mean honor is that it covers nakedness. You see, every single human being is weak. Whoever is in charge of you, what is he if not exactly what you are? He's in the flesh, he's mortal, he eats, he sleeps, he gets up; he was born, he's going to die. So if you think about what he is in himself, he's just a man. But you, by showing him extra honor, cover up as it were what is weak.

Paul wasn't seeking his own advantage

7. Notice what kind of clothing that same Paul had received from God's good people, so that he could say, *You received me like an angel of God. I bear you witness that if it had been possible you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me* (Gal 4:14-15). But though such great honor had been shown him, did he, because of the honor shown him, spare those who were going astray, in case it should possibly be denied him, and he wouldn't be praised so much when he found fault? Well if he had acted like that, he would have been one of those who feed themselves, not the sheep. He would say to himself in that case, "What business is it of mine? Let everyone do what he likes. My living is secure, my honor is secure. Both milk and wool, that's enough for me; let everyone go the way he can." "So, are you all right, Jack, if everyone goes the way he can? I don't wish to put you in charge, I make you just

one of the people: *If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it* (1 Cor 12:26).¹³

So then the apostle reminded them how they had treated him, in case he should seem to forget the honor they had done him; he bears them witness that they had received him like an angel of God, that if it had been possible they were willing to pluck out their eyes and give them to him. And yet he attends to the feeble sheep, to the gangrenous sheep, to lance the wound and not spare the gangrene. *Have I therefore, he says, become your enemy by preaching the truth?* (Gal 4:16). So there you are; he both took of the milk, as I reminded you a few minutes ago, and clothed himself with the wool of the sheep, but for all that he didn't neglect the sheep. He, at least, wasn't seeking his own advantage, but that of Jesus Christ.

Shepherds feeding ourselves

8. Far be it from us, therefore, to say to you, "Live how you like, don't worry, God won't destroy anyone; only keep the Christian faith. He won't destroy what he has redeemed, he won't destroy those for whom he has shed his blood. And if you want to indulge your spirits at the games, go. What's wrong with it? And these feasts they celebrate throughout the city, carousing merrily, as they think enjoying (in fact, destroying) themselves at the public tables¹⁴—go along, celebrate them without a care in the world. Great is the mercy of God, which can pardon everything. Crown yourselves with roses before they fade.¹⁵ Carouse in the house of your God¹⁶ whenever you like; take your fill of food and wine, you and yours. After all, that's why this creation has been given you; it's for you to enjoy. God didn't give it to the heathen and the wicked, and not give it to you."

If we bishops start saying that sort of thing we shall no doubt draw far bigger crowds into our congregations. Even if there are some people who may feel we are not on the right track when we say such things, still we offend only a few and win the favor of the many. But if we do do this and speak not the words of God, not the words of Christ but our own, we shall be shepherds feeding ourselves, not the sheep.

The pastor kills a strong sheep

9. After saying what these shepherds are keen on, he also says what they neglect. The defects of the sheep, after all, are widespread on all sides. Healthy, fat sheep are very few in number, ones, that is, grown sturdy on the food of truth, making good use of the pastures provided by the munificence of God. But those bad shepherds don't spare this sort. It's not enough that they don't take care of the sickly and the weak and the strays and the lost; they even kill these strong, plump ones, as far as they can. And these ones are alive; by the mercy of God they are alive

and stay alive. Nonetheless, as far as the bad shepherds are concerned, they kill them.

“How do they kill them?” you say. By leading bad lives, by setting a bad example. Was it for nothing that a servant of God was told, one prominent among the members of the supreme shepherd, *Offering yourself in all company as an example of good works* (Tit 2:7); and, *Be a model to the faithful* (1 Tm 4:12)? You see, even a strong sheep often enough, when he notices his pastor leading a bad life, if his eyes wander from the rules of the Lord and are attracted by human considerations, well he begins to say to himself, “If my pastor lives like that, who am I not to behave as he does?” He has killed a strong sheep. So if he has killed a strong sheep, what must he be doing for the others, seeing that by his bad life he has slaughtered what he hadn’t fattened himself, but had found fat and sturdy?

I’m telling your graces, and I say it again, even if some sheep go on living, even if some sheep are strong in the word of the Lord, and hold fast to what they have heard from their Lord, *Do what they say, but do not do what they do* (Mt 23:3); yet the pastor who lives a bad life openly in the sight of the people is killing as far as he can any he is observed by. So he shouldn’t kid himself that after all that one hasn’t died. He’s alive, yes, and all the same he is a murderer. It’s like when a lecherous man looks at a woman to lust after her; yes, she remains chaste, and he all the same has committed adultery. The Lord’s verdict on the subject is true and plain: *Whoever sees a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart* (Mt 5:28). He hasn’t managed to reach her bed, and he is already tumbling her in his own inner bed of the imagination.

In the same way, everyone who leads a bad life for all those to see whom he has been put in charge of, as far as he is concerned is killing even the strong ones. Any who imitate him die; whoever doesn’t imitate him lives. Yet as far as concerns him, he has killed them both. *And what is fat, it says, you kill, and my sheep you do not feed* (Ez 34:3).

Christians are meant to imitate Christ’s sufferings

10. You have already heard what they are keen on; now see what they neglect.¹⁷ *What is enfeebled you have not strengthened, and what was ill you have not nursed back to health, and what has been bruised (that is, what has been fractured) you have not bandaged; and what was going astray you have not called back, and what was lost you have not sought; and what was strong you have finished off* (Ez 34:4), you have slaughtered, you have killed.

A sheep is feeble, that is to say, it is feeble in spirit and may easily yield to temptations, if they confront it when it is not being careful and not ready for them. When such a person comes to the faith, the neglectful shepherd doesn’t say to him, *Son, as you undertake the service of God, stand in justice and fear, and prepare your soul for temptation* (Sir 2:1).

Someone who speaks like that is strengthening the feeble and making a sturdy one out of the feeble one, so that when he comes to the faith he won't be expecting good fortune in this world from it. If he has been taught to expect good fortune in the world, he first gets corrupted by it, and then when adversity comes along he is severely injured by it — or even perhaps snuffed out.

So whoever builds him up like that is not building him on rock, but placing him on sand.¹⁸ *Now the rock was Christ* (1 Cor 10:4). Christians are meant to imitate Christ's sufferings, not to go seeking pleasure. The feeble one is strengthened when he is told, "Certainly, expect temptations and trials in this world; but the Lord will pluck you from them all if your heart does not turn back from him. Because it was to give courage to your heart that he came to suffer, that he came to die, that he came to be smeared with spittle, came to be crowned with thorns, came to hear insults, came finally to be nailed to the wood. All this he endured for you; you went through nothing — not for him, but for yourself."¹⁹

Participants in Christ's cross

11. What sort of people, though, are those who, being afraid to hurt the ones they are talking to, not only don't prepare them for the trials that are looming ahead, but even promise them a well-being in this world which God himself hasn't promised to the world? He foretells distress upon distress coming upon the world right up to the end, and do you wish the Christian to be exempt from these distresses? Precisely because he's Christian, he is going to suffer rather more in this world. As the apostle says, *All those who wish to live dutifully in Christ will suffer persecution* (2 Tm 3:12). And now if you please, shepherd seeking your own advantage not that of Jesus Christ, he may say *All those who wish to live dutifully in Christ will suffer persecution*; and you've got to say,²⁰ "If you live dutifully in Christ, you will have plenty of all good things. And if you are childless, you will have children, and rear them all, and not one will die on you." Is that your way of building up? Look what you're doing, where you're putting him. He's on the sand, the one you're setting up. The storm's going to come, the river in flood, the wind blowing, and it's all going to hit that house, and it will fall and great will be its ruin.²¹

Lift him off the sand, place him on the rock; let the one you wish to be a Christian be in Christ. Let him pay attention to Christ's undeserved sufferings, pay attention to the one who without any sin pays what he has not stolen,²² pay attention to scripture telling him, *He flogs every son whom he receives* (Heb 12:6). Let him either brace himself to be flogged, or not seek to be received. *He flogs*, it says, *every son whom he receives*. And do you say, "Perhaps you will be the exception"? If the exception to suffering the flogging, then the exception to being counted among the sons. "Does he really flog every son?" you will say. Of course he flogs

absolutely every son, just like the only Son. That only Son, born of the substance of the Father, equal to the Father *in the form of God* (Phil 2:6), the Word through whom all things were made,²³ had nothing to be flogged on. That's why he clothed himself with flesh, in order not to be a stranger to the whip. So God flogs his only Son who had no sin, and is he going to leave aside his adopted son who has plenty of sin? The apostle says we have been called to adoption.²⁴ We have received sonship by adoption²⁵ that we might be coheirs with his only Son,²⁶ that we might be indeed his inheritance: *Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance* (Ps 2:8). He set an example to us in his sufferings.

Strengthen the feeble

12. But of course, to save the feeble one from falling down under the prospect of trials to come, he must neither be deceived with a false hope nor broken with terror. Tell him, *God is faithful, not to allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear* (1 Cor 10:13). To promise him that and at the same time to predict that sufferings are going to come is to strengthen the feeble.

But when someone is excessively afraid and discouraged by all this, if you promise him God's mercy, not that there won't be trials and temptations but that he doesn't permit him to be tempted beyond what he can bear, then that is bandaging the fracture. You see, there are some people who, on hearing about troubles to come, arm themselves all the more against them, almost as if they were thirsting to drink the bitter draught. It's not enough for them just to be healed with the faithful; they are looking for glory with the martyrs.²⁷ But there are others who on hearing of the trials that are of necessity going to come upon them, which properly have to come upon the Christian, which no one experiences unless he really wants to be a true Christian, so with such things looming up he is broken and goes lame. Offer the bandage of consolation, bind up the fracture. Say, "Don't be afraid, the one you have come to believe in doesn't leave you in the lurch of temptation. God is faithful not to allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear. You are not just getting this from me, the apostle says it, who also says *Do you want proof that it is Christ who is speaking in me?* (2 Cor 13:3). So when you hear this you hear it from Christ himself, you hear it from the very shepherd who feeds Israel. To him, you see, it was said, *You will give us tears to drink, in measure* (Ps 80:5). So what the apostle says, *He does not allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear* (1 Cor 10:13), the prophet also says with the words *in measure*. Only mind you don't let go of the one who is correcting and encouraging you, terrifying and consoling you, striking and healing at the same time."²⁸

Put up with what is bad

13. *What is enfeebled*, it says, *you have not strengthened* (Ez 34:4). He is talking to bad shepherds, false shepherds, shepherds who seek their own advantage, not that of Jesus Christ,²⁹ and enjoy the convenience of milk and wool without taking the least care of the sheep, or nursing back to health what was ill. Between the feeble, that is to say, the not strong (because the sick are also called feeble)—but between the feeble and the sick, that is the ill, the difference seems to me to be this. To be sure, brothers, I'm trying at all costs to find some distinction between these terms, and if I made a little more effort I could doubtless make a better one, and so could someone else more learned or with a more lucid mind; meanwhile, so as not to do you out of anything, as far as the words of scripture are concerned, let me tell you what I think.

As regards the feeble it is to be feared that some trial may happen to him and break him. But the sick man is already ill with some kind of greed, and prevented by some kind of greed from entering on the way of God, from submitting to the yoke of Christ. Think of people who want to lead a good life, who are already determined to lead a good life, and are less capable of enduring evil, while they are quite ready to do good. But it is part of a Christian's strength, not only to do what is good, but also to put up with what is bad. So those who are apparently very keen on good works, but either unwilling or unable to put up with the sufferings looming ahead of them, are feeble. Those who, being lovers of the world, are held back by some bad kind of greed from any good works are lying sick and prostrate, prevented by their very sickness, which has robbed them of all strength, from doing anything good.

Such in his soul was that paralytic, whom the men who were carrying him, when they couldn't bring him in to the Lord, let down in front of him after opening up the roof.³⁰ That is, as if you would like to do this with the soul, and open the roof and let down a paralytic soul to the Lord, one gone limp in all its limbs and unoccupied with any good work, weighed down of course by its sins and wasting away with the disease of its greed. So if all the limbs are limp and there is an inner paralysis, in order to reach the physician—the physician, you see, is probably not immediately available, he's inside; the true meaning is hidden in the scriptures—open the roof by expounding what is hidden and let down the paralytic.³¹ Those who don't do this and who neglect to do it, well you've heard what they hear: *What was ill you have not nursed back to health, and what has been bruised you have not bandaged* (Ez 34:4). I have already spoken about that; he was bruised or fractured by dread of trials and temptations. Here's something to bind up the fracture with, the consolation I mentioned: *God is faithful, not to allow you to be tempted beyond what you can bear, but with the temptation he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to endure it* (1 Cor 10:13).

Calling back

14. *And what was going astray you have not called back.* That's how dangerous it is for us, living among heretics; *and what was lost you have not sought* (Ez 34:4). Here we are, carrying on somehow or other between the hands of robbers and the teeth of rabid wolves, and it's about these dangers of ours³² that we pray that you should pray. And the sheep are stubborn, you know. Because they are sought when they go astray, they say that in the error of their ways and their perdition³³ they don't belong to us. "What do you want us for? Why are you seeking us out?" As though that wasn't the very cause of our wanting them and seeking them, that they are going astray in their error and getting lost in their perdition. "If I'm all astray and in error," he says, "if I'm lost and ruined, why do you want me, why do you seek me?" Precisely because you're astray in error, I want to call you back; precisely because you're lost, I want to find you. "But I want to stray like this, I want to get lost like this." You want to stray, you want to get lost like this? How much better my not wanting it!

Yes indeed, I've the nerve to say, I am importunate, unseasonable. I hear the apostle saying, *Preach the word, be urgent in season, out of season* (2 Tm 4:2). In season for whom? Out of season for whom? In season, of course, for those who are willing, out of season for those who are unwilling. Yes of course, I'm unseasonable, I've the nerve to say, "You want to go astray, you want to perish, I don't want it. In any case, he doesn't want it, the one I'm really frightened of. If I did want it, just see what he has to say, what a reproof he gives: *What was going astray you have not called back, and what was lost you have not sought.* Am I to be more afraid of you than of him? *We all have to present ourselves before the judgment seat of Christ* (2 Cor 5:10).

I'm not afraid of you. After all, you can't overturn the judgment seat of Christ and set up the judgment seat of Donatus.³⁴ I will call back the straying sheep, I will seek the lost one. Whether you like it or whether you don't that's what I'm going to do. Even if the briars of the woods tear at me as I seek, I will all the same squeeze myself through all the thickets, I will search out all enclosures;³⁵ according to the strength my terrifying Lord gives me, I will roam everywhere in my search. I will call back the stray, I will seek the sheep that is perishing. If you don't want to have to put up with me, don't stray, don't perish.

Outward gains and inner losses

15. My grieving over you straying and getting lost is nothing much. What I'm really afraid of is that if I neglect you, I may kill what is strong. Just see what follows: *and what was strong you have finished off* (Ez 34:4). If I don't worry about the one that strays and gets lost, even the one that is strong will think it's rather fun to stray and get lost. I do indeed desire outward gains, but I'm more afraid of inner losses.³⁶ If I

treat your error as a matter of indifference, the one who is strong will notice this, and assume that going off into heresy doesn't matter. If ever some worldly advantage looks likely to be had from changing, that strong one, who's going to get lost because I don't seek you who are lost, will immediately say to me, "God's here and God's there, what's the difference? It's people quarreling who have made these divisions. God is to be worshiped everywhere. Suppose some Donatist says to him "I won't give you my daughter unless you join my party,"³⁷ he needs to think hard and say to himself, "If there was nothing bad about these people and their party, our pastors wouldn't speak so much against them, they wouldn't make such a fuss about their error." So if we shut up and keep quiet, he's going to say the opposite: "Of course, if there was anything bad in the party of Donatus, they would speak against it, they would refute it, they would be busy trying to win them over. If they are straying, they would be calling them back; if they are perishing, they would be seeking them."

It's not for nothing, then, that after saying above *What is fat you have killed* (Ez 34:3), he again says here, *and what was strong you have finished off* (Ez 34:4). Yes, it's just repeating the same thing, except that here it flows from what he said just before, *what was going astray you have not called back, and what was lost you have not sought* (Ez 34:4), and, by so doing, *what is strong you have finished off*.

16. Listen next to the results of this negligence on the part of the bad, or, rather, false shepherds: *And my sheep have been scattered because there is no shepherd, and have become fodder for all the beasts of the field* (Ez 34:5). Treacherous wolves are there to snatch them, roaring lions to grab them, when the sheep don't stick to the shepherd. For the shepherd is present, but those who behave badly don't regard him as the shepherd. They stick instead to shepherds who aren't shepherds, who feed themselves and not the sheep. And a deadly error, a deadly going astray is the consequence: they go off among beasts that ravage them and are longing to glut themselves on their deaths. Such, you see, are all those who rejoice at the errors of others; they are beasts battenning on deaths.

Good and bad mountains

17. *And my sheep were scattered, and strayed over every mountain and every high hill* (Ez 34:6). The beasts of the mountains and hills are earthly haughtiness and the pride of the world. The pride of Donatus reared up, he formed himself a party. Parmenian followed,³⁸ and compounded his error. That one is a mountain, this one a hill. That's the way the author of any error at all, swelling up with earthly self-esteem, promises the sheep rest and good pastures.³⁹ And sometimes the sheep do find pastures there—from the rain of God, not from the rock-hard mountain. After all, they too have the scriptures, they have the sacra-

ments. These don't belong to the mountains, but when they are found in the mountains, it is bad to stay in the mountains, because by straying among the mountains and the hills they are deserting the flock, deserting unity, deserting the pens⁴⁰ fortified against wolves and lions. So may God call them back from there, may he call them back himself.

In a moment or two you will hear him calling them back. *My sheep strayed*, he says, *over every mountain and every high hill*, that is, over every swelling of earthly pride. There are, of course, also good mountains: *I lifted up my eyes to the mountains, from where my help shall come*. And notice that your hope is not in the mountains themselves: *My help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth* (Ps 121:1-2). Don't imagine you are doing the holy mountains an injury when you say "My help is, not from the mountains but from the Lord who made heaven and earth." It was a mountain who cried out, *I hear there are splits among you, and everyone of you is saying, I belong to Paul, I to Apollo, I to Cephas, but I to Christ* (1 Cor 1:11-12). Lift your eyes up to this mountain, listen to what he says, and don't remain in the mountain itself. Listen to what follows: *Was Paul crucified for you?* (1 Cor 1:13). So after you have lifted up your eyes to the mountains where your help shall come from, that is, to the authors of the divine scriptures, pay attention to this one crying out from the very marrow of his bones, *Lord, who is like you?* (Ps 83:1), so that without worrying about doing the mountains wrong you may say, *My help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth*. Not only will the mountains not be angry with you when you say this, but they will love you when you do, they will befriend you all the more eagerly when you do. If on the other hand you place your hope in them, they will be saddened. The angel who showed a man many divine and marvelous things was being worshiped by the man, lifting up his eyes as it were to the mountains; but the angel called him back from himself to the Lord: *Don't do it*, he said; *worship him, for I am your fellow servant and your brethren's* (Rv 19:10).

The useless twigs

18. *They were scattered over every mountain and over every hill and over the whole face of the earth* (Ez 34:6). What's the meaning of *scattered over the whole face of the earth*? Pursuing all earthly objects, things that glitter obviously on the face of the earth, they love them, they set their hearts on them. They don't want to die, that their life may be hidden with Christ.⁴¹ Over the whole face of the earth, in attachment to earthly things, and also because the sheep are straying all over the face of the earth. Not all heretics are to be found all over the face of the earth, but still heretics are to be found all over the face of the earth.⁴² Some here, others there, but there's no lack of them anywhere. They don't know each other: one sect in Africa, another heresy in the East,⁴³ another in Egypt, another in Mesopotamia, for example. They are in different places; one

mother, pride, bore them all, just as our one Catholic mother bore all faithful Christians spread out through the whole world.

So it's not surprising if pride gives birth to division, charity to unity. And yet this Catholic mother, this shepherd within her, everywhere seeks the strays, strengthens the feeble, cares for the ill, bandages the fractured, some from this crowd, others from that which do not know each other. She, however, knows them all because she is spread all over with all of them. For example, in Africa there is the party of Donatus, there are no Eunomians⁴⁴ in Africa, but together with the party of Donatus there is here the Catholic Church.⁴⁵ In the East there are the Eunomians, no party of Donatus there, but with the Eunomians the Catholic Church is there. It is like a vine, spread everywhere just by growing; they are like useless twigs, cut off by the farmer's sickle because of their sterility, in order to prune the vine, not to lop it off altogether. So where those twigs have been cut off, there they have remained. But the vine growing everywhere knows both its own twigs that have remained in it and those beside it that have been cut off. However, from them it calls back the strays, because about broken branches too the apostle says, *For God has the power to graft them in again* (Rom 11:23). Whether you call them sheep straying from the flock, whether you call them sticks cut from the vine, God is equally capable of calling back the sheep and grafting in the sticks again, because he is the chief shepherd, he is the true farmer.⁴⁶

And they were scattered over the whole face of the earth; and there was none to seek them, there was none to call them back (Ez 34:6)—none among those bad shepherds; *there was none, no man, that is, to seek them.*

God's oath

19. *Therefore, shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: I live, says the Lord God* (Ez 34:7). Notice how he begins. It's a kind of oath of God's, calling his life to witness. *I live, says the Lord.* The shepherds are dead, but the sheep have no need to worry; the Lord lives. *I live, says the Lord God.* But which shepherds are dead? Those who seek their own advantage, not that of Jesus Christ.⁴⁷ So will there be shepherds, and will they be found, who do not seek their own advantage, but that of Jesus Christ? There certainly will be, and they will certainly be found, they are not lacking and they won't be lacking. So let us see what the Lord has to say, who says he lives; whether he says he is going to take the sheep away from the bad shepherds, who feed themselves not the sheep, and give them to good shepherds, who feed the sheep not themselves.

I live, says the Lord God, if not⁴⁸ because my sheep have become fodder for all the beasts of the plain, because there was no shepherd. Again he talks of a shepherd, both a little earlier⁴⁹ and again now. He doesn't say, "because there are no shepherds." For sheep like that who are bad enough to stray and bad enough to get lost there is no shepherd even if

the shepherd is present, because even when light is present,⁵⁰ there is no light for the blind. *And the shepherds did not seek my sheep, and the shepherds fed themselves, but did not feed my sheep* (Ez 34:8).

Bishops cannot keep silent

20. *For this reason, shepherds, hear the word of the Lord.* But which shepherds, hear? *Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I am down on the shepherds, and I will require my sheep from their hands* (Ez 34:9). Listen and learn, you sheep of God; from the bad shepherds God will require his sheep, and from their hands he will require their death. He says in another place through this same prophet, *Son of man, I have given you as a watchman to the house of Israel. You will hear a word from my mouth, and you shall point it out to them from me. Whenever I say to the sinner, You shall die the death, and you have not spoken so that the godless man may be warned from his way, he the villain shall die in his villainy, but his blood I will require at your hand. You, however, if you have forewarned the villain about his way to turn away from it, and he has not turned away from his way, he shall die in his villainy, and you shall deliver your soul* (Ez 33:7-9).

What's this, brothers? Do you see how dangerous it is to keep silent? He dies, and rightly dies; he dies in his own wickedness and sin; his own heedlessness kills him. Yes, the one who says *I live, says the Lord*, would like to find a living shepherd. But since he has been heedless, not being warned by the one who was given charge and made a watchman for this very purpose of warning him, he will die justly, and the other will be justly condemned. *But if, says the text, you have said to the godless man whom I have threatened with the sword, You shall die the death, and he has neglected to avoid the looming sword, and the sword comes and kills him, he shall die in his sin, but you have delivered your soul* (Ez 33:2-6). For this reason, it's our business not to keep quiet; it's your business, even if we do keep quiet, to listen to the words of the shepherd from the holy scriptures.

The blind leading the blind

21. So let's see, because that's what I had proposed to do,⁵¹ whether he takes the sheep away from the bad shepherds and gives them to good shepherds. This is what he says: *"Behold, I am down on the shepherds, and I will take away from them so that they may not feed my sheep; and they shall not feed the shepherds any more* (Ez 34:10). For when I say, 'Let them feed my sheep,' they feed themselves, not my sheep." How does he take away, so that they may not feed his sheep? *Do what they say; but do not do what they do* (Mt 23:3). As though to say, "They say my things, they do their own."

If he said, "Do what they do without a qualm, I will condemn them

for living bad lives; but I will spare you because you followed your leaders,” if he said that, he would have given the sheep to the bad shepherds to feed, the ones who don’t feed the sheep but themselves. But since he means to scare not only the blind leader but also the blind follower—after all, he didn’t say “The leader falls in the ditch and the follower doesn’t,” but *The blind leading the blind, both fall in the ditch* (Mt 15:14)—he has warned the sheep and said, “*Do what they say, do not do what they do*. You see, when you do not do what the bad shepherds do, they are not feeding you; but when you do what they say, I am feeding you, because it’s my things they say and do not do.”

“We are safe,” they say, “in following our bishops.” Heretics often say this when they are being refuted by the very obviousness of the truth. “We are sheep, they render an account for us.” They certainly render a bad one for your death. The bad shepherd renders a bad account for the death of the cantankerous sheep. Does the sheep live, just because its pelt is chalked up against someone? The shepherd is rebuked because he neglected the straying sheep, and that’s why it rushed into the wolf’s jaws to get gobbled up. The householder requires the life of the sheep, but here has come the bad shepherd bringing its pelt. Let him account for the pelt.

Is he going to lie about it? The one who passes judgment was watching from above. The fellow gives him a lot of words, but *he* recounts the facts, *he* inspects the thoughts. Let the bad shepherd account for the pelt of the dead sheep. “I shouted out your words to it, and it wouldn’t follow. I tried hard to stop it straying from the flock, and it didn’t comply.” Certainly, if he says this and is telling the truth—and that one knows whether he’s telling the truth—then he’s giving a good account about a bad sheep. But if God perceives that he ignored the straying sheep, that he failed to seek the one that was lost, what’s the use of his finding the pelt to bring back? He should have called it back alive, in order not to have to display its pelt dead.

So if the one who didn’t seek the straying sheep does not render a good account, what sort of account is rendered by one who leads it astray? This is what I’m saying: if a bishop appointed in the Catholic Church doesn’t render a good account of a sheep if he didn’t seek it as it strayed from God’s flock, what sort of account is the heretical bishop going to render, who, far from calling people back from error, actually drove them into error?

Do what they say, not what they do

22. But let’s see, as I said,⁵² how God calls sheep back from bad shepherds. I’ve already mentioned it: *Do what they say, but do not do what they do* (Mt 23:3). And they are not feeding you, but God is, because in order to get at the milk and the wool the shepherds, willy-nilly, are going to speak the words of God. *You who preach against stealing, do*

you steal? (Rom 2:21) says the apostle to those who say good things and do bad things. You then, mind you listen to him preaching “Do not steal”; don’t imitate him stealing. If you want to imitate him stealing, then he is feeding you on his deeds; he’s administering poison to you, not food.

But if you take in from him what he tells you not from his own but from God’s store—yes of course, grapes can’t be picked from thorns; it’s the Lord’s own considered judgment: *Nobody gathers grapes from thorns and figs from thistles* (Mt 7:26). That’s no reason, however, for you to try to misrepresent your Lord and say, “Lord, you didn’t want me, because in fact it’s impossible, to pick grapes from thorns; and again you said to me about some people, *Do what they say but do not do what they do*. People who do bad things are of course thorns. So how can you want me to gather the grapes of the word from thorns?” He will answer, “That bunch of grapes doesn’t belong to the thorns, but sometimes as a vine-shoot grows it threads itself into a hedge, and the grapes hang where the thorns are thickest, but they don’t grow from the thorn’s roots. So if you’re hungry and can’t get them anywhere else, put your hand in carefully, to avoid being lacerated by the thorns, that is, to avoid imitating the deeds of bad men; and pick a bunch hanging among the thorns, but deriving from the vine. From the bunch you will obtain nourishment, for the thorns is reserved fire as a punishment.”

Christ’s flock listens to his voice

23. *And I will snatch my sheep, he says, from their mouth and from their hands, and they shall no longer be food for them* (Ez 34:10). You find the same notion in the psalm: *Will those who work iniquity not realize, those who devour my people for food like bread?* (Ps 14:4). *And they shall no longer be food for them; because thus says the Lord: Behold, here am I myself. I have taken the sheep away from the bad shepherds by warning them, as I said, not to do what those do, that is, not to be careless and heedless sheep by doing what the bad shepherds do. And what does he say? To whom does he give what he has taken away from those fellows? To good shepherds, perhaps? That’s not how it goes on.*

And what are we saying, brothers? Aren’t there any good shepherds?⁵³ Doesn’t it say in another passage of the scriptures, *I will set up for them shepherds after my own heart, and they shall feed them with instruction* (Jer 3:15)? So how can he fail to give the sheep he takes from the bad shepherds to good ones, and say, as though there were absolutely no good ones left anywhere at all, “I will feed them”? He said to Peter, *Feed my sheep*. So what are we to make of it? When the sheep are entrusted to Peter, the Lord doesn’t say on that occasion, “I will feed my sheep, don’t you do it,” but, *Peter, do you love me? Feed my sheep* (Jn 21:15-17).

Or perhaps because Peter is no longer to be found—he has already been taken up to the eternal rest of the apostles and martyrs—there is

nobody to whom the Lord of the sheep can safely say, "Feed my sheep," and in some way or other he seems to be obliged to come down and take on the job of feeding his sheep himself, having no one he can entrust them to and yet being determined not to forsake them? Well, that's what seems to follow: *Thus says the Lord God: Behold, here am I myself.* He's the one to whom we are saying, *You who pasture Israel, give ear, you who lead out Joseph like sheep* (Ps 80:1),⁵⁴ that is, the people established in Egypt. You know, of course, that Joseph went down to Egypt; it happened when he was sold by his brothers.⁵⁵ The Jews sold Christ; it's not without reason that among the apostles it was Judas⁵⁶ who sold him. Christ began to be found among the Gentiles, there he was honored, there his people grew, his shepherd did not desert him.⁵⁷ *Stir up your power,* it says, *and come in order to save us* (Ps 80:2). He certainly does this, and will go on doing it.

He says, *Behold, here am I myself, and I will seek out my sheep and visit them, as a shepherd visits his flock* (Ez 34:11). The bad shepherds didn't bother; after all, they hadn't redeemed the flock with their blood. *As a shepherd,* he says, *visits his flock on a day*— what sort of day?— *when there have been thunderstorms and clouds,* that is, rain and fog. Rain and fog, the errors of this world; a great darkness arising from the lusts of men, a thick fog covering the earth. And it is difficult for the sheep not to go astray in this fog. But the shepherd doesn't desert them. He seeks them, his piercing gaze penetrates the fog, the thick darkness of the clouds does not prevent him. He sees, from all sides he calls back the strays, so much so that what he says in the gospel is happening: *Those that are my sheep hear my voice and follow me* (Jn 10:27). *In the midst of the scattered sheep, thus I will seek out my sheep, and lead them out from every place where they have been scattered to, on a day of cloud and thunderstorm* (Ez 34:12). When it is difficult for them to be found, now I will find them. The fog is dense, the stormcloud thick; nothing escapes his eyes.

*Mountains of Israel,
authors of the divine scriptures*

24. *And I will lead them out from the nations, and gather them from the regions, and lead them into their own land, and feed them on the mountains of Israel* (Ez 34:13). He established the mountains of Israel, the authors of the divine scriptures. Feed there, in order to feed without a qualm. Whatever you hear from that source, let that taste good to you;⁵⁸ anything from outside, spit it out. In order not to go astray in the fog, listen to the voice of the shepherd. Gather yourselves to the mountains of holy scripture. There you will find your heart's desire, there is nothing poisonous there, nothing unsuitable; they are the richest pastures. All you have to do is come to them in good health, in good health feed on the mountains of Israel.⁵⁹

And by the streams and in every habitation of the land (Ez 34:13). From the mountains which we have pointed out have flowed down the streams of the preaching of the gospel when *their sound went forth in all the earth (Ps 19:4)*, and every habitation of the land became fertile and pleasant for feeding sheep. *I will feed them in good pastures, and on the high mountains of Israel. And there they will have their enclosures (Ez 34:14)*, that is, where they can rest, where they can say "It's good," where they can say "It's true, it's clear, we are not being duped." They will rest in the glory of God, as in those enclosures.⁶⁰ *And they will sleep*, that is, rest, *and rest in good delights.*

25. *And in fat pastures shall they feed over the mountains of Israel (Ez 34:14).* I've already talked about the mountains of Israel, good mountains where we lift up our eyes to, in order that help may come to us from there. But our help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.⁶¹ It's to stop us placing our hopes even in the good mountains, that's why after saying "I will feed my sheep over the mountains of Israel," he immediately added, again to stop you staying on the mountains, *I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep (Ez 34:15)*. Lift up your eyes to the mountains, by all means, from where help shall come to you—but pay attention to him saying "I myself will be the shepherd." Because your help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

26. *And I will give them rest, says the Lord God (Ez 34:15).* But in order to give them rest, what did he first take care of? He went on to say what he first took care of: *Thus says the Lord God: What is lost I will seek, and what has gone astray I will call back; and what is crushed I will bind up, and what is half dead I will strengthen; and what is fat and what is strong I will guard (Ez 34:16)*, which the bad shepherds never did, being busy feeding themselves, not the sheep. The Lord didn't say, "I will provide other good shepherds to do these things," but "I myself," he said, "will do them. I will commit my sheep to nobody else." You're all right, brothers; you're all right, you sheep. It's we bishops, it seems, who have got to worry, there being apparently not a single good shepherd.

Christ feeds with judgment

27. He concludes like this: *And I will feed them with judgment (Ez 34:16)*. Notice that he is the only one who feeds them like this, feeding with judgment. What man, after all, can judge about man? The air's full of rash judgments all the time. One we despaired of is suddenly converted and becomes one of the best. One we counted on absolutely suddenly falls away and becomes one of the worst. We cannot be certain about our fears, and we cannot be certain about our loves. What a man is today, the man himself scarcely knows, though he himself has some idea what he's like today. But what he will be tomorrow not even he himself knows.

So God feeds with judgment, distributing to all what is proper to them; this to these people, that to those, their due to whom it is due, this or that. He at least knows what to do. With judgment he feeds those whom he redeemed by being judged. So he himself feeds with judgment.

The devil wants everyone going astray

28. In the prophet Jeremiah a certain *partridge* cried out, *he gathered together what he has not borne, making his fortune not with judgment* (Jer 17:11). As against this partridge making his fortune not with judgment, this shepherd feeds with judgment. Why is that one acting without judgment? Because he gathered together what he has not borne. And why with judgment this one? Because he takes care of what he has borne. However, we are talking here about the good shepherd. As for good shepherds, either there aren't any or else they are hidden away somewhere. If there aren't any, what are we to do? If they are hidden away, why aren't they mentioned?⁶²

Now that partridge was understood by some earlier authorities who interpreted the scriptures before us to be the devil, gathering together what he has not borne.⁶³ He is not the creator, after all, but the deceiver, making his fortune not with judgment. It doesn't matter to him, you see, who goes astray this way, who that. He just wants them all going astray, with any errors you like. How many different heresies there are, how many different errors! He wants people to go astray in all of them. The devil doesn't say, "Let them be Donatists and not Arians." Whether they are with this lot or that lot, they belong to him gathering together without judgment. "Let him worship idols," he says, "he's mine; let him remain in the superstition of the Jews, he's mine, let him forsake unity and go over to this or that heresy, he's mine." So he is gathering together without judgment, making his fortune.

But how does it go on? *In the midst of his days they will abandon him, and at his end he will be a fool* (Jer 17:11). That other one comes along, gathering his sheep together from all directions. In the midst of his days, sooner than he expected, sooner than he imagined, they will abandon him, and he will be a fool at his end. Why was he wise at his beginning, to be a fool at the end? Listen, brothers. Sometimes in the scriptures "wisdom" is put for "cunning," by a figure of speech twisting the word from its proper meaning. Thus it says, *Where is the wise, where is the scribe, where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world* (1 Cor 1:20)? And this partridge, who is also the dragon, also the serpent, was wise in a manner of speaking when he deceived Adam through Eve. He was thought to be telling the truth, he was reckoned to be giving good advice, he was believed against God. That "wisdom" by a stretch of meaning is also used in this bad sense in the style of our scriptures (what do we care how the world's authors speak?) you can find in that very text: *The serpent there was wiser than*

all the beasts (Gn 3:1). He is acknowledged to be wiser than all the beasts, sharp and cunning at deception. But later on he is not believed. He is told, "We renounce you;⁶⁴ it's enough that we carelessly let you deceive us the first time." So that's how he will be a fool at his end. His tricks have been uncovered, and so they won't be tricks any more. At his end he will be a fool, because he has gathered together what he has not borne, and made his fortune not with judgment. Against him our redeemer feeds his flock with judgment.

The astuteness of the heretics

29. There also exists a kind of heretic who may not be the devil's brother, but is certainly his assistant and his son. Him too I would call a partridge, this quarrelsome animal. You see, this animal, as bird-catchers know, can be caught through its enthusiasm for quarreling. These people quarrel with the truth, and they have gone on quarreling from the moment they separated themselves. Now they say "We don't want to quarrel," because they have already been caught. He isn't in a position to say "I don't want to quarrel." You captive you, once upon a time it was certainly you that found fault at the beginning of your rebellion with the betrayers,⁶⁵ that condemned the innocent, sought the emperor's judgment, didn't accept the judgment of the bishops, appealed so often after losing the case, kept the litigation going so insistently at the emperor's court. Where's that nerve of yours now, where's that tongue, where's that hiss? Indeed at your latter end you have become a fool, you have fed your sheep without judgment. You just don't want the truth, don't want to pass judgment on your error or on the truth of the case. Against you Christ feeds his sheep with judgment, he distinguishes between his sheep and those that are not his. *Those that are my sheep*, he says, *hear my voice and follow me* (Jn 10:27).⁶⁶

Good shepherds are not lacking

30. Here I find all the good shepherds in the one shepherd.⁶⁷ The good shepherds are not lacking after all, but they are in the one. Those who have broken away are many. Here one is being proclaimed because unity is being commended to us. It isn't really because the Lord couldn't find shepherds to commend his sheep to that here shepherds are not mentioned and the shepherd is. In that other text he found Peter to commend them to. Yes indeed, and in Peter himself he commended unity to us. There were several apostles, and only one was told, *Feed my sheep* (Jn 21:17). It's unthinkable that good shepherds should be lacking now; far be it from us that they should be lacking, far be it from his mercy not to produce them and establish them. Of course, if there are good sheep, there are also good shepherds, because good shepherds are made out of good sheep. But all the good shepherds are in the one, they are one. They

feed the sheep, Christ feeds them. The friends of the bridegroom, you see, don't utter their own voice, but rejoicing they rejoice at the voice of the bridegroom.⁶⁸ So that's why he feeds when they feed; and he says "I feed," because it's his voice in them, his love in them.

And with Peter too, when he was commending his sheep to him as one man to another, he wished to make him one with himself, and to commend his sheep to him in such a way that he himself would be the head and Peter would represent the body, that is to say the Church, and like husband and wife they would be two in one flesh.⁶⁹ Well, what did he say to him first, in order to be able to commend his sheep to him, without simply commending them to him as one man to another? *Peter, do you love me? and he answered, I do. And again, Do you love me? And he answered, I do. And a third time, Do you love me? and he answered, I do (Jn 21:15-17).*⁷⁰ He makes sure of love, in order to consolidate unity.

So he, the one shepherd, feeds his sheep in these others, and they do so in this one. And about shepherds there is silence, and yet there is not silence. The shepherds boast, but *he that boasts, let him boast in the Lord (2 Cor 10:17)*. This is feeding Christ, this is feeding for Christ, this is feeding in Christ, not feeding oneself apart from Christ. There isn't really a dearth of shepherds, as though the prophet were foretelling these bad times to come when he said, "*I will feed my sheep (Ez 34:15)*, I have no one I can commend them to." Even when Peter was there, and when the apostles were still in the flesh and in this life, even then that one, in which one all are one, said, *I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them too, so that there may be one flock and one shepherd (Jn 10:16)*. So let them all be in the one shepherd, and speak with the one voice of the shepherd which the sheep may hear and follow their shepherd, not this or that shepherd, but the one shepherd. And in him let them all speak with one voice, not with conflicting voices. *I beseech you, brothers, that you should all say the same thing, and that there should be no schisms among you (1 Cor 1:10).*⁷¹ Let the sheep hear this voice strained of all schism, purged of all heresy, and follow their shepherd who says, *Those that are my sheep hear my voice and follow me (Jn 10:27)*.

Your voice must be Christ's

31. Well then, heretic, do you want to know how in fact you don't speak with the voice of the shepherd, and how dangerous it is for the sheep to follow you, wearing sheep's clothing, but inwardly a ravening wolf?⁷² Let them hear your voice, let's see if it's Christ's. A feeble sheep, straying from the flock, not knowing where the flock may be, is looking for the Church. It is looking for a flock to join, a fold to enter. Use your voice; let's hear whether it's Christ's. Let's hear whether it's the lamb's or the partridge's. One of God's sheep is looking for its flock. Suppose a

sheep from the East has come to Africa, it's looking for its flock. It comes across you, it comes across your basilica, it wants to go in. You're alerted by an unknown face, you or your minister.⁷³ Standing or sitting at the door, he questions the sheep which is looking for its flock, or rather for the flock of God. It wants to join its fellows, it thinks it's there already. You ask, "Are you a pagan or a Christian?" He answers, "A Christian"; you see, he's one of God's sheep. You inquire whether he's a catechumen, perhaps, and is pressing on to the sacraments.⁷⁴ He replies, "I'm a baptized believer." You ask what communion he belongs to. He replies, "I'm a Catholic." A Christian, a believer, a Catholic, and you reject him. Who are those you've got inside? But go on, throw him out, reject him. Rejected by you, he is accepted by Christ.

And if only all those who are with you would also recognize you for what you are, and abandon you in the midst of your days! Some of our brothers went to their basilica yesterday. Even if they went to bad brothers, they still went to brothers. Observe, my brothers, what the difference is between the confidence born of truth and the fear born of falsehood. When you recognize some of them in this crowd of people, how delighted you are! Because among you is the one who seeks what was lost.⁷⁵ Someone opines, "He will listen and go away." And you say, "Let him listen and go away." "He will listen and mock." "Let him listen and mock. One day he will come to his senses, one day he will realize the truth." Sometimes he is abandoned by his own people, but remains with his own conscience. He renounces his mistake, he gives thanks to his God.

But what did they do?⁷⁶ "Who are you?" "Christians." "They're spies." They said, "We're Catholics." They tried to beat them up; they thought better of it and were sorry. And if only they were as sorry for staying there as they were sorry for knocking about those who went in among them! Yet the ones they threw out, they are Christians, believers, Catholics; the ones they kept—I won't say. The ones they threw out I can see; the ones they kept, let them say.

32. So let him use his voice, then. Let's see whether it is the voice of Christ, whether it is the voice of the shepherd which the sheep follow. Whether the voice comes from a good man or a bad one, let us observe whether it is the voice of the shepherd. The feeble one is looking for the Church, the wanderer is looking for the Church. You there, what do you say? "It's the church of the party of Donatus." I'm making inquiries about the voice of the shepherd. Read me this from the prophet, read it to me from a psalm, recite it from the law, recite it from the gospel, recite it from the apostle. What I recite from there is the Church spread through the whole world, and the Lord saying, *Those that are my sheep hear my voice and follow me* (Jn 10:27). What is the voice of the shepherd? *And that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name throughout all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem* (Lk 24:47). There's

the voice of the shepherd; recognize it and follow, if you are a sheep.

Listen to scripture

33. "But they betrayed the sacred books, and they offered incense to idols, so-and-so and so-and-so." What do I care about so-and-so and so-and-so? If they did that, they are not shepherds. What you've got to do is utter the voice of the shepherd, because not even about them, about so-and-so and so-and-so, are you proclaiming the voice of the shepherd. It's you who are accusing them, not the gospel, not the prophet, not the apostle. I will believe it about someone whom that voice speaks to me of; I won't believe others. But you have court records to produce; I have court records to produce. Let us believe yours; you too must believe mine. I don't believe yours; don't you believe mine.⁷⁷ Take away human documents, let divine words be heard.

Produce me one utterance of scripture on behalf of the party of Donatus; listen to thousands on behalf of the whole wide world. Who can count them, who can get to the end of them? Yet, to remind ourselves of a few, pay attention to the law, God's first testament: *In your seed shall all the nations be blessed* (Gn 22:18). And in the psalms: *Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance, and for your possession the ends of the earth* (Ps 2:8). *All the ends of the earth shall remember and be converted to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship in his presence, for his is the kingdom, and he shall be Lord of the nations* (Ps 22:27-28). *Sing to the Lord a new song, sing to the Lord, all the earth* (Ps 96:1). *And all the kings of the earth shall worship him, all nations serve him* (Ps 72:11). Who can possibly count them all? Practically every page tells of nothing but Christ, and the Church spread through the whole world. Let just one saying pop out on behalf of Donatus and his party; it's not much I'm asking for, is it? The Church spread through the whole world, they say, was due to perish. Was a perishable Church the subject of so many testimonies that it was going to stay? "But not a single one of these utterances, from the law, from the prophets, from canticles, is the shepherd's."⁷⁸ You see, not even they could say anything true apart from the Word of God which is Christ. Well then, hear the voice of the Word, and from the mouth of the Word.

34. He was amazed at the centurion's faith: *Amen I tell you*, he said, *I have not found such great faith in Israel. Therefore I tell you that many shall come from East and West and take their seats with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven* (Mt 8:10-11). From East and West shall many come. There you have the Church of Christ, there's Christ's flock for you. You see to it if you are a sheep. After all, the flock which is everywhere cannot escape your notice. You will have nothing to answer your judge with, whom you do not wish to be your shepherd. You will not have, I say, this answer to give to your judge, "I didn't

know, I didn't see, I didn't hear." What didn't you know? *There is none who can hide from his heat* (Ps 19:6). What didn't you see? *All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God* (Ps 98:3). What didn't you hear? *Their sound has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world* (Ps 19:4).

Hold fast to the open texts

35. But we are quite right to ask you for the voice of Christ, the voice of the shepherd, which the sheep can hear and follow. You can't find anything to say, you haven't got the voice of the shepherd. Hear and follow. Give up the voice of the wolf, follow the voice of the shepherd. Or utter the voice of the shepherd yourselves.

"We do utter it," they say. Let's hear it. "We too utter the shepherd's voice." Let's hear it. "In the Songs⁷⁹ of Songs," they say, "the bride speaks to the bridegroom, the Church to Christ." Yes, we know the Songs of Songs, holy songs, love songs, songs of holy love, of holy charity, of a holy delight. Certainly I would like to hear in them the voice of the shepherd, the voice of the delightful bridegroom. Produce it, you've got it. Let's hear it.

"The bride," they say, "says to the bridegroom, *Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you feed your flock, where you lie down*. And he," they say, "replies, *In the noonday* (Sg 1:6)."⁸⁰ Well—I was presenting you with straightforward testimonies, there was no other way you could explain them: *Ask of me, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, and as your possession the ends of the earth* (Ps 2:8). *All the ends of the earth shall remember and be converted to the Lord* (Ps 22:27). What's this you are presenting me with from the Songs of Songs? Something you probably don't understand. After all, you know, those songs are riddles, their meaning is known to a few who understand them, they are opened to a few who knock.⁸¹ Hold fast to the open texts and accept them wholeheartedly, and you will deserve to have the obscure ones unfolded to you. How can you penetrate obscure passages if you shrug aside the plain ones?

Song 1:6-7

36. However, brothers, come on, let's discuss these words as best as we can. The Lord will be present to help you see the sensible meaning. First of all, as everyone can tell, even the less well educated, they divide the words up badly. You'll hear in a minute, you'll agree with me in a minute. This is how the text of the passage goes. The bride is speaking to the bridegroom, *Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you feed your flock, where you lie down*. Neither we nor they have any doubt that the bride is speaking to the bridegroom, the Church to Christ. But listen to all the words of the bride. Why do you want to attribute to the

bridegroom a word that is still in the bride's part? Let the bride say everything she says, and then the bridegroom will reply. Listen to the evidence for this distinction I am going to make; you won't find anything plainer.

Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you feed your flock, where you lie down in the noonday. She is still the one speaking, *where you feed your flock, where you lie down in the noonday.* See why she is still the one speaking: it goes on, *lest perchance I come as one veiled upon the flocks of your companions* (Sg 1:6). I think everyone, educated and uneducated, can tell the difference between the masculine and feminine genders. "Veiled," I ask what gender it is.⁸² I ask every one: is it masculine or feminine? *Tell me, you whom my soul loves*, she says. When she says "whom,"⁸³ she is addressing a male, she is addressing the bridegroom. That it's a woman addressing a man is indicated by the words that follow: *Tell me where you feed your flock, where you lie down in the noonday, lest perchance I come as one veiled.* Mark that "veiled," you, in order that all this may be unveiled for you.⁸⁴ *Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you feed your flock, where you lie down in the noonday, lest perchance I come as one veiled upon the flocks of your companions.*

Thus far the bride's words. Now the bridegroom's words clearly begin: *Unless you recognize yourself*—in a manly way, woman, acknowledge yourself; *unless*, he says, *you recognize yourself*—listen to the rest of it—*O fair one among women. Unless you recognize yourself, O fair one among women, go out yourself in the tracks of the flocks, and feed your goats in the tents of the shepherds* (Sg 1:7), not in the tent of the shepherd. Notice how threatening the bridegroom is; notice how, in a situation of danger, he puts aside all compliments, courteous though he may be. What compliments she pays! *"Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you feed your flock, where you lie down in the noonday.* Midday is coming, you see, when the shepherds take refuge in the shade; and perhaps where you are feeding your flock and lying down will escape me; and I want you to tell me, lest perchance I go as one veiled, that is as one concealed, and not recognized. I am in fact plain to see, but lest as one veiled, as one hidden, I stumble on the flocks of your companions."

You see, all heretics have gone out from Christ. All who became bad shepherds, having their own flocks under the name of Christ, were his companions, they accepted his hospitality. They are called companions, as sharing one meal. The English word "companions," coming from the Latin *panis*, "bread," originally means eating bread together.⁸⁵ Listen to him in the psalm upbraiding bad companions, that is to say people who ate together: *If an enemy*, he says, *had taunted me, I could of course have hidden myself from him, even if he had spoken great things against me. But you, my twin mind, and my friend, my leader, who used to take pleasant meals together with me* (Ps 55:12-13). So then, many companions, ungrateful for the Lord's table, went out outside; bad com-

panions, they made their own tables, they set up altars against altar; they are the ones this bride was fearful of stumbling on.

Rebaptizers in Africa

37. And if you think the noonday or south means Africa⁸⁶— though I could demonstrate that parts of Egypt are more to the south of the world, and those regions burnt up by the sun where it never rains, because that's the south where it is boiling hot at midday. But there in fact the desert is full of thousands of the servants of God.⁸⁷ So if we want to pick out southerly places, why shouldn't he rather be feeding his flock there, and taking his rest there, seeing that it was foretold beforehand, *The desert places of the wilderness shall be fruitful* (Is 5:17)? But fine, I agree, let the noonday or south be Africa, Africa be the noonday. Here are the bad companions. The overseas Church, sailing to Africa in one of its members, is anxious not to go astray, and calls upon its bridegroom and says to him, "I hear there are lots of heretics in Africa, I hear there are lots of rebaptizers⁸⁸ in Africa. But I also hear that your people are there in no less numbers. I hear both things. But what I want to hear from you is which are yours. *Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you feed your flock, where you lie down in the noonday*, in that noonday to the south where I hear there are two parties, one the party of Donatus, the other an integral part of your whole. You tell me, please, where I am to go, *lest perchance as one veiled*, that is unrecognized, *I come upon the flocks of your companions*, I stumble on the flocks of heretics trying to place stone upon stone that will be thrown down,⁸⁹ lest I rush in among the rebaptizers, *tell me.*"

And he that insists on the unity of the shepherd, who said in this reading *I will feed them* (Ez 34:15), and who rejects the shepherds who want to be many, who have lost unity, he answers very sternly and with no compliments at all, so great is the danger: "*Unless you recognize yourself,*" he says, "*O fair one among women.* You are fair among women, but for goodness' sake acknowledge yourself. Where are you to acknowledge yourself? In the whole wide world. If you are beautiful, it's the unity in you. Where there's division there's ugliness, not beauty. *Unless you recognize yourself.* You have believed in me? In the same way as these bad companions also agree that the Word was made flesh, born of the virgin, crucified, rose again, ascended into heaven? They have believed in such a me as that, they too declare me as such. You must know yourself and me: me in heaven, yourself in the whole wide world." Christ is addressing any one member of the Church as the Church.

For how, after all, can the Church look for the Church? I'm speaking now in their way. *Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you feed the flock, where you lie down.* What's she looking for? The Church. And he, by way of showing her the Church, says *In the noonday*, as they would have it. Let them answer me how the Church can look for the Church. *Tell me, you whom my soul loves.* Who's speaking? The Church. What

does she want to be told? *Where you feed the flock, where you lie down*, that is, where the Church is. The Church is speaking, and asks where the Church is; and he replies, so they suppose, *In the noonday*. If she is only in the noonday, the south, or as they say, in Africa, how can she ask where she is? But on the other hand the portion of the Church overseas can well ask the question about the south or noonday, in case it goes wrong here.

So Christ is addressing any member of his Church as his Church.⁹⁰ And what does he say? *Unless you recognize yourself, O fair one among women, go out*. Going out is what heretics do. Either recognize yourself, or go out, because if you don't recognize yourself, you are going to go out. Go out where? In the tracks of the flocks, following the bad flocks. In case you should imagine you are following the sheep if you go out, hear what follows: *Go out yourself in the tracks of the flocks and feed your goats*, not sheep anymore. You know where the goats will be, brothers. On the left hand is where all those will be who have gone out of the Church.⁹¹ Peter staying inside is told, *Feed my sheep* (Jn 21:17). The heretic going out is told, *Feed your goats*.

Exegesis of Habakkuk

38. "There's also," they say, "another testimony." It will turn against you just the same. Tell it, let's hear it. There it will be, but against you, just like this other one which you were imagining was for you.

"Are you interpreting the noonday as Egypt?" Sure, we interpret the noonday in many ways. As regards a region of the world we can take it as Egypt, and I will also understand it as Africa. You've heard what I understand it as. I also understand the noonday as the fervor of spiritual people, blazing with the fire of charity, shining with the light of truth. It says in one of the psalms, you see, *Make your right hand known to me, and those whose minds are trained in wisdom* (Ps 90:12);⁹² your right hand, not the goats; and those whose minds are trained in wisdom, they are the noonday. That's why the prophet is told, *And your darkness shall be as the noonday* (Is 58:10).⁹³ So there are many ways in which we can understand the noonday. But of course I understand it to mean Africa, absolutely I understand it as Africa. I accept from you something better no doubt than I would have thought of myself, unless you had drawn my attention to it. Let Africa be the noonday. What the Church overseas is afraid of is stumbling upon rebaptizers, it's afraid of stumbling as one unknown upon the flocks of the companions; and what she's asking of her bridegroom is to tell her where he feeds, where he lies down in the noonday, because in this noonday there are some he feeds among, some he doesn't lie down among. May she listen to good advice, may she come to the Catholic Church, and not fall in with the flocks of the companions, not feed her goats.

But tell us the other thing you were saying you were going to tell us.

"The prophet," says he, "says: *God will come from the Afric* (Hb 3:3),⁹⁴ and now of course where the Afric is, there is Africa." Well, there's a fine testimony for you! God will come from the Afric, and from Africa God will come. The heretics are announcing another Christ who is born in Africa and goes through the world. I'm asking what it means, God will come from Africa. If you said, "God has only remained in Africa," you would certainly be saying something shameful enough. But now you also say, "He will come from Africa." We know where Christ was born, where he suffered, where he ascended into heaven, where he sent his disciples from, where he filled them with the Holy Spirit, where he instructed them to evangelize the whole world, and they complied, and the world all over is filled with the gospel. And you say, "God will come from Africa!"

Origin of the Donatists

39. "So you explain to me, then," he says, "the meaning of *God will come from the Afric*." Give the whole text, and there's just a chance you will understand. *God will come from the Afric, and the Holy One from the shady mountain*. So you explain it to me now, if it's from Africa, how it can be from the shady mountain. The party of Donatus was born in Numidia. They were sent first of all to stir up quarrels and rows and scandal, looking for a wounding machine.⁹⁵ Numidians⁹⁶ sent them. Secundus of Tigisi sent them. We all know where Tigisi is. The clergy who were sent called a meeting outside and apart from the Church, and wouldn't let the clergy of Carthage attend, put in a visitor,⁹⁷ were received by Lucilla. The author of this whole evil was a heretic Numidian.⁹⁸ Now in Numidia, where they came here⁹⁹ from with this dreadful evil, you can scarcely find a fly-whisk bush, they live in wigwams.¹⁰⁰ How can there be a shady mountain in Numidia? So tell me. Don't just quote as far as *God from the Afric*; I insist on the rest: *And the Holy One from the shady mountain*. Just show me the party of Donatus coming from Numidia from a shady mountain. You will find a totally bare countryside, fertile plains indeed, but grain-producing, not bearing olive groves, or graced with woods and copses of other kinds. So where is there a shady mountain in those parts of Numidia where this scandal came from?

40. "You then," he says, "explain to me the meaning of *God will come from the Afric, and the Holy One from the shady mountain*." Just see how easy it is for me to explain. First of all, hear what the Lord said: *It was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise again on the third day, and for repentance and the forgiveness of sins to be preached in his name throughout all nations, beginning from Jerusalem* (Lk 24:46). There you are, that's where he will come from. When he said "beginning," he was of course foretelling where he was going to come to the other nations from in his saints.

Now read up the division of the land among all the tribes of the children of Israel in the book of Jesus Nave; it says there, quite clearly, *Jebus from the Afric, which is Jerusalem* (Jos 15:8).¹⁰¹ And the Lord says, *Beginning from Jerusalem*. So that's the meaning of *God will come from the Afric*.

So how does he come from the shady mountain? Read the gospel once more: it was from the Mount of Olives that Christ ascended into heaven. Continue. And what could be clearer? You hear *from the Afric*; you have heard *from the shady mountain*. We recite the law,¹⁰² we recite the gospel; you have heard *beginning from Jerusalem*; now hear *throughout all the nations*. In the same prophet continue with those words that you ignored, those words you left out: *God will come from the Afric, and the Holy One from the shady mountain; his shadow will cover the mountains, and the earth is full of his glory* (Hb 3:3). Thus *throughout all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem*. How is it the same as beginning from Jerusalem? *God will come from the Afric, and the Holy One from the shady mountain*, that is from the Mount of Olives where he ascended into heaven, where he sent his disciples from, where he also said as he was about to ascend, *It is not for you to know the times which the Father has placed in his own power; but you will receive might from on high, and you will be witnesses to me*—now see how the gospel begins—and *you will be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in Judaea and in Samaria, and as far as the whole earth* (Acts 1:7-8).

So when God, that is Christ, comes, because the gospel has been noised abroad *throughout all the nations* both in his name and in the preaching of his gospel *from Jerusalem*, that is *from the Afric*, and *from the shady mountain*, that is from the Mount of Olives, therefore *his shadow will cover the mountains*, that is his soothing consolation, his protection, and *the earth is full of his praise*. Therefore, *Sing with the whole earth a new song* (Ps 96:1), not an old song with one corner of the earth.

Error is convicted by the plainness of the truth

41. They have still got something else to say. “A Cyrenaean,” they say, “a certain Simon was compelled to carry the Lord’s cross.”¹⁰³ We’ve read about it, but how does it help you, I would like to know? “A Cyrenaean,” he says, “is an African. That’s why he was the one who was compelled to carry the cross.” Perhaps you don’t know where Cyrene is. It’s Libya, it’s the Pentapolis, it’s next door to Africa, but it really belongs to the East.¹⁰⁴ You can tell this, if you like, from the distribution of the provinces between the emperors; it’s the eastern emperor who sends a governor to Cyrene.

My answer is very short. Where the party of Donatus is, there you won’t find Cyrene; where Cyrene is, there you won’t find the party of Donatus. Error is convicted by the plainness of the truth. Let him give

me Cyrene in the same place as the party of Donatus; let him give me the party of Donatus in the same place as Cyrene. It's perfectly plain, brothers, that the Church in the Pentapolis is Catholic, that the party of Donatus is not to be found there.

But in any case, we need have no qualms about laughing at those who should be wept over, and weeping over those who should be laughed at. What are you saying? You recall the great merit of this Cyrenaean in carrying the Lord's cross, and you call him an African. Well, he's an Easterner. You see, the name Libya is used in two ways, the part which is properly Africa, or the eastern part which is next to Africa and has a long common border.¹⁰⁵ But let's grant the Cyrenaean was an African. Do you regard him as blessed because he was press-ganged into carrying the cross? Could not someone else say, with much better reason perhaps, that the Church of Christ remained in Arimathea?¹⁰⁶ Because that rich man Joseph of Arimathea, having the kingdom of God before his eyes, came to the Lord's cross without being press-ganged, without being forced to it. When the rest were all frightened, he asked Pilate for the Lord's body to bury him, he took him down from the gibbet, he arranged the funeral, he placed him in the tomb, he was praised in the gospel.¹⁰⁷ So because this devout man who showed such reverence to the Lord's dead body came from Arimathea, does that mean the Church remained in Arimathea? Or if you are better pleased with the man who was press-ganged, that is to say forced to carry the cross, it follows that the Catholic emperors are quite right in forcing you into unity.¹⁰⁸

NOTES

1. This mammoth sermon on "The Shepherds" (it must have taken rather more than two hours to preach) forms a pair with Sermon 47 on "The Sheep," and both together offer an extended reflection on Ezekiel 34, with particular reference to the Donatists.

The editor of the CCL text says that we do not know where they were preached. But in my view we have conclusive proof that they were preached in Carthage from section 39 below, where he says "In Numidia, where they came *here* from with this dreadful evil . . ." (*In Numidia unde ventum est huc cum tanto malo . . .*). Now he has just been sketching how Numidian clergy came to Carthage *en masse* to start the Donatist schism. So clearly, he is speaking in Carthage. In support of this, section 8 contains a brief description of high life that would only really fit a metropolitan city like Carthage, and not a provincial town like Hippo or any of the other cities and towns of North Africa.

As for the date, one scholar suggests 409–410, in which case the occasion for it would seem to be part of a sustained campaign on the part of the Catholics in preparation for the great *colloquium* or debate of 411 in the presence of the imperial commissioner Marcellinus, which was officially to settle the dispute with the Donatists once and for all. But the editor of the CCL text notes a reference in Sermon 47, 22 to a law invalidating the wills of Donatists—presumably making it impossible for them to benefit, at least as a Church, from legacies. And this law, he tells us, was only promulgated on June 17, 414. This information, I imagine, is derived from the Theodosian Code. In this case, one must suppose

that the occasion for the two sermons was some kind of concerted drive to get the Donatists of the metropolis to abide by the judgment of 411 and conform to the Catholic Church.

In the circumstances, the sermons are not of a tone to give comfort to those of us who nowadays see an ecumenical commitment as imperative for all Catholics. They are frankly polemical; they are the productions of a very skillful and experienced controversialist. But it is worth noting that they are not merely attacks on the Donatists. This attack is contained in a context of Catholic self-criticism. In Sermon 46, broadly speaking, he is reminding Catholic bishops like himself of how easy it is for them to be bad shepherds; though he doesn't actually say so, it is because so many of them had been bad shepherds that the Donatist schism had begun, and because so many continued to be rather dubious or ineffective shepherds that it was able to continue and flourish for so long. Sermon 47, when we come to it, will no doubt be found to provide the anti-Donatist polemic with a similar context directed at the Catholic laity.

2. See Ps 80:1; this psalm had doubtless furnished the responsory.

3. The Latin just has the first person plural, and doesn't actually mention bishops. It is not always easy to tell when this mode of speaking just refers to the preacher himself, and when it refers to a group of which he is a member. But given the whole tenor of the sermon, I think it likely that he was preaching in the presence of a number of bishops, and is largely directing his words to them. See Sermon 23 for a similar situation.

4. See Lk 16:2. The same thought is expressed, even more plainly, in Sermon 340, 1: "For you I am a bishop, with you I am a Christian. The first name signifies an office undertaken, the second signifies grace; the first means danger, the second salvation." This is quoted in Vatican II's Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* 32—in the chapter on the laity, oddly enough, not in the chapter on the episcopal ministry.

5. *Ad hos sermo dirigitur*. It is left open whether the *sermo* (which doesn't just mean "sermon") is Augustine's words, or Ezekiel's, or both.

6. See Ps 80:1.

7. See 2 Thes 3:9; 1 Cor 9:12; also Acts 18:3; 20:34.

8. See 1 Cor 9:14.

9. A double representation: Paul was representing the one represented by the good Samaritan in the parable, namely (in the unanimous patristic interpretation) Christ.

10. The interest, which increases to your credit. The spiritual interest on his spiritual capital outlay is theirs.

11. What the lamp "lives on" is oil. So the oil represents receiving the means to live, but it also represents charity or love, which makes the lamp shine.

12. See Phil 2:21.

13. Here, I think, Augustine is making Christ answer the pseudo-Paul of the previous sentence.

14. *Publicis mensis*. I translate literally, not knowing what he is referring to. I don't suppose it could have been the ancient equivalent of restaurants, where you could eat out on occasion. I don't think even Augustine's early Christian puritanism would have objected to that. This puritanism, incidentally, was the standard official Christianity of the time, not personally peculiar to him. More likely, these tables were attached to pagan shrines and temples. But then the question arises, would these have been tolerated by the civil authorities as late as 414, or even 409?

15. See Wis 2:8.

16. See Am 2:8.

17. He started on this at the beginning of section 9, but then characteristically sidetracked himself.

18. See Mt 7:24ff.

19. The Latin is very condensed: *Omnia haec ille pro te, tu nihil. Non pro illo, sed pro te*. All this he for you, you nothing. Not for him, but for you.

20. *Et tu dic*; a rather unexpected imperative.

21. See Mt 7:27.

22. See Ps 69:4.
23. See Jn 1:3.
24. See Rom 8:17.
25. See Gal 4:5.
26. See Rom 8:17.
27. Throughout this section he is referring to prospective Christians, thinking of enrolling as catechumens.
28. See Dt 32:39.
29. See Phil 2:21.
30. See Mk 2:3-4.
31. His inspiration has rather deserted him. He is waffling here in incomplete, fragmented sentences, and seems to have forgotten what he is trying to explain – how the bad shepherds have not restored the sick to health. If he is saying anything here, he is saying that the way to do this is to show the sick soul, the paralytic, Christ hidden in the more obscure parts of the scriptures; and that is rather an odd thing to say. What I think he wants to say is that the way to do it is to bring the paralyzed soul to Christ, the forgiver of sins – but his technique has betrayed him into painting himself into a corner.
32. I think he means “these dangers of us bishops and clergy,” who had more to fear from the Donatists’ strong-arm men, the “circumcellions,” than ordinary Catholic lay people. The assumption behind what he is saying is that the sheep that stray and are lost are the Donatists, and that the bad shepherds (Catholic bishops and clergy) do nothing to bring them back because it’s too dangerous – as the good Catholic bishops who do try, by preaching and disputation, have learned to their cost. Augustine himself only escaped being ambushed once by luckily changing his traveling plans.
33. “Error” = “straying,” “perdition” = “being lost” much more obviously in the Latin. In English the image gets blurred.
34. So it is the Donatists above all that are the straying and lost sheep for him.
35. *Omnes sepes excutiam*. In Lesotho, under the crags on the tops of the hills you will frequently find such low stone walled enclosures for folding the sheep and cattle in. I suppose, however, the Latin could mean “I will knock down all fences.”
36. Outward gains – public conversion of Donatists to the Catholic Church; inner losses – Catholics becoming crypto-Donatists.
37. That is, my Church. Augustine consistently calls his opponents the *pars Donati*, the Donatist party.
38. Donatus, sometimes known as “the Great,” was the prime organizer of the schism toward the beginning of the fourth century, though he was the second, not the first, Donatist bishop of Carthage. Parmenian was a Donatist apologist of the second half of the fourth century, against whom Augustine wrote a work in several books.
39. See Ps 23:2.
40. *Cohortes*. This is the original meaning of the word – an enclosure. From it come the Spanish *cortes*, the French *cour*, English *court*. Its secondary meaning is a company of soldiers.
41. See Col 3:3.
42. He is safeguarding his apologetic point that the Catholic Church is to be found all over the world, unlike the Donatists. But wherever the Church is, there it will encounter some heretics or others.
43. That is, most particularly, Syria.
44. The most extreme form of Arians, sometimes known as Anomoeans (Unlikers), because they said the Son is quite simply unlike the Father, of a different nature altogether, whereas the so-called Semi-Arians or Homoeans (Likers) said he is like the Father, but did not wish to say he is of the same nature or substance as the Father. Eunomius flourished in the mid fourth century.
45. In the Latin simply *est hic Catholica*.
46. See Jn 15:2.

47. See Phil 2:21.
48. This is a literal translation (in the Latin too) of the Hebrew form of oath, a conditional, with the main clause, the sanction on the oath, left unsaid. But in this case the conditional clause itself is not concluded for several paragraphs. When someone as prolix as Augustine comments on someone as prolix as Ezekiel, it is very easy to lose the thread.
49. At the beginning of section 16 (Ez 34:5).
50. The light and the shepherd are the same: I am the light of the world, Jn 8:12; I am the good shepherd, Jn 10:11.
51. Quite a long way back, halfway through section 19.
52. At the end of the first paragraph of section 17.
53. The answer to this question is not going to be given until section 30.
54. The responsorial psalm for the service.
55. See Gn 37.
56. Judas = Judah; Jews = Judahites.
57. Christ is being identified with his people as Joseph was identified with his. He is represented by Joseph in the psalm. He is also, of course, "his shepherd."
58. *Hoc vobis bene sapiat*. We should note the double meaning of *sapio*: words *taste* good when they make good *sense*, when they are *sapid*, full of *sapientia*, wisdom.
59. The implication is that unhealthy sheep feeding on them will get sick. The scriptures are a dangerous diet when they are not read with good faith and good will.
60. So he seems to be thinking of the final eschatological rest in the kingdom, though up till now, with sheep feeding on the scriptures, he has presumably been thinking of their being gathered into the Catholic Church. He would, of course, see a close connection between the two moments of rest.
61. See Ps 121:1-2.
62. He raises the question only to drop it immediately again.
63. He is probably referring to a certain Filastrius of Brescia and to Ambrose and Jerome. He refers to the text again in Letter 222.
64. In the baptismal rite.
65. The *traditores*, that is, those clergy who handed over (*tradiderunt*) the sacred books to the imperial authorities during the great persecution launched by the emperor Diocletian in 303. It was because the first Donatists maintained that such persons, if they were bishops, could not validly ordain anymore, or validly baptize, having cut themselves off from the Church, that the Donatist schism began. The "you" he is addressing here is the Donatist movement in general.
66. This rendering sounds somewhat exclusivist, explicitly excluding those that are not my sheep—and it is likely Augustine so understood it. But in fact it is just an over-literal and clumsy device for rendering the Greek definite article in Latin.
67. See section 23, note 52 above.
68. See Jn 3:29.
69. This is an interesting variation on the standard Catholic interpretation of the passage in support of the papal primacy in the Church. Augustine's interpretation does not contradict this, but it is quite obvious he is not thinking about the papacy. His treatment of Peter as symbolic of and representative of the Church avoids the tendency of the clumsier ultramontane apologetic to make the pope a kind of entity in himself distinct from and above the Church.
70. The point is that love is what creates unity; it is the great unifier.
71. Paul is here addressing the sheep; Augustine applies it to the shepherds.
72. See Mt 7:15.
73. The doorkeeper or *ostiarius*, no doubt, who until recently was the lowest of the four minor orders in the Latin Church.
74. Those of initiation, baptism, confirmation, and eucharist.
75. See Lk 19:10.

76. When Catholics went to their church yesterday.

77. He is refusing to go over the history or the origins of the schism all over again; he dealt with it *ad nauseam* in his anti-Donatist writings. His point is that they are not really relevant. Even supposing the Donatist account of them to be correct—so what? It would not justify their schism, which depended on erroneous doctrinal suppositions.

78. This must be the Donatists' reply. The CCL text does not so punctuate. I find its punctuation here hard to follow.

79. It is odd that the African text called the book the Songs of Songs in the plural; neither the Septuagint nor the Vulgate Latin do so. But the Africans are in fact right; the book is a collection of love songs. The Jerusalem Bible makes it five.

80. *Meridies*, noonday, also means "south."

81. See Mt 7:7.

82. *Operta* is feminine. The original languages of Augustine's Latin text, the Greek and Hebrew, also distinguish genders, which in English have mostly disappeared.

83. *Quem*—masculine accusative singular.

84. *Operta*, "veiled," feminine singular; *aperta*, "unveiled," neuter plural.

85. For obvious reasons, a paraphrase. He actually says, "In the Latin language *sodales* (companions) are so called as though *simul edales* (together eaters) in that they eat together (*simul edant*)"—a much more fanciful etymology than mine for "companions."

86. The province of Africa (Tunisia), not the continent.

87. The monks and hermits in the Egyptian deserts.

88. The Donatists, not recognizing Catholic baptism as valid (because of that "original sin" of the *traditores*), baptized again Catholics and other Christians who joined them.

89. See Mk 13:2—a very curious allusion, comparing the Donatists to the Jews building the temple.

90. An important point of practical doctrine he is making: any Christian can represent the whole Church, because the Church is Christ as his body, and every and any member of the Church is Christ, an *alter Christus*. This latter identification has been limited to priests only by a later and distinctly decadent theology.

91. See Mt 25:33.

92. The Hebrew for "right" *yamin* also means "south." Both Augustine and his audience appear to have known this. Without this knowledge, the quotation contributes nothing to his argument.

93. It is not the prophet who was being told this, but the people.

94. *Deus ab Africo veniet*. *Africus* is not the usual word for an African (*Afer*), but is the name of a wind, a sou'wester; that's why I translate by the exotic form "Afric." The Vulgate has *ab Austro*, the *Auster* being the south wind. Both these Latin translations are rather strange, because the Septuagint retains the Hebrew proper place name Teman.

95. *Ingenium vulneri*; *ingenium* being used in the vulgar or demotic sense of "engine."

96. *Numidae*—the Latin form of *Nomads*. That shows how the Romans first perceived the Numidians, as a nomadic people, nomads of semi-desert country. Augustine is talking about the interior of Numidia, where Tigisi was. His own see of Hippo was also in the province of Numidia, but on the coast, and presumably not in such a treeless region.

97. *Visitorem posuerunt*. It is not clear what this refers to, whether to the election of the first schismatic bishop of Carthage, Majorinus, in place of the Catholic Caecilian whom the Numidian "synod" deposed as a *traditor* and as ordained by a *traditor*, Felix of Aptunga; or whether to a kind of vicar capitular, whom they installed to run the Church of Carthage after they had deposed Caecilian and declared the see vacant. Caecilian had been the archdeacon of Carthage under his predecessor, Mensurius, who died in 311. He had incurred the undying resentment of the wealthy widow Lucilla by rebuking her for bringing a martyr's bone with her to communion and apparently showing more devotion to this relic than to the sacrament. So when the Numidians, led by Secundus, objected so vehemently to Caecilian's election as bishop of Carthage, Lucilla gave them powerful

backing and presumably some very necessary financial assistance.

98. He either means Secundus, just mentioned, or Donatus of Casae Nigrae, who may or may not be the same man as Donatus the Great, who gave his name to the schism.

99. *Huc*. This proves the sermon was preached in Carthage. See note 1.

100. Of course they did nothing of the kind. But Augustine uses an otherwise unknown word, *cupsones*—so unknown that it is spelled with great variety in the manuscripts. It is presumably a word borrowed from Punic or Berber. The editor and other scholars suggest it may mean caves. My guess, given the semi-nomadic nature of Numidian society, is that it was some kind of movable dwelling. If it is a Punic word, it may be related to the Hebrew root *q-p-ts*, which means “draw together,” shut, “fold up.” Thus a *cupso* could be an easily folded tent, like a wigman or teepee.

The “fly-whisk bush” translates *muscarium*, which normally means just a fly-whisk. Botanists would no doubt be able to identify what kind of shrub Augustine meant.

101. Jesus Nave is the Greek form of Joshua son of Nun, and is also the Septuagint name for the book of Joshua. I retain it, because the identity of name of Joshua and Jesus was significant for the Fathers.

102. He seems to include the book of Joshua in the law. While this is normally the term for the first five books of the Bible, or the Pentateuch, some scholars do also include Joshua, and talk about the Hexateuch, the six-volume book.

103. See Mk 15:21.

104. That is, as he goes on to explain, the eastern half of the Empire, governed from Constantinople, not, like Africa, from Ravenna.

105. Respectively Tripolitania, which the Romans called Africa Byzacena, and Cyrenaica.

106. The Donatist case is that the Donatist African Church is represented and given validity by Simon of Cyrene, the African. Augustine's *ad hominem* reply is that the Catholic Church can equally claim to be represented and validated by Joseph of Arimathea.

107. See Mt 27:57-60; Mk 15:43-46; Lk 23:50-53; Jn 19:38-41.

108. There were penal laws against the Donatists, as against other heretics, and from about 400 onward, especially after 411, they were being enforced with increasing severity. Like the penal laws against Catholics in the England of the eighteenth century, they imposed civil and financial disabilities, not the death penalty for heresy.

A concluding word about Augustine's arguments with the Donatists in the concluding sections of this sermon. To our eyes, they are on about the same level, a rather low one, as the scriptural justifications of Donatism they were intended to refute. And I think he would accept that criticism, and say, “Yes, if they produce a silly argument it only deserves a silly answer. But given their assumptions and presuppositions it is an effective argument.”

SERMON 47

ON THE SHEEP

Date: 414¹

God made himself sheep to feed

1. The words we have sung contain our acknowledgment that we are God's sheep. Nor are we being importunate when we demand with tears the mercy of him whose sheep we are. What we said was, *Let us weep before the Lord who made us, for he is the Lord our God* (Ps 95:6-7). In case anyone weeping should despair of being listened to, God is reminded of a reason why in a sense he has got to listen to us: *for he is the Lord our God, who made us*. He is our God; *we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hands* (Ps 95:7). Men who are shepherds, or even landowners who own the flocks and herds, haven't made the sheep they own, haven't themselves created the sheep they feed. But our Lord God, because he is God and creator, made himself sheep to own and sheep to feed. It wasn't someone else who brought the sheep he feeds into being, nor is it someone else who feeds the sheep he brought into being. So let us weep before him.

And you know, we are not in a good way while we are in this world. When we please the Lord in the region of the living,² that is when our tears shall be wiped away,³ and we shall sing the praises of him who has delivered us from the bonds of death, our feet from slipping, our eyes from tears,⁴ that we may please the Lord in the region of the living, because it is difficult to please him in the region of the dead.⁵ Even here, though, there are ways of pleasing him, by begging him to have mercy on us, by abstaining as far as we can from sins, and in so far as we can't, by confessing and lamenting them. In this way we go through this life hoping for that other life, weeping in hope—or rather weeping now as we try to cope, rejoicing as we look forward in hope.⁶

Pastors are also sheep with you

2. So after acknowledging in this song that we are his sheep, the people of his pasture, the sheep of his hands, let us hear what he has to say to

us, as to his sheep. Some time ago⁷ he was speaking to the shepherds in the reading before this one. But in this reading today he is speaking to the sheep. So to those words of his that time we bishops were listening with fear and trembling, while you people had nothing to worry about in what you heard. So what about these words today? Do we change places, we with nothing to worry about, you fearing and trembling? Not at all. First, because even if we are shepherds, the shepherd doesn't only tremble at hearing what is said to him, but also at what is said to the sheep. If he is carefree about what he hears said to the sheep, it means he doesn't care about the sheep.

Secondly, as we already remarked to your graces on that occasion, two things have to be taken into account about us bishops: one that we are Christians, the other that we have been put in charge. So it's because we have been put in charge that we are counted among the shepherds, if we are good. But because we are Christians, we too are sheep along with you. So whether the Lord is speaking to the shepherds or the sheep, we have to listen to all of it with fear and trembling, nor should we put anxious care out of our minds, but rather *weep before the Lord who made us*.

Waiting for judgment

3. So then, brothers, let us listen to what the Lord is rebuking unmannerly sheep for, and what he is promising his sheep. *And you, my sheep*, he says, *thus says the Lord God (Ez 34:17)*. The first point: if you really think, brothers, what a very great blessing it is to be God's flock, you must be filled even in the midst of these tears and troubles of ours with very great joy. You see, there is nobody in his flock whom the wolves can harry, or who can be seized while asleep by robbers. About the one who is called *Shepherd of Israel* (Ps 80:1) it is also said that *He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep* (Ps 121:4). So he watches over us wakefully while we are awake, he watches over us also while we are asleep. So if a man's beasts are secure in the care of a human shepherd, what should our sense of security be when God is our shepherd—not only because he is our shepherd but also because he is our maker.

4. We are called upon to be anxious for one thing only: to hear the shepherd's voice. And now is the time for us to hear, because he has not yet called it time to judge. The one who speaks is now keeping quiet. He speaks in commandments, he keeps quiet in judgment. That's why he says somewhere, *I have kept quiet, will I keep quiet always?* (Is 42:14). How has he kept quiet, seeing that he spoke to say this very thing? He says "I have kept quiet," and he doesn't keep quiet, because just saying "I have kept quiet" means not keeping quiet. "So then, Lord, I hear you speaking in so many commandments, so many sacred signs,⁸ so many pages, so many books. And then I hear you saying this, *I have kept quiet*,

will I keep quiet always? So how have you kept quiet?" "Because I am not yet saying, Come, you blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom. And I am not yet saying to the others, Go into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels (Mt 25:34.41). And while I am not yet saying these things, I am already warning you that I am going to say them."

The parties do not hear the final judgment which the judge is going to pronounce, going to inscribe in the record with his own hand; it's being written while they are waiting outside. Both parties are frantic with suspense, wondering which of them the judgment will be given for or against. That is the judge's great secret.⁹ Those involved in the case are very nervous and anxious; no one knows what he's thinking and what he's writing. And he's a man, and the ones he is passing judgment on are of course men. But that one is our God, and we the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hands. And since he is the creator we the creature, he immortal we mortal, he invisible we visible, he did not wish us in this life to be in the dark about what final judgment he is going to pronounce at the end. No one who really wants to condemn says beforehand "I'm going to condemn"; no one who really wants to strike you tells you first "I'm going to strike you."¹⁰

Warning us, not yet judging

5. So you see, he's infinitely gentle, infinitely merciful, infinitely mild. But only if we do not misuse his patience to further our own wickedness, and while he is carrying our sins, increase our sins with more sins—in order to make him up a good load, I suppose; as though to make sure he carries more, seeing that carrying puts no strain on him. Our sins which he is still sparing, because he is still putting up with them, demonstrate his patience, pile up our burden. *Do you not know*, he says, *that the patience of God is leading you to repentance?* (Rom 2:4). It's this patience that he calls keeping quiet, and of which he says, *I have kept quiet, will I keep quiet always?* (Is 42:14). So when he would rebuke some people and say, *You preach against stealing, and you steal; you speak against adultery, and you commit adultery, etc.* (Rom 2:21-22), he says, *Or do you despise the riches of his goodness and forbearance?* (Rom 2:4). Because he is good, because he is forbearing, because he sees and keeps quiet, because he sees and puts up with it, do you think he is indifferent to what is right? *Do you not know that the patience of God is leading you to repentance?*

And just see if he is always going to keep quiet, because he is keeping quiet now. *But you*, he says, *according to the hardness of your heart and your unrepentant heart are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath and of the revelation of the just of God, who will render to everyone according to his works* (Rom 2:5-6). So he is keeping quiet; will he always keep quiet? He also says somewhere else, after listing some sins, *These*

things you have done, and I have kept quiet—that is, these things you have done and I have not punished them; *you have suspected iniquity, that I will be like you* (Ps 50:21). And indeed, this is what many people think, when they have done many bad things, and seen that nothing bad happens to them, they are not only delighted with their bad deeds, but they think that God is too; so far does ungodliness go that the godless snapper of fingers reckons God is like him. And when God would lead him to his own likeness by warnings, teachings, exhortations, corrections, not only does he not follow the likeness of God, but he even wants to reduce God to the likeness of himself. This is an iniquity worse than the actual sins he refuses to turn from. *You have suspected iniquity, that I will be like you. And how does it go on? I will rebuke you. Why so? I have kept quiet, will I keep quiet always?* (Is 42:14).

So therefore, brothers, since this word that proceeds from the mouth of God¹¹ terrifies both me and you—for we all have one and the same good hope in him, and we should all alike be afraid of offending him and so not finding what we are hoping for but experiencing what we have snapped our fingers at—let us all listen like God’s sheep while the one that keeps quiet speaks, while he that made us is warning us and not yet judging us, while there is still time to listen, while it is still permitted to read.

Weeds and the good crop

6. *And you, my sheep, he says, thus says the Lord: Behold, I am judging between sheep and sheep, and rams and he-goats* (Ez 34:17). What are he-goats doing here in God’s flock? In the same pastures, at the same springs, and he-goats, though destined for the left hand, are mixing with those of the right hand,¹² and those who are going to be separated are first tolerated. And this is to exercise the sheep in a patience after the likeness of God’s own patience. He is the one who will carry out the separation, some to the left, some to the right. Now, though, he is keeping quiet, you want to speak. But what am I saying you want to speak about? What he is keeping quiet about. About judgment and sentence, not about a timely word of correction. He is not yet carrying out the separation, you want to do so. He that sowed the field is tolerating the mixture. But if before winnowing time you want the grain to be purged, and with your own wind, you will be winnowed yourself, very unpleasantly indeed.

It was all right for the servants to say, *Do you want we go and collect them?* (Mt 13:28). They were naturally vexed when they saw the weeds, and pained at the weeds mixed up with the good crop. And they had said, *Did you not sow good seed? So where did the weeds spring from?* (Mt 13:27). He explained where they sprang from, but he did not for all that allow them to be pulled up before the time. And though the servants themselves were vexed at the weeds, they sought their lord’s advice and orders. They disliked the weeds in the crop, but they saw that if they did

anything off their own bat even about pulling up the weeds, they would be counted among the weeds themselves. They waited for orders from their Lord, they sought their king's command: *Do you want we go and collect them?* And he said, *No*. And he gave his reason: *In case perhaps when you want to collect the weeds, you also uproot the wheat at the same time* (Mt 13:28-29). He calmed their indignation, and did not leave them in their uneasiness. The servants thought it was all wrong for weeds to be there in the corn, and indeed it was. But the state of the field is one thing, the quietness of the barn another.

Put up with it, because that's what you were born to. Put up with it, because perhaps you have been put up with. If you have always been good, be merciful; if at one time you were bad, don't erase the memory of it. And who, anyway, is always good? It will be easier for God to find that you are bad even now, if he investigates you carefully, than for you to find that you have always been good. So we have to tolerate these weeds among the corn, he-goats among the rams, goats among the sheep.

And what does he say about the corn? *At harvest time*, he says, *I will tell the harvesters, First collect the weeds, and tie them in bundles to burn, but stack my wheat in the barn* (Mt 13:30). So the time of growing together in the field is going to pass, the time of sorting out at the harvest is going to come. What the Lord requires of us now is patience, and he displays it in himself as he says to you, "I, if I wanted to judge now, would certainly not judge unfairly, would I? I, if I wanted to judge now, could not be mistaken, could I? So if I, who always judge rightly and cannot be mistaken, defer my judgment, how can you, ignorant though you are how you are likely to be judged, have the nerve to pass judgment so hastily?"

Notice, brothers, how when those servants wanted to root up the weeds before the time, he did not even give them that job at the harvest. He said, *At harvest time I will tell the harvesters*; he didn't say, "I will tell you." But perhaps the servants themselves will be the harvesters? No. When he explains everything in detail, you see, he says *The harvesters are the angels* (Mt 13:39). As a mere man, then, enveloped in flesh, toting flesh, perhaps even totally flesh, that is flesh in body, fleshly in mind, how dare you take over a duty that belongs to others, and won't be yours even at the harvest?

So much for the separation of the weeds. What about the he-goats? *When the Son of man comes, and all the angels with him, he will take his seat on his throne of glory, and all the nations will be gathered together before him, and he will separate them as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats* (Mt 25:31-32). He will both come and separate. The harvest will come, and they will be separated. So now is not the time for separation, but for toleration. And I'm not saying this, brothers, in order to let diligence in correcting people go to sleep. On the contrary, in order not to be taken by that judgment unawares and find ourselves suddenly

on the left hand because being blind we have ignored our blindness, we must practice discipline, but not precipitate judgment.

We have a judge

7. So what is the Lord doing? *Behold, I am judging between sheep and sheep, and rams and he-goats* (Ez 34:17). "I am judging." What a relief, what reassurance! He himself is judging, the good can be reassured. No opponent can corrupt their judge, no counselor twist him round their little finger, no witness play fast and loose with him. But just as the good can be reassured, so to the same extent the bad should be afraid. He is not the sort of judge things can be kept hidden from. Do you imagine, after all, that God as judge is going to examine witnesses, to learn from them who you may be? How can he possibly be mistaken about who you may be, seeing that he knew what you were going to be? It's you he interrogates, not someone else about you. *The Lord*, it says, *interrogates the just and the ungodly* (Ps 11:6). And he interrogates you, not in order to learn from you, but in order to disconcert you.

So, as we have a judge like that, whom nobody can hoodwink against us, nobody hoodwink for us, let us so behave that we are not afraid of his judgment to come, but instead look forward to it and desire it. Is the grain afraid of being put in the barn? On the contrary, it's only too eager and keen to be so. Are the sheep afraid of being placed on the right? On the contrary, nothing seems so slow to them as waiting for it to happen. These are the ones who say with total sincerity and from the bottom of their hearts, when they pray, *Your kingdom come* (Mt 6:10). But a bad man's heart trembles at these words, and his tongue stutters. After all, how can you say, *Your kingdom come*? It's coming anyway; the question is, what will it find you like?¹³ So mind you behave in such a way that you can greet it¹⁴ without a qualm.

And if you happen to have some serious mistake or sin on your conscience, you have a remedy for it in this very prayer: *Forgive us our debts, as we too forgive our debtors* (Mt 6:12). God, you see, wanted you to be the sort of debtor that has someone else in his debt. By sinning, of course, you make an enemy for God, but look out in case you perhaps have an enemy too. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. What you do, though you can be involved in sin, he that cannot be convicted of any sin¹⁵ will also do for you. But if, as a man sunk in sin, you do not spare the one who sins against you, nor observe in him your own state and condition, nor shudder at your own lapses and frailties in another, what is God going to do to you, who judges with such assurance as being one who never sins?

The Lord is speaking by way of admonition

8. So trouble has to be taken to get a clean conscience. And if some little worry happens to remain still, *let us come before his face in*

confession (Ps 95:2). We have just heard in the psalm, as it was being sung, *Let us come before his face in confession*. Let us come before him, else he may get in before us. After confession he won't apply retribution, provided you, after confession, don't repeat unrighteousness. Get in first, before he gets in ahead of you.¹⁶ That he is going to come is quite certain. If you don't long for what's coming, you will lose it; because whether you like it or not, he is going to come. Do you think you will put him off by objecting to his coming? Just as he knew the hour at which he was due to be judged, so he also knows the hour when he is due to judge. He will come all right; you see to it what sort of condition you are going to be in. You have an uneasy conscience today, let there be some confession today, let there be a renunciation today of what is making your conscience uneasy. Today is the time to be forgiven, today is the time to be put at ease.

There are no grounds for you to say, "God keeps on putting off pardon." Mind you don't keep on putting off the remedy available to you. You have something on your mind that distresses you. And if it distresses you, it's also nagging at you to do something about it. Surely, if there were some stone in your house that offended your eyes,¹⁷ you would order it to be removed, especially if you were about to receive in your house a rather important guest. Now when you call upon God, you call or invite him into yourself. How do you expect him to come to you, if you haven't cleaned up the place you are to receive him in? You're not capable, you say, of clearing up the mess you have made of yourself? Call upon him to clean it up, invite him in to help you do it. Provided always, though, that you do now what you are going to do, while he is speaking by way of admonition, and keeping quiet in the matter of passing judgment.

God judges between sheep and sheep

9. He mentioned he-goats here, he mentioned rams, and he judges between them. And what does he say to them? *Is it not enough for you that you were feeding on good pastures? And the rest of your pasture you trampled with your feet; and you were drinking water that was settled—that is, it was pure and still—and the rest you stirred up with your feet: and my sheep were feeding on what your feet had trampled, and drinking water your feet had stirred up* (Ez 34:18-19). What's all this? God's pastures are good, and God's springs are pure. We have them in the holy scriptures. So who are these people that drink still waters there, and feed on clean pastures there, and then trample on the rest and muddy the water, so that the other sheep have to make do with trampled grass and muddy water? And this of course, as you see, displeases the shepherd, who says while this is going on, *I myself judge between sheep and sheep*, with the intention, of course, that these goings on should stop.

There are people who learn quietly, teach distinctly unquietly, and

though they have a patient teacher, they are savage with their learners. We all know, don't we, how quietly and gently scripture itself teaches us. So someone comes along and reads God's commandments, reads and understands them, understands them in tranquillity drinking from tranquil waters, feeding on green, clean pastures. Someone else comes along, hoping to hear something from him. He's bad-tempered, he upsets the student, finding fault with his stupidity, for example, when he is too slow in understanding something, and by upsetting him he stops him understanding as much as he could have done if he had heard it calmly and quietly.

God dissolves stupidity and grants truth

10. In saying this, brothers, I don't mean that insensitivity doesn't sometimes have to be rebuked; it's rebuked, after all, by Truth itself in its essential tranquillity, when he says, *O insensitive and slow of wit in believing!* (Lk 24:25). But it has to be done out of a real concern for people, and the desire to inspire them with a serious interest in the truth, to instill in them a habit of diligence and application, and to clear their minds, perhaps, of the cloudiness they have contracted from worldly interests, and perhaps by fixing their thoughts on other unprofitable matters they are not able to take in what is of real profit. Again, even if someone realizes he is a bit stupid, he may properly be chivvied and prodded into asking God to dissolve his stupidity and grant him the truth. You see, it's either thanks to our own carelessness that we don't understand much of what we have heard, and carelessness certainly needs to be corrected; or else if it really is slowness of wit, when we are blamed for it we will be given something to ask God about.

So it is not teachers of that sort who are to be blamed, but those who do this sort of thing in a sour spirit, a grudging spirit, these are the ones who trample down the pastures and muddy the springs. Whatever they may know, they want to know in such a way that others don't know it. Ill-natured, mean-spirited men, driven by a spite straight from hell, bilious of mind rather than body,¹⁸ they have read and they have understood. When they are asked questions—"Much good it'll do you, my entrusting you with these matters! You, fit to read or hear about such things, you think? Huh!" Why are you muddying the water? The spring flows for both of us. Why are you trampling the grass of the common land? You didn't send the rain to make it grow.

*Your conscience is open to God;
your conduct is open to your neighbor*

11. There's something else that can, not unreasonably, be understood in these words. There are people who suppose that it's enough to keep their consciences clear by living good lives, and don't greatly care what

anyone else may think about them; they don't realize that when a person sees someone of good conscience living rather carelessly, consorting with all and sundry anywhere and everywhere, knowing full well that an idol is nothing really, and yet sitting at table in an idol-sty,¹⁹ his conscience is feeble, and so is not guided by what he can see, but by what he suspects. And in any case, a man who is your equal, your brother, cannot enter your conscience, which God knows. Your conscience is open to God, your conduct is open to your brother. If he suspects something bad about you, and getting muddled is encouraged to do what he thinks you are doing, since that's the way you behave, what good is it that your conscience has drunk clean water, while he as a result of your carelessness and indifference has his conduct all muddied?

*At times nothing is left to us
except the testimony of our conscience*

12. And when such people are corrected about doing this sort of thing, you will hear them answering us and saying, "The apostle said, *If I wished to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ*" (Gal 1:10). Here too you are muddying the water, trampling the pastures. In case you muddy the water for yourself as well, pay closer attention to what the apostle means: *If I wished to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ*. I accept it wholeheartedly, I gladly acknowledge the apostle's considered opinion. But haven't you read another thing in the apostle? *Please everyone in everything, just as I please everyone in everything, not seeking my own advantage, but that of the many, that they may be saved* (1 Cor 10:33). Again, haven't you heard the same apostle saying, *Give no offense to Jews and Greeks and the Church of God* (1 Cor 10:32)? Thirdly, haven't you heard the same apostle saying, *For we aim at what is good not only in God's sight but also in the sight of men* (2 Cor 8:21)?

So he says, "Explain to me then how I am to understand these opposite and contrary statements, with the apostle saying this time, *If I wished to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ*; saying this time, *Please everyone in everything, just as I please everyone in everything*; saying this time, *Our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience* (2 Cor 1:12); saying this time, *We aim at what is good not only in God's sight but also in the sight of people*." If you listen quietly, if you don't muddy the water of your own mind for yourself, I may perhaps explain, as best I can. There are people who are very quick to judge, to disparage, to tell tales, to grumble, always ready to suspect what they don't see, ready even to assert what they have no reason to suspect; against such people what resort is left to us except the testimony of our conscience?

And in any case, brothers, even in matters in which we wish to please people, we are not seeking our own glory—or we ought not to be seeking our own glory—but their salvation, so that if we walk well they won't go wrong by following us. Let them be our imitators, if we are Christ's; but

if we are not Christ's, let them be imitators of Christ. He is the one, you see, who feeds his flock, and with all who feed it well he is the only one, because they are all in him. So we are not seeking our own advantage when we wish to please people, but we wish to rejoice in people,²⁰ but we rejoice that they are pleased by what is good, for their advantage, not for our self-importance.

It's clear, then, against whom the apostle said, *If I wished to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ*. And it's clear for whose sake he said, *Please everyone in everything, just as I please everyone in everything*. Each statement is transparent, each is unruffled, each is pure, neither is muddied. Just you feed and drink, don't trample and muddy.

*The testimony of our conscience
is our glory and our boast*

13. For you have of course also heard the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the master of the apostles: *Let your works shine before others, that they may see your good deeds, and glorify your Father in heaven* (Mt 5:16), that is, the one who made you what you are. *For we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hands* (Ps 95:7). So let him be praised who made you good (if you are good), and not you, who left to yourself could be nothing but bad. Why do you want to turn the truth upside down, so that when you do anything good you want to be praised, when you do anything bad you want to blame the Lord? Yes of course, the one who said *Let your works shine before all* also said in the same sermon *Do not perform your justice before men* (Mt 6:1). Just as these kinds of injunction seemed, in your view, to contradict each other in the apostle, so too they do in the gospel. But if you don't disturb the water of your thoughts, and instead observe here the peace of the scriptures, you too will also have peace with them. If, however, you refuse to have peace with them, it's yourself you are picking your quarrel with, they do not lose their peacefulness.

So then, it's on account of those who thrust themselves on people by boasting, and make such a song and dance about their good works because they see the whole point of their good works to be praise from people, and reckon this praise from others as a kind of reward for their good works, it's about these people that it says, *Amen I tell you, they have received their reward* (Mt 6:2). It's against them that we are told, *Beware of performing your justice before others*; it continues straight away, *to be seen by them* (Mt 6:1). He didn't extend his aim any further, he made this his object and his end. Don't do like this before people whatever good you do, just to be seen by them, for this to be the whole object and end of your good work, to be seen by them. So don't do it like this, simply in order to be seen by them.

But in this other text he doesn't make this the end and object, that we should be seen by the people before whom he wishes our good deeds to

be performed, but he says, *Let your good works shine before others, that they may see your good works*— he didn't pause, he didn't stop there, but led you up above from there, and took you out of yourself (you would have fallen if you had stayed in yourself), and set you where you would be safe. *That they may see*, he said, *your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven* (Mt 5:16). Now, now, don't get angry because he is glorified; stay with him, and you will be glorified in him. *That no flesh may glory before him* (1 Cor 1:29), says the apostle. So are we going to remain without glory? No. You see, he also says, *Whoever glories let him glory in the Lord* (1 Cor 1:31). The testimony of our conscience is our glory and our boast, because it is in him. Because if it's our boast in such a way that we are pleased with ourselves and become very self-satisfied, the one who is pleased with himself is pleased with a very foolish fellow.

14. So let us take care, brothers, not only to lead good lives, but also to conduct ourselves well before others, not only taking care to have a good conscience, but as far as our feebleness is able, as far as human frailty can keep alert, let us take care to do nothing that could lead a weaker brother or sister to suspect something bad; otherwise, while munching clean grass and drinking pure water, we may be trampling God's pastures, and the weaker sheep may be eating what has been trampled on, and drinking what has been muddied. And woe to us, in that case, because of the one who said, *I myself am judging between sheep and sheep* (Ez 34:17).

Goats and sheep

15. *For these reasons, thus says the Lord God to them. Behold, I myself am judging between the strong sheep and between the feeble sheep* (Ez 34:20). Let him get on with it, and say something else. We've already heard about those who trample in the grass and muddy the waters. Let's hear about another kind of wrong, and a serious kind of wrong. He makes no further mention of the he-goats. He mentioned them once, so that we would know they exist. He knows them well. After that he speaks as if all are sheep. First he speaks in the way he sees, afterward in the way we see. "The sheep must know that he-goats are around and that they will be put to one side at the end; but now I am distinguishing as though between sheep and sheep."

Only he who was able to predestine and foreknow can tell the sheep from the goats by predestination and foreknowledge.²¹ For the present, because all are under the sign of Christ, and all have access to the grace of God, you consider yourself a sheep, while perhaps God knows you for a goat. But let it be as a sheep that you listen to what you are hearing: *Behold I myself am judging between the strong sheep and between the feeble sheep.*

The time of harvest

16. *Because you were shoving with sides and shoulders, and thrusting with your horns, and everything that was failing you were crushing, until you scattered them outside* (Ez 34:21). Can anyone fail to understand that? Can anyone fail to be horrified? If there are no sheep outside, it hasn't happened. But if we lament the many sheep that are straying outside, woe to those whose shoulders and sides and horns have brought it about. It's only strong sheep who would do this. Who are the strong? Those who rely on their own powers. Who are the strong? Those who glory in their own righteousness. None but those who called themselves just divided the sheep and drove them outside. Shoulders bold at shoving, because they do not bear God's burden; evil sides, conspiracies of friends, companions in obstinacy; horns lifted up, high and mighty pride. Shove with sides and shoulders, flail with your horns, drive outside what you haven't bought. Certainly this is your whole case, that you are just and others are unjust, and it was unfitting that the just should remain with the unjust, unfitting, that is to say, that the corn should remain among the weeds, unfitting that the sheep should feed among the goats until the shepherd should come who would make no mistake in separating them.²²

So are you the angel who roots up the weeds?²³ I wouldn't acknowledge you as the angel who roots up the weeds, not even if harvest time had already come. Before the harvest certainly not you; but nobody at all is the true harvester. The one who appointed the harvesters also appointed the time. Even men and women could call themselves angels; we may even find men and women called angels in scripture, but what I am thinking of is the time of the harvest. You can entitle yourself an angel, you cannot advance the time of the harvest. So your saying that you are one is untrue, because the time has not yet come for you to be one. And then when it does come, and the true harvesters are sent, I don't know which side they will find you on, whether one of those to be cleansed and stored up in the barn, or one of those to be tied up and thrown on the fire. The reason I say "perhaps," is that I dare not judge. Now I grieve that you are outside. Whether you are going to be inside, I do not know.

The pride of the Donatists

17. Meanwhile listen to what is written about you in another passage of scripture, while you are still alive, and stop wanting to root up weeds when it's not yet time, but instead come back inside while there is still time. Another scripture of God says, *A bad son calls himself just* (Prv 10:12). These are your shoulders and sides and horns. Strong in a bad way, how much better if you were weak! Strong in a bad way, but you are not healthy. Strong in a bad way, the madman even thrashes the physician. You attribute to yourself perfection, in order to lead a defecation.²⁴ How much better, how much more to your advantage it would be

if you were weak, so that you might be perfected by him who knows how imperfect you are! The apostle Paul, a specially chosen vessel,²⁵ in case he should be puffed up by the revelations—and we wouldn't dare suggest such a thing, except that we believe him when he tells us so: *Lest I should be puffed up, he says, by the magnitude of the revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, an angel of Satan to buffet me.* He says he was buffeted to stop him lifting up his horns. *About which, he goes on, I asked the Lord to take it away from me. And he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for strength is made perfect in weakness* (2 Cor 12:8-9).

How much more profitable, then, is the weakness that is made perfect than the strength that pushes the sheep around, that flaunts itself in order to shut them out. So you are a bad son, you call yourself just. *A bad son calls himself just, he does not wash off his going out* (Prv 30:12). Pay attention, my brothers, to a sentence short enough in the number of its words, but heavy with the weight of truth. He calls himself just, in order to go out and shut out.²⁶ He calls himself just, but he's bad; that's why he does not wash off his going out. What does it mean, he doesn't wash it off? He doesn't purge it, doesn't defend it, doesn't excuse it.²⁷

Why, after all, have you cut yourself off? Why have you gone out? Why does your heart tremble when you hear from the divine books the words, *They went out from us, but they were not of us* (1 Jn 2:19)—provided, of course, that bad strength of yours with which you shove and prod and thresh God's sheep permits your heart the slightest tremor? Because of course, when you hear *They went out from us, but they were not of us*, the one who was speaking was in the Church. The Church is spread throughout the world, what are you doing outside? It's not just me, you know, declaring that the Church is spread throughout the world. The prophets declared it, the apostles declared it, the Lord himself proclaimed the Church spread throughout the world. Just now when the psalm was being read we heard, *The Lord does not push aside his people*—and as though you ask "Which?"—*since in his hand, it says, are the ends of the earth* (Ps 95:4).²⁸ He doesn't push it aside, and you push it around. You push, you toss, you shut out.

You shout about betrayers,²⁹ but you don't prove it. These are the horns of a tossing ram, not the mild words of a caring shepherd. Look, there's the people of God in the ends of the earth; there's the people of God sighing and crying before the God who made it, and it says in a psalm to the Lord in whose presence it is crying, *From the ends of the earth I cried out to you when my heart was in anguish* (Ps 61:2). See how he humbles himself in his anguish of heart. And what does he say he was granted? *You lifted me high on a rock* (Ps 61:2). You lifted me high on the rock which is Christ, you did not hurl me down from the mountain of Donatus. Go on, then, toss your horns, stretch your sides, hunch up your shoulders, push the sheep around and say, "I am just." Scripture answers you, "Bad, not just. *A bad son calls himself just*" (Prv 30:12).

If you are just, why do you go outside? Why do you throw people out? What are you doing outside with those you throw out? Have you run away, like a sheep, from the he-goats? You would do better to be separated from them by the shepherd on the right than to be convicted with them on the left. They were goats, you a sheep, you should be feeding with the goats. Why did you take umbrage with the pastures, with the springs? To crown it all, why did you take umbrage with the shepherd himself, who mixed a flock of each together for a time, who also reserved to himself their final separation, though he can do it rightly whenever he likes? Even if he were to separate them now, he wouldn't make a mistake.

He puts it off to the end, you make the separation before it's time. You don't wait for the end, though you don't know when it's going to be the end for you. Now why should this be, if not because you have falsely accused those whom you accused of being goats? If your accusation had been true, surely, you wouldn't have separated yourself. Your act of separation is their vindication. If they were weeds, why did you want to separate them before the time? You would have been wheat mixed with them, with roots in the same field, watered by the same rain. So why did you go out? Can you really find a good reason? You don't manage to get a conviction against those you accuse, but by going out before the time and separating yourself, you convict yourself. See what a bad son you are; you call yourself just, but you do not wash off your going out.

I'm not saying to you, "It's you, rather, who are the betrayer." If I did, I could prove it easily enough. But the reason I don't want to say it is that it was your people who did it, you didn't do it yourself.³⁰ I'm not blaming other people's actions on you, not even your own people's. It's your action I'm concentrating on. It's the fact of your being outside I object to; it's your going out I object to. I put aside absolutely everything else that can be said against your people. I pass over your bouts of drunkenness, your loans at positively extortionate rates of interest; I pass over the hordes of circumcellions and their rampages.³¹ I pass over all this, and all the other things I can't possibly count. No doubt not all of you do these things. Let the one among you who doesn't do these things, the one who is distressed by them when they are done among you, let him come forward, then, let him speak. I'm not casting someone else's wrongdoing in his teeth; let him wash off his going out.

You see how rightly it is said about him, *A bad son calls himself just*. It's the Lord who says it, and what he says is true: *A bad son calls himself just*. I'm not saying it, he is. But he wants me to call him just? Let him come here, let him bear good fruit in the Catholic peace,³² let him preserve it in the Catholic peace, because there isn't really any fruit where it is not accompanied by patient tolerance. *And they will bring forth fruit*, it says, *with patience* (Lk 8:15). Do you want to see how heavily you have been hailed upon? Listen to it from another place: *Woe to those who have lost patience* (Sir 2:14).

Where is the true Church?

18. Now imagine somebody thinking, as indeed often happens, about where he should be a Christian. He is moved to become a Christian, he observes the human race converging on the name of Christ.³³ It's not for any temporal convenience suggested to him that he wants to be a Christian, not to win the favor of an influential friend, not to get himself a desirable wife, or escape some difficulty and distress of this world, though many people do come in for these reasons, and are put right once they are in. But let's suppose someone who is thinking about his soul, and wanting to be a Christian.

He looks and sees there are two parties, and he asks for the reasons why that lot separated themselves from this lot. They answer him, "We separated ourselves, as just people, from sinners"—as though they were speaking to a blind man who can hear what they say and not see what they do. So if, on examining their habits and behavior, and all those things I mentioned just now, he were to say to them, "I've one question; you call yourselves just, and maintain that that's why you were right to separate. Why then have you got people like this and like that among you?" And then perhaps, because they dare not deny it, because what is said is plain for all to see, they say, "There are, of course, such people among us, but are we all like that?" "Fine. So I see you are outside with sinners. Then why not inside? The reward of your separation should have been not living with a sinner. If you were outside in such a way that you did not have among you people like the ones you pretend to have fled from, I might somehow or other put up with your separation."

So let this man who is eager to be a Christian observe where he should be a Christian. He sees them having separated themselves, they say, from sinners, yet full of sinners. Again, let him observe the Church of Christ by the acceptable standard of ordinary human morals, morals he can himself judge by in some fashion as he comes from the world. Here too he can see some sober, others drunkards, some patient in their poverty, others planning the seizure of other people's possessions, and so on and so on. He sees it here, he sees it there.

Now let him observe God, what he has to say about his Church. He finds the Lord saying that his Church is among all nations. He also finds God saying in that parable of the tares, *The field is this world* (Mt 13:37-39). Not, "the field is Africa," but this world. Grain throughout the world, weeds throughout the world—yet *the field is the world, the sower is the Son of man, the harvesters the angels* (Mt 13:37-39), not the leaders of the circumcellions—and they are both growing till the harvest, not the weeds growing and the grain decreasing, but both growing till the harvest. What harvest? Listen to what he says: *The harvest is the end of the world* (Mt 13:37-39).

He hears all this clearly, and he makes a correct judgment, and what does he say? "I won't be in that divided section.³⁴ I will be here, and I will be good in the name of the one whom I shall belong to. And I will

be good, not making myself good, but hoping to be made so by him, not calling myself good and just, but desiring to be called so by him." He comes in, he becomes a Catholic. There you are, he has washed his coming in; now you in your turn, wash your going out. You can't do it; for *a bad son calls himself just, but he does not wash his going out* (Prv 30:12).

The Church scattered throughout the world

19. *You were shoving with your sides and shoulders, and thrusting with your horns, and everything that was failing you were crushing, until you scattered them outside. And I will save my sheep* (Ez 34:21). Just as we must abominate their injustice and cruelty, so we must praise the mercy of our shepherd, who is truly our God; he will save his sheep. Perhaps, my brothers, he is doing this when we say this, doing it through the least of his servants, doing it perhaps through unworthy servants. Let him save his sheep; let them hear the voice of their shepherd and follow him. Don't let them look for a proof of the Church from the mouth of men. Let them look for it from the mouth of God, look for it from the mouth of Christ. Whoever he calls ungodly is ungodly, whoever he calls just is just, whoever he calls a sheep is a sheep, whoever he calls a goat is a goat. He himself is Truth, let him speak, let the Church be sought from him. Tell us, Lord, where is your Church?

And he says to everybody, "Do you know where I am?" Let everyone reply, "In heaven at the right hand of the Father." "That's sound faith; that's what I taught, that's what I sowed—but I sowed it throughout the world. When you confess that I," he says, "am in heaven, that psalm, no doubt, comes to your mind, *Be lifted up above the heavens, O God*. Are you looking for the Church? Read what follows: *And above the whole earth your glory*" (Ps 108:5). There, brothers, where it says *Be lifted up above the heavens, O God* about Christ rising from the dead and ascending into heaven, there it immediately continues *And above the whole earth your glory*. The bridegroom is in heaven, the bride is on earth. He is above all the heavens, she is over the whole earth. My dear heretic, you believe what you don't see in heaven, you deny what you do see on earth! So let him say this, let him say it and be listened to;³⁵ let him save his sheep. *And I will save my sheep*, he says, *and they shall no longer be for ravaging, and I will judge between sheep and sheep* (Ez 34:22).

Christ, prefigured by David, is the true pastor

20. *And I will raise over them one shepherd* (Ez 34:23). Hadn't he said himself in the previous reading, *I myself will feed them* (Ez 34:13)?³⁶ Now the one who feeds them is raising up one shepherd. Could it really be within such a short interval of the reading³⁷ he grew tired of feeding, and raised up a shepherd, to whom he could hand over care of the sheep, and

himself be relieved of responsibility? Let's hear what shepherd he means; and then we will understand why he himself feeds them as their shepherd, and he alone feeds them even after this other shepherd has been raised up. *I will raise up over them one shepherd, and my servant David will feed them, he will feed them himself* (Ez 34:23). You will readily understand, brothers, that it is a prophecy of Christ coming to men from the seed of David, if you realize the dates. This prophet Ezekiel lived in the time of the captivity, which resulted from the exile of the people to Babylonia. From the time of David to the time of the exile there are fourteen generations.³⁸ That's how much later than David he says *And David will feed them*. If this had been said in the time of Noah, or the time of Abraham, or the time of Moses, or even the time of Saul whose successor in the monarchy David was, then we would be right to understand that it was said of David himself, the son of Jesse, that he would be the shepherd of God's flock, to whom that people was entrusted as their king. But now David had already been king long ago, he had long ago departed this life, he had long ago been laid to rest with his fathers, long ago gone to his rest for his merits. So what does it mean, "I will raise up David and make him their one shepherd," but that it's the David who comes from the seed of David?

So how does God raise up a shepherd for us? Which one shepherd? *And my servant David will feed them*. A short while ago he was feeding us himself; now his servant David feeds us. Why as if he were a second shepherd? Because of course when he was feeding them, God was feeding them. And when God was feeding them, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit was³⁹ feeding them. Now he is raised up and becomes like a second shepherd. But he's not a second one. Not a second one in the form of God, because in the form of God he and the Father are one God. But in the form of a servant he is raised up to feed them like a second one, because the Father is greater. Listen to one feeding them, and Christ feeding them: *I and the Father are one* (Jn 10:30). Listen to Christ being raised up to feed them: *The Father is greater than I* (Jn 14:28). So one shepherd feeds them, because *when he was in the form of God, he did not think it robbery to be equal to God*. But he is raised up to feed them because *he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant* (Phil 2:6-7). This is also indicated here by the words *And my servant David will feed them*. Servant, in the form of a servant. Servant, because *he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, made in the likeness of men, and being found in condition as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, death indeed on a cross*. So let him be raised up to feed them: *Wherefore God, he says, has lifted him up from the dead, and bestowed on him a name that is above every name*. Now that his servant David has been raised up, now that the form of a servant has been raised up and placed at his right hand, he has *bestowed on him a name that is above every name*—see how he feeds, how he feeds far and wide—that

at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of beings in heaven, on earth and in the underworld (Phil 2:7-11).

Into what narrow corner would your heretical vanity squeeze the possessor of such wide domains?⁴⁰ Or have you such total confidence in your proud horns and shoulders that, besides not congregating to the shepherd, you even try to exclude the shepherd from the flock? *My servant David will feed them.* Listen, sheep, to David who feeds you. Listen to the voice of David your shepherd, not to the voice of robbers, not to the howling of wolves. *My servant David will feed them, he himself will feed them.* Oh, entrust yourself to him!⁴¹ *He himself will feed them.* Anyone who wants to feed them must feed them in him, because *he himself will feed them.* A little while ago God was saying, *I myself will feed them (Ez 34:13).* Now he says, *He himself will feed them.* Let the Son answer and explain to us, "Each statement is true. *I and the Father are one (Jn 10:30)* The one who says *I myself will feed them* is not lying when he says *He himself will feed them.* And when he says *He himself will lead them,* he is not giving the lie to himself, saying *I myself will feed them.*" *Do you not believe,* he says, *that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? Philip, whoever sees me sees the Father also (Jn 14:9-10).* It's right when it says *I myself will feed them;* it's right when it says *He himself will feed them.* They are being distinguished, not separated.⁴²

Don't panic, sheep. The one who said, *He himself will feed them,* does not abandon you. God is feeding you, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, God himself is feeding you. But the form of the servant had to be distinguished, not separated and distanced and set up as another person.⁴³ The creator took the creature to himself, the creator wasn't changed into the creature. He took on what he was not, he did not lose what he was.

Christ is the shepherd; the Father too is the shepherd

21. *My servant David will feed them. He will feed them himself, and he will be their shepherd, and I the Lord will be their God (Ez 34:23-24).* Pay close attention, brothers. Note the unity of the godhead, and yet the distribution of persons, in case we should say that he who is the Father is the Son, or that he who is the Son is the Father. Look: the one who said, *He himself will feed them,* is the one who had said a little earlier, *I myself will feed them.* Here he says, *And he will be their shepherd, and I the Lord will be their God.*

Explain, please, Lord. Don't let anyone muddy the water, let us drink what is flowing pure from the pure spring. Now what's the meaning of what you said, seemingly mentioning one by one, "He will be shepherd, I will be God," as though he is our shepherd, while you are our God? Why, Lord, are you not our shepherd and he not our God? Listen calmly, be meek to hear the word, so that you may understand. Perhaps, you see, there is a pair of ears listening to me that has different ideas and is riddled with heretical poison, and he laughs at me for saying Father and Son are one God, though he doesn't laugh at so many thousands of the brethren

having one soul.⁴⁴ And he says to me, "Here God says plainly, *My servant David shall be their shepherd*, and you yourself understood that to refer to Christ, and it cannot be understood in any other way. You explained that this was all said long after David had fallen asleep. Christ, therefore, will be their shepherd; *I, the Lord*, he says, *will be their God*. One their shepherd, the other their God."

So you just explain to me the meaning of *I myself will feed them*. Who was it that said, *I myself will feed them*? Undoubtedly it was God speaking and saying, *I myself will feed them*. Well, just as he didn't cut Christ off from feeding when he said "I myself will feed them," so neither did he cut Christ off from the godhead when he said "I myself am their God." Here you have Christ as the shepherd, the Father too is the shepherd. In the same way, the Father is God, Christ too is God. Just as you don't separate the Father from Christ the shepherd, so you don't separate Christ from the Father as God. The Father shares with the Son the kindly concern of being a shepherd, the Son shares with the Father the equality of being God. But unless he had put it that way, you would have assumed that he who is the Son is also the Father. So he was reminding you both of the unity of the godhead and the distribution of persons; when he says "He will feed them and I will be their God," he is not separating himself from the Son feeding them, nor separating the Son from himself being Lord, but he means you to understand the Son as God in the Father, and the Father as shepherd in the Son.

I, the Lord, he says, *will be their God, and my servant David prince in their midst* (Ez 34:24). Why "in their midst"? Because *the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us* (Jn 1:14). *Prince in their midst*. Thus also *mediator of God and men* (1 Tm 2:5),⁴⁵ because he is God with the Father, and because he is man with men. Not mediator as man apart from his godhead; not mediator as God apart from his humanity. Look, he's the mediator. Godhead without humanity doesn't mediate, humanity without godhead doesn't mediate. But what mediates between godhead in itself and humanity in itself is the human godhead and divine humanity of Christ. *And my servant David prince in their midst. I the Lord have spoken*; not some heretic or other. *I the Lord have spoken* (Ez 34:24).

God's testament

22. *And I will draw up for them a testament of peace* (Ez 34:25) through him, of course, who said, *My peace I give you, my peace I leave you* (Jn 14:27). This is our Father's testament, it is a testament of peace. Any inheritance may be divided among co-owners; the inheritance of peace cannot be divided. Christ is our peace. Peace makes both one, not two out of one. *For he is our peace*, it said, *who made both one* (Eph 2:14). It is God's testament, the inheritance is peace. Let it be possessed by co-owners in concord, not divided by quarreling litigants. *And I will draw up for them a testament of peace*.

Wake up, you heretics, listen to the shepherd's testament of peace, come to the peace.⁴⁶ You are angry with the Christian emperors because they have decreed that your testaments have no validity in your families.⁴⁷ Observe how fitting a penalty it is. And what does it amount to, that your testament has no validity in your own house? What is it? What does it amount to? This grievance is a warning, not yet a condemnation. God, you see, wanted you to have some fellow feeling for the testament of his peace. You grieve about your testament, if your will and testament may not stand in your own house. There is no doubt you are going to die, ignorant of what may take place in that house afterward. *On that day*, it says, *shall perish all his plans, and he will know his place no more* (Ps 146:4). So not knowing what may take place in your house when you're dead, you still grieve that your testament does not stand in your own house. Christ died and rose again, he has looked down from heaven to make sure his testament does stand. Bestir yourself from your grief, let yourself be corrected by your torment. You know that it's usual to apply heat to a warped plank of wood. Let this grief straighten you out. It isn't yet the flame of eternal fire. It's like the heat of the hearth applied to your warped mind, so that you may take warning from it and correct yourself. Grieve, yes you are quite right to grieve that your will and testament does not stand in your own house. God's house is your mind. If you want your testament to be valid in your house, why don't you want God's testament to be valid in his house?

You are leaving your children bricks and mortar, and if you know your children are going to divide it all up otherwise than you have disposed, you are grieved. How you do fight off as best you can the burning fever, the progressive disease, the imminent approach of death itself, gasping out your last words, to implement your testament! How many clever lawyers you consult, how many loopholes you look for so that your testament may stand against the emperor's law! God answers you immediately, "Don't look for loopholes, don't chase after tricky formulas. Do you want your testament to stand? Let mine stand in you. It grieves you that your inheritance is being taken away by someone you didn't want to have it. What about my inheritance, so vast, so benign? *In your seed shall all the nations be blessed* (Gn 22:18), said I to my servant," your God says to you, "and he believed, though he didn't see it. You see it, and deny it."⁴⁸ There he is, keeping the testament when it was made; here you are, tearing it up when it is opened." The testament was kept when it was heard; it was opened when it was fulfilled. The testament was kept until it came into your hands. You certainly want to be an heir. Does your fellow heir argue with you and say, "You take that part, I'll take this one," or "You take the smaller portion, I'll take the bigger one"? He doesn't say "Let's divide it equally," but "Let's possess it equally." That's what the testator wanted. Open it and read.

And you have the nerve to claim, "It was I who ensured it wasn't burnt; it was I who saved it from being burnt."⁴⁹ *You saved it from being*

burnt? Open it and see that what you “saved” was a reason for being burnt yourself—though God forbid I should believe you saved or kept anything, since I see you not keeping what he commands: *and I will draw up for them a testament of peace.*

Ask if there is charity in the heart

23. *And I will banish evil beasts from the land (Ez 34:25);* beasts, the enemies of the testament of peace. About these beasts it says in another psalm, *Rebuke the wild animals of the reeds (Ps 68:30).* What are the wild animals of the reeds? Beasts setting themselves against the holy scriptures, because they were written with reeds. *I will banish evil beasts from the land; and they will dwell in the desert in hope (Ez 34:25).* What’s “in the desert”? In solitude. What’s in solitude? Inside, in the conscience. It’s a solitude indeed, because not only do no other human beings cross it, they don’t even see it. Let us dwell there in hope, because we are not yet there in fact.⁵⁰ After all, everything we have outside chops and changes with the storms and trials of the world. The desert is inside, that’s where we should interrogate our faith. Let us ask if there is charity there inside. Let us see if it’s not just the lips but the heart uttering, when we say *Forgive us our debts, as we too forgive our debtors (Mt 6:12).* If it rings true, if we are speaking the truth where nobody can see, that’s the desert where we can rest in hope.

Because all these troubles are passing away, and what was hope will have become fact, and everything that is ours will be so in fact. Because then we shall finally be transparent to each other and our thinking will not be a sheep *as it were concealed.*⁵¹ And our consciences will not be a desert or solitude, because everyone will be known to each other and will not have their thoughts unknown, *when the Lord comes and lights up the things concealed in darkness, and he will reveal the thoughts of the heart, and then everyone will have praise from God (1 Cor 4:5).* But now you see two people in distress, you cannot see their hearts. The conscience of one, perhaps, is being gnawed by pangs of remorse, the other is at rest in conscience, as in the desert.

And they will dwell in the desert in hope, and they will have sleep, that is, quiet with their senses somehow withdrawn from all the din of the world; inside themselves they will rest *by the streams (Ez 34:25).* In that inner solitude there are certain streams of memory flowing, distilling divine essences from the mind of one who retains and mulls over the scriptures. You see, if you entrust what you have read, what you have heard, in all its purity and freshness and holiness to your memory, then when you begin to rest in that interior desert or solitude, in a good conscience, it seeps from the inner recesses of your mind, and recollection of the word of God starts flowing somehow or other, and you rest with the others in hope, and you say, “Yes, it’s true, it’s well with me, this is my hope, this is what God has promised me, he doesn’t lie, I have nothing

to worry about.” And this freedom from worry is sleep by the streams. *They will have sleep by the streams.*

24. *And I will give them blessing round about my hill (Ez 34:26).* Although it’s a mountain, although it’s a hill, may it be well with us round about it. This hill is Christ. In this way he is in our midst, we are round about him. He had already said, you see, shortly before, *David the prince in their midst (Ez 34:24)*. And that’s why he’s a hill, because he is a prince; gentle, not steep and difficult to climb, but provided you don’t try to step on it from above.

And I give them blessing round about my hill; and I will bring along the thundershower in its time (Ez 34:26), the rain of the word of God. There is also, of course, the bad sort of thundershower, which knocks down the house built on sand, which it is a great thing even for the house founded on the rock to stand up against.⁵² That’s the thundershower of temptation, bent on devastation, not on irrigation, of the earth. This thundershower won’t be of that sort, this one the Lord says he is bringing along. What does he say about it, after all? *They will be showers of blessing (Ez 34:26)*. Your suspicions were aroused by the mention of thunder showers; They will be showers, however, of blessing, not of temptation. *They will be showers of blessing.*

The fruit of the trees

25. And notice the value of this shower. *And the trees in the plain will give their fruit (Ez 34:27)*. In the plain, on level ground, not in rugged places, in a relatively easy life. Having things fairly easy in this life, with nothing steep or rugged, toilsome, difficult to cope with, this he calls the plain. Such is the life of many of the faithful in the Church of God, who have their wives and husbands, children, families. They are like trees in the plain, they are not strong enough to climb anything steep or rugged. But only let them receive the shower, these trees too will give their fruit. The fruit of these trees is: *Break your bread to the hungry, and the needy without a roof bring into your house (Is 58:7)*. To such trees the apostle said, *Not that I seek the gift, but I am looking for the fruit (Phil 4:17)*. *And the trees in the plain will give their fruit*; even if they haven’t got a more valuable one, still they have fruit that is properly their own.

And the earth shall give its increase—the whole earth.⁵³ *And they shall dwell in their land*. Now plains, hills, mountains will give their increase. What can the plain yield, what can the hill, what can the mountain? Only the farmer may tell. *And they shall dwell in their land in hope (Ez 34:27)*. You observe he is promising us the things he gives us in this time. As long as he says “in hope,” I understand it as referring to this time. You see, when we finally attain to the promises, it won’t be a question of hope any longer, it will be the thing, the fact itself.

26. *And all will know that I am the Lord, the moment when I have broken the prongs of their yoke, the prongs under which their necks are pressed.*⁵⁴ Lord, break the prongs with which the heretics press on the necks of the weak. Could anything, I ask you, be such a strangling pressure of the prongs as, "Don't listen to Christ, listen to me"? Take the prongs away, let me breathe. Say what you like; I hear the voice of my shepherd *among all nations, beginning from Jerusalem* (Lk 24:47). Allow me to follow the shepherd; why do you press on me? Take the prongs away from my neck, let me take upon me the easy yoke of my Lord.⁵⁵ He hears all this, and he goes on pressing. Lord, the heretic refuses to suspend the prongs treatment, please break the prongs yourself. The Lord's cross raises up, the heretics prongs press down. But they shall be broken: *the moment when I have broken the prongs of their yoke*. They want to impose their own domination on people, you see; they want them to be subject to themselves, not to God.

The moment when I have broken the prongs of their yoke, and I will release them from the hand of those who were reducing them to slavery (Ez 34:27). What's the meaning of *were reducing them to slavery*? Were compelling them to sin. *Everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin*. Observe, brothers, what they were persuading them to do, so that they end up saying, "They will render an account for us. We are sheep. We follow where they lead." So you are a sheep, are you? Listen to the shepherd, not the wolf.⁵⁶

*They disagree among themselves;
but they all agree against unity*

27. *And they shall no longer be for ravaging by the nations.* They are not lacking in any nation, you see, some here, others there. Not the same there as here, but still people are not lacking to press the necks of the faithful with prongs, neither here nor there. They disagree among themselves, but they all agree against unity.⁵⁷ Unity on the other hand does not disagree with itself, but everywhere battles against those who disagree with it, toils and labors everywhere. But there is rest in the desert.

And they shall no longer be for ravaging by the nations, and the beasts of the earth shall not devour them any more. As they listen to the voice of the shepherd, they will be snatched from the teeth of the wolves. Those beasts of the reeds will not devour them, those who wish to twist the scriptures to their own sense, who turn their ears away from the open scriptures, wishing to be listened to themselves, and not to listen to the scriptures. *And the beasts of the earth shall not devour them, and they shall dwell in hope.* Notice how often he shows that what he is promising now he is promising here; he's speaking about things which he is still supplying us with now.

And there will be nobody to terrify them (Ez 34:23). How will there be nobody to terrify them? Absolutely nobody at all: *In the Lord I trust*

(Ps 11:1). Now when people start saying, *In God I will praise the word, in the Lord I will praise the word*, not in myself, they praise the word in themselves, and say, "Believe what we tell you." But we praise the word in the Lord and say, "Let us believe what we are told by the Lord." There will be nobody to terrify us, because *in God I will praise the word; in the Lord I will praise the word; in God I have hoped, I will not fear what man may do to me* (Ps 56:10-11). *There will be nobody to terrify them.*

They reproach Christians with the divisions of Christians

28. *And I will raise up for them a planting of peace.* The testament of peace, that's the planting of peace. May what God plants germinate and what the heretic has sown be pulled up. I mean what God has planted about himself, about his Church; about himself in heaven, about the Church on earth; about himself above all the heavens, about the Church throughout all the earth, that's what God has planted. "Come here, though, join the party of Donatus, the Church exists only in Africa" — this God has not planted, I don't recognize it as God's planting. What you say should be uprooted, not watered.

And I will raise up for them a plant of peace, and there will be none any more who are consumed with famine in the land. Indeed, brothers, that there really is a famine now, just make inquiries and see how severely they are suffering from hunger. And what's worse, they have got food all round their mouths,⁵⁸ but they don't eat it; exactly as sick people often die of fastidiousness, not because there is nothing for them to eat, but because they refuse to eat and push the food away. Because of course the scriptures are saying those things, and both here and there⁵⁹ the psalm rings out, *All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship in his presence* (Ps 22:27). There you are, the food is handed you on a plate. If you were healthy and ate it, would you stay over there?

And there will be none anymore who are consumed with famine in the land, and they will no more bear the curse of the nations (Ez 34:29). Indeed, brothers, the Church has been raised up to such a pinnacle in the name of Christ that all cursers are now put to shame and dare not curse anymore. The one thing left them to say against us is, "Why don't you agree with each other?" Such Gentile pagans as are left in the nations have nothing to say against the name of Christ, they only reproach Christians with the divisions of Christians. So any heretics who cross over to the Catholic Church will not have this reproach of the nations to bear. They will not bear the curse of division, because they remain in the root of unity, in the plantation of charity; *They will not bear the curse.*

29. *And they will know that I am the Lord their God, and they are my people the house of Israel, says the Lord God.* Here it's sheep,

somewhere else it's also a vineyard. When Isaiah was speaking about a vineyard reproaching a certain bad vineyard to stop the vine saying "I didn't understand," he explained which he meant at the end: *The vineyard of the Lord Sabaoth is the house of Israel* (Is 5:7); so they couldn't say, "It wasn't said to us, but to goodness knows what other lot." So too here, when he had spoken about sheep, just in case anyone should pipe up at the end and say, "Well, perhaps there are some other sheep of God, goodness knows where else, which God is interested in, and I don't know about them" (though anyone who thinks like that must be a bit cracked, tone-deaf to human sense); still this shepherd with his soft spot for the weak came down to the level of such thoughts, and explained very clearly who his sheep were. *And you my sheep, and the sheep of my flock are men* (Ez 34:30-31). But which men? All men? No. For *blessed is he whose hope is the Lord God* (Ps 40:4). And, *How good is the God of Israel to the upright of heart* (Ps 73:1)! *Blessed is the one whose God is the Lord* (Ps 146:5).

We are God's possession

30. God is over all people. Yet I don't know how it is, but nobody will find it easy to say boldly "My God," except one who believes in him and one who loves him. Such a one says "My God." You have made him yours, though you are his. He loves that. Certainly say, in the warmth of your affection and your carefree and confident love, "My God." You say it without a qualm, and you say it truly, because he is yours, and you haven't stopped him being anyone else's. After all, you don't say "My God" in the same way as you say "My horse." It's your horse, not someone else's horse. He is your God, and anyone else's who says "My God" in the same way as you say it. They each say "My God," and "My God." He is the God of all people, offering himself to be enjoyed by all in common, totally in all, totally in each. After all, those who each say "My God" don't divide him up among themselves.

This sermon which I am uttering with my tongue, and with sounds consisting of letters and syllables, all reaches everybody, and those who are listening don't divide it among themselves; well, if a sermon, carried by material sound waves to material ears, more clearly the nearer you are, more faintly the further away, is nonetheless all received by all who are listening, and they don't divide it syllable by syllable among themselves, but all receive all of it, how much more will that God who is present everywhere and fills all things, not things near more clearly and things far more faintly, but reaching mightily from end to end and disposing all things sweetly,⁶⁰ how much more is he possessed equally by all! This light, my brothers, material as it certainly is, shines from the sky, rises, sets, goes round, changes from place to place. Yet the eyes of all people move around in it and are guided by it. And the eyes of all people possess it equally, they don't divide it between them. No rich man

puts up fences in it, nor by staking a prior claim to see in it does he exclude or severely limit the eyes of the poor man. Let the poor man say "My God"; let the rich man say "My God"; the first has less, the second has more—but money, not God.

To reach God, the rich Zacchaeus gave half his patrimony;⁶¹ to reach him, Peter left nets and boat;⁶² to reach him, the widow gave two farthings;⁶³ to reach him, someone poorer still held out a cup of cold water;⁶⁴ to reach him, someone totally poor and destitute contributed nothing but a good will. They gave different things, but they all reached the one thing, because they did not love different things. So too you, men and women, God's sheep, sheep of God's flock, don't let your temporal diversities of fortune worry you, the fact that some are in positions of honor, others have no honor, some have money, others have none, some are beautiful to look at, others not so beautiful, some are worn out with age, others are young, some are children, others men, others women. God is equally present to all. The one who has more standing with him is the one who has brought along more, not money but faith.

And you, he says, my sheep, and sheep of my flock, are men, and I am your God, says the Lord God (Ez 34:31). Oh how blessed we are with such a possession and such a possessor! Because as well as him possessing us, we also possess him. He possesses us in order to tend us, and we possess him in order to tend him.⁶⁵ But we tend him with worship as God, he tends us with cultivation as a field. He tends us so that we may bear fruit; we tend him so that we may yield fruit. Everything accrues to us, he needs nothing of ours. *I will give you, he says, the ends of the earth for your inheritance and your possession (Ps 2:8);*⁶⁶ so there you are, we are his possession. *The Lord, he says, is the portion of my inheritance and my cup (Ps 16:5);* so there you are, he is our possession. And yet, because there is an important distinction, *You are men, I the Lord am your God, says the Lord our God.*

NOTES

1. This sermon clearly follows on the heels of Sermon 46, to which reference is made in it more than once. But how long afterward it was preached is by no means clear. In note 7 below we remark on the use of the word *pridem* to refer to the reading of the first part of Ezekiel's text, on which Sermon 46 was preached, which seems to rule out the two sermons being preached in quick succession, within the context of the same visit to Carthage. But on the other hand the two sermons are so closely connected in all sorts of ways that the interval between them cannot, I would imagine, be more than about three months.

2. See Ps 116:9.

3. See Rv 7:17.

4. See Ps 116:8.

5. That is, in this world we are living in now.

6. *Plorantes in re, gaudentes in spe*. The contrast between *res*, reality or fact, and *spes*, hope, provides him with what is probably his favorite rhyming jingle. Here *res* means present actuality; at other times it means the future eternal reality to which *spes* looks forward. It is rarely possible to reproduce the rhyme in English, as I manage to do here.

7. *Pridem*, which primarily means long ago, not recently. This does suggest that sermon 46 was not preached *immediately* before 47. Is a week too short a period to justify the word *pridem*? See note 1.

8. *Sacramentis*—the “enacted parables” of scripture, especially those that prefigured Christ.

9. The text adds *unde secretarium nominatur*, “where it gets the name *secretarium* from,” this being the magistrate’s chamber. We only have “secretary” in English, from a late Latin *secretarius*—the magistrate’s confidential clerk, in charge of his secret files. The whole passage gives us a tantalizing glimpse into Roman judicial procedure.

10. But God does do so—which shows he doesn’t really want to condemn or strike; he isn’t an ogre God.

11. See Dt 8:3; Mt 4:4.

12. See Mt 25:33. He is using the word “destined” loosely and indeed carelessly; it suggests the erroneous idea of “double predestination,” that is that as well as predestining the elect to eternal salvation, God also predestines the reprobate to eternal damnation. But this idea, as well as being rather repulsive, doesn’t really make sense, because damnation means failing to achieve one’s destiny—it is a non-destination. So predestining to eternal loss or damnation is like destining something not to reach its destination, like arranging for a letter which you want someone to receive not to reach him, but to get lost in the post.

13. There is a play on words here not reproduced in the English: *Ecce veniet, qualem te inveniet?*

14. *Ut securus oves*. The last word is from the verb *ovo* (whence “ovation”), a very unusual word. As he is talking throughout the sermon about *oves*, sheep, it could be a deliberate piece of punning. But the Maurists have *ut securus ores*, “that you can pray without a qualm”; and as neither they nor the CCL editor mentions any variant in the apparatus, I wonder if the CCL reading may not just be a printer’s error.

15. See Jn 8:46.

16. He is playing on the word *praevenio* of the psalm text just quoted. Is he talking about the *sacrament* of penance or confession? What he says could well be applied to it; but it is unlikely that he is deliberately referring to it, because the sacrament took such a different form in those days, in an altogether different structure of Church discipline. He is more likely to be talking about confession to God, whether in personal or in common prayer (as in the verse of the psalm), showing itself in amendment of behavior.

17. An odd thing to offend the eyes—it would be more natural, to our way of thinking, if he had talked about dirt or a mess. But he is thinking in biblical images, of texts like Is 8:14 and New Testament allusions to it, Rom 9:32-33; 1 Pt 2:8.

18. What can have fueled this savage diatribe? Mere rhetorical self-indulgence? Or some distant memory of his youth? Or complaints about clergy and catechists? One could say that the intellectual or professional snobbery to which some ecclesiastics and theologians are always prone, is at all times fair game.

19. See 1 Cor 8:4.10. The word *idolium* (the Greek *eidoleion* of Paul’s text) is manifestly a rude word for a pagan temple which Paul gets from the Septuagint (Dn 1:2, 14:10; 1 Mc 1:47, 10:83), whose authors seem to have invented it rather derisively—perhaps not quite so derisively as my translation. But the “idol’s temple” of RSV is certainly too polite. Alternatives could be “idolarium,” or “idoleum” (analogies, “aquarium,” “colosseum”)—or just “idolhouse,” in the manner in which George Fox and the early Quakers called churches “steeple-houses.”

20. His favorite distinction between use/utility (“advantage” in my translation) and enjoyment. We mustn’t use people, by seeking to please them for our own advantage, but we should enjoy them, take pleasure in them.

21. A glaring tautology, surely!

22. See Mt 25:32.

23. See Mt 13:39.

24. *Dicis te perfectum, ut facias defectum.*

25. See Acts 9:15.

26. He is applying this almost meaningless text (in his translation) to the Donatists, and fixes on the word *exitus*, “going out.” The Donatists went out from the Church, because they regarded themselves as just (unlike the *traditores*) and would not consort with the *traditores*. Of course, they did not regard themselves as going out of the Church, but the *traditores* and all who condoned their action and communicated with them as having unchurched themselves.

27. Not that he doesn’t try, but he doesn’t succeed.

28. Ps 95:4 (Septuagint) in Codex Vaticanus only, and in the old Latin deriving from it.

29. See Sermon 46, note 64.

30. He is addressing the typical *contemporary* Donatist bishop, and the time of the *traditores* was long past.

31. The circumcellions (whom there is no point in attempting to translate) were Donatist strong-arm squads, violent fanatics who went round (*circum*) the *cellae* (cottages, home-steads) in the countryside, committing outrages on those who won their disapproval. They were also prone to what one might call heroic suicide (often by jumping over cliffs) in lieu of martyrdom. As for the bouts of drunkenness, Augustine is probably thinking of something more specific than common or garden merrymaking, or the general abuse of liquor. It had been the practice of African Christians, Catholic and Donatist alike, to celebrate the feasts of martyrs with banquets at their tombs at which everyone got very drunk. When Augustine was first ordained a priest, he launched a sustained campaign against the practice, and no doubt succeeded in eliminating it among the Catholics at Hippo. As his influence grew, he would presumably have also succeeded in getting his fellow bishops to stamp it out among the Catholics of North Africa generally. But it would have continued among the Donatists.

32. One of his names for the Catholic Church. It is the place where “goats” and “weeds” are tolerated in peace, rather than schisms caused by policies of intolerance.

33. As it was doing, pretty obviously, in and around the Roman world of Augustine’s day.

34. *In illa concisione.* An allusion, not recoverable in English, to Phil 3:2, *Watch out for the dogs . . . watch out for the concision*; Paul’s contemptuous name for “the circumcision,” that is, Jews or Judaizing Christians, in contrast to us, the true circumcision, circumcised in spirit, in the faith of Christ.

35. That is, let Christ/God say it.

36. See Sermon 46, 24.

37. 10 verses.

38. See Mt 1:17.

39. Augustine has the verb in the singular – such was his sense of the unity of the divine persons. I myself would be happier with the plural.

40. Their vanity showed itself in their supposing that Christ was only interested in the Donatists in Africa.

41. *O commendare!* I am not absolutely certain what it means. I treat it as the second singular passive (middle) imperative. The Maurists, with one manuscript in support, read *O commendanda res*, which does look rather like a copyist trying to make sense of something he didn’t understand.

42. The most obvious reference is to the divine persons, the Father and the Son. But I rather think that in fact he is referring to Christ in his humanity to be distinguished but not separated from God, Father Son and Holy Spirit.

43. Christ is not two persons, one divine and one human. Nor, as he goes on to say, is he a “mixed person,” half divine half human, or a divine being changed into a human

one. Augustine here anticipates both the Council of Ephesus, 431 (celebrated the year after he died), and the Council of Chalcedon, 451. His writings must have had considerable influence on Leo the Great, whose formulation of the christological mystery in turn swayed Chalcedon.

44. See Acts 4:32.

45. Mediator from *medium*; the one in the middle/midst.

46. That is, the Catholic Church. See note 32 above.

47. See Sermon 46, note 1. This law, apparently only promulgated in 414, enables us to date these two sermons after (or during) that year (*Cod. Theod.* XVI, v, 54).

48. The Donatists denied that God's true Church was to be found anywhere except in Africa.

49. The reference is to the great persecution of 303-313, that is, the Donatist party is saying "I wasn't a traitor, handing over the sacred scriptures, God's testament (old and new) to be burnt." God's will and testament was made in the Old Testament, fulfilled (opened) in the New. I wonder if, when Augustine was talking of its being opened (as wills are opened and read on the death of the testator), he was also thinking of the book sealed with seven seals, in the hand of him that sat upon the throne, which was opened by the Lamb (Rv 5).

50. The *in spe/in re* jingle again. The expression is rather loose, "there" in the first part being the solitude of conscience, in the second being the kingdom.

51. A most peculiar and obscure remark. It is probably an allusion to Song 1:7, *Lest perchance I come as one (sc. a sheep) veiled upon your companions*, which he discussed at some length in Sermon 46, 36. Here his *tanquam abscondita* corresponds to the *sicut operta* there. In that passage he interprets "as one veiled" as meaning lacking in full self-knowledge, hence an easy prey to deception and the snares of the heretics. If I am right in this supposition, he is certainly expecting a lot from his audience—unless his exposition of Song 1:7 was the buzz of pious circles in Carthage.

52. See Mt 7:27.

53. A side-swipe at the Donatists.

54. The last phrase is mistakenly included by the CCL text in the quotation; it is in fact Augustine's brief comment. The "fork" was an instrument of punishment, a kind of pillory perhaps; hence its comparison with the cross a little further on.

55. See Mt 11:30.

56. The Donatist bishops and clergy press with the fork, reduce to slavery. The sin of the rank and file is abdication of personal responsibility.

57. Another of his names for the Catholic Church.

58. He is thinking of them as sheep in a pasture. The famine they suffer is want of the word of God, which they ignore, though it is available, and thus "refuse to eat."

59. Here in the Catholic basilica, there in the Donatist one.

60. See Wis 8:1; also 1:7.

61. See Lk 19:8.

62. See Mt 4:22.

63. See Mk 12:42; Lk 21:2.

64. See Mt 10:42.

65. He is playing on the word *colo*, which means both to cultivate and to worship, in a way really impossible to reproduce in English. "Tend" is not really satisfactory.

66. The "you" is understood as Christ, God the Son.

SERMON 48

SERMON PREACHED ON A SUNDAY IN THE CELERINA BASILICA,
ON THE WORDS OF THE PROPHET MICAH, WHERE IT SAYS:
*WHAT SHALL I FITTINGLY OFFER THE LORD,
BENDING THE KNEE TO GOD MOST HIGH, ETC.*

Date: 420^l

1. We heard the readings of the divine utterances while they were being recited. That is the material that has been given me to talk about. That's what I have to get wise to, that's from what I have to sow what wisdom I have gotten, with the help of him in whose hand, as it is written, are both *we and our words* (Wis 7:16). Nor is it simply pointless, what is written somewhere else: *I will praise the word, in the Lord I will praise the word* (Ps 56:10). What is praised in the Lord is what the Lord gives. So although I am fairly feeble, I am for all that his instrument.² I grasp what I can, I share without grudging what I grasp.³ May he make good in your minds whatever I have done less well, because even what I do manage to convey to your ears is not worth anything, is it, unless he does the whole work in your minds.

Straight and right judgment

2. Let me remind you of what the first reading, from the prophet, was urging upon us. Remember? *What shall I fittingly offer the Lord?* he says. Man was looking for a sacrifice with which to appease God, or please God. *Am I to bend the knee, he says, to God Most High, shall I appease him with thousands of bulls, or with tens of thousands of fat she-goats, or shall I offer God the fruit of my womb for the sin of my soul?* Am I to offer my firstborn, he says, to my God for the sin of my soul? So *the answer comes, O man*, as you wonder what you are to offer God, and how you are to appease the Lord, or to please God, *the answer comes to you what is good, or what else does the Lord require of you, but to do judgment and justice and love mercy, and to be ready to go with the Lord your God* (Mi 6:6-8). You were asking what you should offer for yourself. Offer yourself. What, after all, is the Lord asking from you, but you yourself? Because in the whole earthly creation he made

nothing better than you. He asks yourself from you, because you had ruined yourself.⁴

Now if you do what he has told you to, he finds in you judgment and justice; judgment first of all on yourself, justice toward your neighbor. In what way judgment on yourself? To be displeased with what you were, and to be able to become what you were not. Judgment, I insist, about yourself upon yourself without any respect of your person, so that you don't spare your sins or even approve of them just because they are yours, and don't praise yourself for your good points and blame God for your bad ones. That is a perverse judgment, and for that reason it quite simply isn't judgment. To show you that a perverse judgment is not a judgment at all, God did not say, "What does the Lord require of you but to do right judgment?"; he simply said, "to do judgment." If it's right, then it's judgment; if it's perverse, then it's not a judgment, it's an offense. So what were you doing when you had ruined yourself and were going in pursuit of your ruin, going and not coming back? What were you doing? I know what you were doing; you were praising yourself for your good points, railing against God for your bad points. That is a perverse judgment and therefore, as I said, not even judgment.

So do you want to make a right judgment, that is, simply a judgment? Correct what you were doing; reverse it, and it will be right. What do I mean by "Correct it"? Praise God for your good points, blame yourself for your bad ones. So when you are displeased with your perversity, and have corrected yourself with the help of the one who created you, you will be straight and right, and will observe justice. You will approve of God, you see, if you are straight. You will not be out of true with the straight, unless you are crooked and perverse. Being straight you will shape up to the straight, and without a doubt you will approve of God. When you didn't like him, you see, it was your perversity that didn't like him.

3. Listen to the holy psalm: *How good is the God of Israel to the upright of heart!* The one who is saying this in the psalm, had he disapproved of God? Far be it from me to accuse him of this, I am only believing his own confession. Just listen with me, and consider what he said: *How good*, he says, *is the God of Israel!* To whom? *To the upright of heart.* *But my feet*, he says, *when I wasn't upright of heart, but my feet were almost shaken, a little less my steps were pulled from under me.* *My feet were shaken* is the same as *my steps were pulled from under me*; *almost* is the same as *a little less*. So then, what does he mean, *Almost, a little less, my feet were shaken, my steps were pulled from under me?* "I almost slipped," he's saying, "I almost fell." How did you incur such a great risk? *Because I was jealous*, he says, *of sinners, observing the peace of sinners* (Ps 73:1-3), that is, on seeing bad men doing well, I staggered and reeled under God, I almost fell away from God. So that's why he hadn't liked God: why do bad people have all the luck?

The testimony of the saints

4. Finally, mark the words of this staggerer, what he said to himself: *Look, these are sinners*—they are the staggerer’s words in the psalm itself—*Look, these are sinners for ever; they have gotten riches* (Ps 73:12). *And I said, How did God know?* He says it himself in the psalm, it’s the man himself speaking who, not yet being straight, hadn’t liked God, because bad people were flooded with good things. *How did God know*, he says, *and can there be knowledge in the Most High* (Ps 73:11)?² Notice yet again what he adds, notice how in staggering he is on the verge of falling, how close he is to ruin. Notice, I repeat, what he adds: *Is it to no purpose that I set my heart right, and washed my hands among the innocent?* (Ps 73:13). “I’ve lost everything,” he says, “that I lived a good life for. I set my heart right, I washed my hands among the innocent, just for this, that bad people might do well and I myself might be afflicted. *And I was scourged*,” he says, “*all day long* (Ps 73:14). They are enjoying themselves, and I am being scourged. They speak ill of God and enjoy themselves, I worship God and get myself scourged. *How did God know?*” That’s what made him stagger and reel, that’s why he almost fell, that’s why he imagined that human affairs are no concern of God’s.

5. So while he was thinking like this, with a perverse and not an upright heart, and being led by an apparently plausible argument to suppose because of this incongruous state of things that the direction of human affairs is not God’s business, he would have liked to proclaim this doctrine, to assert it, to teach it. He was held in check by the authority and the testimony of the saints. Notice his words: *If I were saying*, he says, *if I were saying, I will tell it like that*, I will testify like that, I will teach like that, I will tell people that God is not interested in human affairs—*if I were saying I will tell it like that, lo and behold I have disavowed the generation of your children* (Ps 73:15). So how can I tell it like that? Moses didn’t tell it like that, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob didn’t tell it like that, Jeremiah didn’t tell it like that, nor did Isaiah, nor did the other prophets. But these were all your children. So if I tell it like that, I will be disavowing the generation of your children.

6. So what am I to do? *I undertook to realize. I undertook*, he says, *to realize*. But it’s a big matter to realize, it’s difficult to realize. *This*, he says, after he has said *I undertook to realize, this toil is in front of me*, how to realize both that God is just, and that he knows about human affairs, and that it goes well with the perverse, and that it sometimes goes badly with the upright. How it can be just I undertook to realize, and toil is ahead of me.

Let yourself be checked by divine authority

7. Toil for how long? *Until I enter into the sanctuary of God and*

*understand about the latter end.*⁶ So enter into the sanctuary of God, faithful soul, enter into the sanctuary of God, devout soul, you who are not displeased with God for your ills, nor displeased with God for the good luck of the bad. And if you don't know the reason for it all, just believe that what God allows and does, does not happen unjustly. You were being led along by human reason; let yourself be checked by divine authority, and believe that there is something there which escapes you. For that God cannot be perverse and iniquitous is something to be believed with the most assured faith. Entering in this way by faith into the sanctuary of God, entering by believing, you learn by understanding. That's the way he says it, you see: *Until I enter into the sanctuary of God*, which is entered by faith. And after faith, what? *And understand about the latter end.* The latter end, the last things are coming, when it will go ill with no good people, go well with no bad ones. The last things, I repeat, are coming, when the godly will be sorted from the ungodly, the just from the unjust, the praisers of God from the slanderers of God. The sorting times are coming, so that as I've just said, it won't go ill with any good people, or go well with any bad people. So why isn't it like that now? Perhaps it is like that even now. But what is now hidden will afterward be revealed.⁷

*Be sure to have the good things
that do make you good*

8. Step in with me, if you can, into the sanctuary of God. Perhaps there, if I can, I will teach you. Or rather, learn with me from the one who is teaching me that even now it does not go well with the bad, and goes better with the good than with the bad, although the full felicity of the good has not yet come about, nor yet have come about the ultimate pains and penalties of the bad.

Perhaps you can understand with me that it does not go well with the bad. You see, I am asking you, inquiring of you, why things are going badly with you. You will answer, "Dire poverty is strangling me, want oppressing me, not to mention physical pain perhaps, or dread of an enemy." So it's going badly with you because you are suffering evils; and is it going well with him, who is the very evil?⁸ There is a great deal of difference between suffering evil and being evil. You are not what you suffer, because while you suffer evil, you are not evil yourself. You suffer evil, I repeat, but you are not evil yourself. He, on the other hand, doesn't suffer evil, and is evil. So don't be misled, then, don't be misled. It is impossible that it should go badly with you who suffer evil, and go well with him who is evil. After all, since he is evil, do you suppose he doesn't suffer evil, seeing that he suffers himself? It's going badly with you, because you are suffering some extraneous evil in your body. and is it going well with him, who is suffering the evil of his own self in his heart?

It's going badly with you, because you have a bad farm; and is it going well with him, who has a bad soul?

Be good, you that have got the goods. Riches are good, gold is good, silver is good, families are good, possessions are good, all these things are good—but they are for you to make good use of, they don't make you good. Be sure to have the good things that do make you good. What are they, you say? Do judgment, do justice. Are the things you have good? Do judgment, do justice. You too be good yourself among all your good things. Blush for your good things; be one good person who is going to abide, among good things that are going to perish. Blush for your good things; don't be bad among them, or you will perish with them.

As for how the rest of it,⁹ brothers, is to be taken, how justice is to be observed, and how mercy is to be loved, and how each of us should be ready to go with the Lord our God, I shall discuss with you some other time, if the Lord allows me. Hold me to what I owe you, or if I go on any longer you may find that I bore you.¹⁰

NOTES

1. It is really only the first line of the title that is authentic; the rest is added only in one collection of sermons. It serves to explain why the sermon occurs precisely here in sermons on the Old Testament.

The Celerina Basilica was a church in Carthage, possibly named after a martyr commemorated by Cyprian (+ 258) in one of his letters (39).

It is pretty clear, from the end of this sermon and the beginning of the next, that both 48 and 49 were preached on successive Sundays. From 49, 11 we learn that on the following day, a Monday, one of the readings would be from Acts, on the martyrdom of Stephen. This could not possibly be for his feast day on December 26, since sermon 49, preached the day before, makes no mention at all of Christmas, which would be unthinkable if it had been preached on Christmas day. So it is probable that Acts was being read routinely in the course of the liturgical year, and that happens during the weeks after Easter. Hence we may conclude that this sermon is being preached on a Sunday after Easter. My guess, from the style, and from two personal references of the preacher to himself (notes 2 and 10), is that it was preached when Augustine was getting rather old—say about 420 or later.

2. Is this just a reference to his being an earthen vessel (2 Cor 4:7) like any other Christian, or more particularly to his own health? I am inclined to think the latter, because he is contrasting being "his instrument" with being feeble.

On the other hand, he is here speaking in the first person plural, which while it was common form for preachers to apply to themselves, like the editorial "we," still could mean "we" in the plural—here "we bishops/clergy." I think the context here is against that; but I have to admit that here he also puts the word "instrument" (*vasa*) into the plural—which does tell in favor of the plural interpretation of the first person plural. This would presumably eliminate any allusion to his own health.

3. See Wis 7:13.

4. The force of that "because" is not immediately obvious. Perhaps we may paraphrase as follows: God says to you, "Here, you have made a very bad job of yourself—wrecked yourself. Give yourself to me, I'll put you right and make a better job of you."

5. Augustine's text is odd; not only does he reverse verses 11 and 12, he also reads /

said, where the Septuagint, true to the Hebrew, has *they say*. In the Greek behind his Latin it could have been the same word, *eipon*, which is both first singular and third plural. But in the Rahlfs edition we are given the Hellenistic modifications *eipa* for first singular and *eipan* for third plural.

6. In Sermon 15A, 2, he quotes more accurately “about their latter end.” Now he leaves out “their” because he wants a wider field of reference, to the latter end of the just as well as of the wicked.

7. See Mt 10:26; Lk 12:2.

8. This is an extreme expression that I am sure Augustine would not have defended if he had been pressed, conveying as it does the impression that any creature can be *ipsum malum*, evil itself. This is one of the ideas, of course, that he fought against in the Manichees. The unease finds expression in two manuscripts, one of which reads *qui seipsum malum patitur* (who endures himself as evil), the other *qui est ipse malus* (who is himself evil).

9. The text from Micah.

10. Afraid of boring them after only 15 to 20 minutes? This does not sound like Augustine in his prime! It is to me another indication that it is an old and himself rather tired man speaking. He will pay what he owes in sermon 49 on the following Sunday. The Maurists, following one manuscript, add after *ne diu habeatis fatigatorem* the phrase *sed pro viribus meis adiutorem* – I would rather be regarded, to the best of my ability, as helping you (a clumsy paraphrase, I fear). The CCL editor says the manuscript in question is of no independent authority. But the style, a three-member rhyming sentence, *Tenete me debitorem, ne diu habeatis fatigatorem, sed pro viribus meis adiutorem*, has the authentic Augustinian ring about it.

SERMON 49

SERMON PREACHED AT THE SHRINE OF SAINT CYPRIAN ON A SUNDAY

Date: 420¹

Preface

1. We heard several holy lessons while they were being recited, and about these it is my duty to say whatever the Lord may be pleased to grant. But every listener to the readings remembers best what has been read last, and expects something to be said about that by the handler of the word. So since the holy gospel was the last thing to be recited, I don't doubt your graces are expecting to hear something about that vineyard, and about the hired laborers, and about the wage of a dollar.² I, though, remember what I promised last Sunday.³ I wanted to explain something that had been read from the holy prophet – what had been was that the man who asked what sacrifices he should appease God with was informed that God required nothing of him but to do judgment and justice, and to love mercy, and to be ready to go with the Lord his God.⁴ Well I dealt with the point about judgment to the best of my ability, and the sermon went on so long that no time was left for me to discuss the other points. That's why I promised that today I would speak about justice. But those of you who were expecting me to talk about the gospel mustn't consider yourselves cheated. The work in that vineyard, after all, is precisely justice.

Justice and faith

2. So consider that you yourselves have been hired. Those who came in as children can reckon they were hired at the first hour; if you came in as teenagers, at the third hour; as young people, at the sixth; as mature adults, at the ninth; as decrepit old things, at the eleventh. Don't argue about the time; listen to the work you are to do, wait serenely for your wages. And if you reflect what sort of person your Lord is, don't resent the wages all being the same. You know what the work is, but I will remind you. Listen to what you know, and do what you hear.

I have said that the work of God is justice. But when the Lord Jesus

was asked what the work of God is, he replied, *This is the work of God, that you should believe in the one whom he has sent* (Jn 6:29). Our loving Lord could have said, "Justice is the work of God." So have I, a mere hired laborer, had the gall to take up a position against the head of the household? If justice is the work of God, as I said, how can what the Lord said be the work of God, namely to believe in him – unless believing in him is justice? "But look," you say, "we have heard from the Lord that this is the work of God, that you should believe in him; from you we have heard that the work of God is justice. Prove to us that believing in Christ is justice."

Do you think – since I am replying to a just and urgent question – do you think that believing in Christ is not justice? What is it then? Give a name to this work. Undoubtedly, if you consider carefully what you have heard, you are going to answer me, "This is called faith. Believing in Christ is called faith." I accept what you say: believing in Christ is called faith. Now you in your turn listen to another text of scripture: *The just lives by faith* (Hb 2:4). Do justice, believe; *the just lives by faith*. It's hard for someone who believes well to live badly. Believe with your whole heart, believe without wavering, without hesitation, without pitting human skepticism against the faith.

"Faith" comes from the Latin *fides*, and that is so called because it is no sooner said than done. There are two syllables when you say *fides*. The first syllable is from *factum*, what's done, the second from *dictum*, what's said.⁵ So, I'm asking you whether you believe. You say, "I believe." Do what you say, and it's faith. I can hear your voice as you reply, I can't see your heart as you believe. But I'm not the one who hired you into the vineyard, am I, I who cannot see your heart? I don't do the hiring, I don't indicate the work to be done, I don't make up the dollar-a-day pay packet. I am your fellow worker. With whatever strength he has been pleased to grant me, I am laboring in the vineyard. But in what kind of spirit I am laboring the one who hired me can see. *For to me*, says the apostle, *it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you* (1 Cor 4:3). You too can hear my voice, you cannot see my heart. Let us all set our hearts before God for him to see, and do our work wholeheartedly. Let us not offend the one who hired us, so that we may receive our wages without effrontery.⁶

We are light and darkness

3. We too, beloved, will be able to see each other's hearts, but only later on. For the time being, however, we are still carrying around with us the darkness of this mortality, and we walk by the lamplight of scripture, as the apostle Peter says: *We have the firmly established prophetic word, to which you would do well to attend, as to a lamp in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts* (2 Pt 1:19). Accordingly, beloved, because of the faith with which we

believe in God, we are the day in comparison with unbelievers. In unbelief we were the night together with them, but now light, as the apostle says: *You were once darkness, but now light in the Lord* (Eph 5:8). Darkness in yourselves, light in the Lord. Again in another place: *For you are all sons of light and sons of the day; we are not of the night, nor of the dark* (1 Thes 5:5). *Let us walk becomingly as in the day* (Rom 13:13).⁷ So we are the day in comparison with unbelievers.

But in comparison with that day, when the dead will rise and this perishable thing will put on imperishability and this mortal thing put on immortality,⁸ we are still the night. As though we were already in the day, the apostle John says to us, *Dearly beloved, we are children of God*. And yet because it is still night, how does it go on? *And it has not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is* (1 Jn 3:2). But that's the wages, not the work. *We shall see him as he is* is the wages. Then it will be a day than which there can be none brighter.

Meanwhile, then, in this already-day let us walk becomingly; in this still-night let us not pass judgment on one another. You can see, I hope, that the apostle Paul saying, *Let us walk becomingly as in the day*, is not at odds nor out of tune with his fellow apostle Peter saying, *To which you would do well to attend, namely to the divine word, as to a lamp in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts*.

Impossible to read the heart

4. Now observe the apostle Paul also saying the same thing: *Therefore do not make any judgment before the time*. And when will the time be? *Until the Lord comes and lights up things hidden in darkness and reveals the thoughts of the heart, and then everyone shall have praise from God* (1 Cor 4:5). What does *before the time* mean, if not "before you see each other's hearts"? Just see if this is what I have been saying. Listen bit by bit to all the words of that sentence. *Do not make any judgment before the time*. And when will the time be? *Until the Lord comes and lights up things hidden in darkness, and he will reveal the thoughts of the heart, and then everyone shall have praise from God*. How will the darkness find fault with you, when you are being praised by the light?

Then hearts will be out in the open, but now they are lying low. Someone or other is looked at askance as an enemy, and perhaps he's a friend. Someone else rather looks like a friend, and is possibly a hidden enemy. Oh what darkness! This one roars, and he loves; that one coos, and he hates. If I judge by their words, I avoid calm waters and run on the reef; I flee from a friend and cling to an enemy. That's all the result of the heart lying low. And that's where believing is to be done, there inside where it's lying low, where it's hidden. It was to cultivate this that you were hired. That's where you must work together by believing, where

your fellow worker can't see you but your Lord can. *The just lives by faith* (Hb 2:4). Do just that.

Judge yourself, don't spare yourself

5. I have already discussed judgment, last Sunday, pointing out that you should judge yourself, and when you find yourself to be crooked or perverse you shouldn't coddle yourself, but correct yourself and become straight or upright, and so take pleasure in the upright God. The upright God, you see, cannot be pleasing to the crooked man. Do you want to take pleasure in the upright God? Be upright yourself. Judge yourself, don't spare yourself. Whatever there is about you that displeases you, clean it up, mend it, put it straight. Use the holy scriptures like a mirror. This mirror has a reflective sheen that doesn't lie, a sheen that doesn't flatter, that doesn't respect the person of anyone. You're beautiful, you see yourself beautiful; you're ugly, you see yourself ugly. But when you come in front of it in your ugliness and see yourself ugly, don't blame the mirror. Go back to yourself, the mirror isn't deceiving you, take care you don't deceive yourself. Pass judgment on yourself, be sorry about your ugliness, and so as you turn away and go off sorry and ugly, you may be able to correct yourself and come back beautiful.

So when you have judged yourself without flattery, go on to judge your neighbor. The fact is, you see, that you judge by what you see. Because it can happen that while you see the badness that is defiling you, it can happen that your neighbor comes and confesses his badness to you, and discloses to a friend what he had concealed even from himself.⁹ Judge according as you see; what you don't see, leave to God. And when you judge, love the person, hate the vice. Don't love the vice for the person's sake, nor hate the person for the vice's sake. Your neighbor is the person; the vice is your neighbor's enemy. You show that you love your friend if you hate what harms your friend. If you believe, you act accordingly, because *the just lives by faith* (Hb 2:4).

Love the person, hate the vice

6. There are plenty of instances in human affairs of what I am saying. Sometimes your dearest friend has an enemy who was a friend of you both. Of three friends two begin to be enemies of each other; what is the one to do who remains in the middle? He desires, insists, implores you to hate with him the one he has begun to hate, and he says to you like this: "You are not my friend, since you are my enemy's friend." The words you get from this one, you also get from that one. You see, there were three of you. There were the three of you, two began to fall out, the one left was you. If you join this one, you will have that one as your enemy; if that one, this one; if both, both will complain. There's a trial

and a testing for you; there you have the thorns in the vineyard we have been hired to work in.

Perhaps you are expecting to hear from me what you should do. Remain the friend of both of them. They have fallen out with each other; let them fall in with you and with each other through your good offices. If you hear nasty things about each of them from the other, don't betray them to the other — or else though they are enemies now, they may perhaps become friends later and betray to each other their betrayers. But that's an all too human reason I have given, and it's not for the eyes and ears of the one who has hired us. Look, no one is betraying you. It's God who sees, God who judges you. You have heard a word from an angry man, from someone who's been deeply hurt, who has flared up in a temper. Let it die in you. Why disclose it, why pass it on? After all, if it stays in you, it won't burst you.

So, of course, say to your friend, who wants to make you the enemy of your friend — speak to him and so to say massage his aching spirit with a soothing liniment — say to him: "Why do you want me to be his enemy?" "Because he's my enemy," he answers. "So you want me to be your enemy's enemy? What I ought to be the enemy of is your vice. This one you want to make me the enemy of is a human being. You have another enemy, whose enemy I ought to be if I am your friend." "Who is this other enemy of mine?" he answers. "Your vice." "What's my vice?" he asks. "The hatred you hate your friend with." So be like a doctor. A doctor doesn't love the sick person if he doesn't hate the sickness. To set the sick free, he persecutes the fever. Don't love the vices of your friends if you love your friends.

A speck and beam in the eye

7. But who's talking? Do you suppose I do what I say myself? My brothers, I do do it, if I do it first on myself. And I do it on myself, if I receive the ability to from the Lord, then I do it. I hate my vices, I offer my heart for healing to my doctor. I persecute them as best I can, I sigh about them, I confess that they are in me, and finally, I blame myself. You that were finding fault with me, first put yourself right. That's justice, which saves us from being told, *You see the speck in your brother's eye, and do not see the beam in your own eye? Hypocrite, first pull the beam out of your own eye, and then you will be able to see to draw the speck out of your brother's eye* (Mt 7:3-4).

Anger is a speck, hatred is a beam. But nurse a speck, and it becomes a beam. Anger grown chronic becomes hatred, the speck that is nursed becomes a beam. So to prevent the speck becoming a beam, *do not let the sun go down upon your wrath* (Eph 4:26). You can see, you know perfectly well that you are riddled with hate, and you find fault with someone for being angry? Eliminate the hatred, and you are quite right to reproach anger. There's a speck in his eye, a beam in yours. After all, if you are busy hating, how can you see what you are to pull out? There's

a beam in your eye. Why is there a beam in your eye? Because you made light of the speck that was planted there. You went to sleep with it, you got up with it. You cultivated it in yourself, you watered it with groundless suspicions; by believing the words of flatterers and people telling you nasty tales about your friend you nursed the speck instead of whipping it out.

Are you getting very frightened, or aren't you? I'm telling you: Don't hate, and you've nothing to worry about. And you answer me and say to me, "What does hating matter? And what's wrong with a man hating his enemy?" You are hating your brother. But if you make light of hatred, listen to something you are failing to take into account: *Whoever hates his brother is a murderer* (1 Jn 3:15). Whoever hates is a murderer.¹⁰ Can you now say, "What do I care about being a murderer?" Whoever hates is a murderer. You haven't prepared any poison, you haven't gone so far as to strike your enemy with a sword, you haven't hired a hit-man for the crime, or worked out a place and a time. Finally, you haven't committed the crime yourself. You have only hated – and you have killed yourself before him.

So learn justice, to hate only vices, and to love people. If you stick to this, and practice this sort of justice, so that you prefer even vicious people to be cured rather than condemned, then you have been doing good work in the vineyard. But mind you work at this, my brothers.

Forgive with all your heart

8. Look – after the sermon there's the dismissal of the catechumens.¹¹ The faithful will stay behind. We are coming to the place in the service for prayer. You know what it is we are going to draw near to.¹² What are we going to say to God first? *Forgive us our debts, just as we too forgive our debtors* (Mt 6:12). See that you do forgive, see that you do. You are coming to these words in the prayer. How are you going to say them, how are you not going to say them? Finally, I ask you, Are you going to say them, or aren't you? You hate, and you say them? "In that case," you answer, "I'm not saying them." You're praying, and not saying them? You hate, and you say them? You pray, and you don't say them? Come on, come on, answer quickly. So if you do say them you lie; if you don't say them, you don't deserve anything.¹³

Look at yourself, observe yourself. You are shortly going to pray; forgive with all your heart. If you want to quarrel with your enemy, quarrel first with your own heart. Quarrel, I tell you, quarrel with your own heart. Tell your heart, Don't hate. But that heart of yours, those feelings of yours – are still hating. Tell your soul, "Stop hating. How will I pray, how will I be able to say *Forgive us our debts*? Well, I can say this, of course, but how can I say what follows? *Just as we too.*" We too what? "*Just as we too forgive.*" Where is your faith? Do what you say: *Just as we too.*

9. But your soul doesn't want to forgive, and is made miserable by your saying to it, Stop hating. Answer it, "*Why are you miserable, my soul, and why do you upset me?* (Ps 42:6). Why are you miserable? Stop hating, or you will destroy me. Why do you upset me? *Hope in God*. You are very ill, you are gasping, you're crippled with disease. You're unable to rid yourself of hatred. *Hope in God*, he's the doctor. For your sake he hung on the cross, and he hasn't yet avenged himself. Why do you want to avenge yourself? That's what your hating means, you see, a desire for revenge. Look at your Lord hanging, look at him hanging, and giving you a directive from that kind of judicial bench which is the cross. Look at him hanging there, and concocting a medicine for you in your illness from his own blood. Look at him hanging there. You want revenge? You want to get even? Look at him hanging there, and listen to him praying, *Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing* (Lk 23:34).

Cast your eye on Stephen

10. "But he could do that," you say to me, "I can't. I, after all, am just a man, he's God. I'm a man, that man is the God-man." So why is God man, if man is not to correct himself? But anyway look, it's just me talking to you. It's too much for you, man, to imitate your Lord; cast your eye on Stephen, your fellow servant. Saint Stephen, certainly, was a man. Or was he God and man? He was simply a man. He was what you are. As for what he did, it was only with a grant in aid from the one whom you too are asking for help. However, just see what it was he did.

He was speaking to the Jews, he was being harsh and he was being loving. I have got to show you both, because I said he was being harsh, and I also said he was being loving. I'm bound to demonstrate both, Stephen harsh and Stephen loving. Listen to him being harsh: *Stiff-necked*—they are Saint Stephen's words when he was addressing the Jews—*Stiff-necked and uncircumcised of heart and ears, you people have always resisted the Holy Spirit. Which of the prophets did your fathers not kill?* (Acts 7:51-52).

You have heard him being harsh; now I owe you the other Stephen; listen to him being loving. That made them very angry, and growing hotter and more violent they returned evil for good, they rushed to pick up stones, and began stoning the servant of God. Now, Saint Stephen, prove your love. Now, now let's see you, now let us watch, now let us observe you conquering and triumphing over the devil. We heard you raging against them while they kept silent; let's see if you love them when they are raging. You were raging against them while they kept silent; let's see if you love them while they are stoning you. After all, if you hate and have ever been able to hate, now is the time for it, when you are being stoned. Then, surely, if ever, you ought to hate. Let's see if you pay back hardness of heart to the hard stones, to the stones who are stoning you.

It's stones, you see, who are throwing stones, rock-hard men throwing rocks. They received the law on stone, and they throw stones.

11. Let's go and see, beloved, let's go and see, let's watch this great spectacle. Let's watch the show that is also to be presented tomorrow.¹⁴ Let's go and see. Here's Stephen being stoned. Suppose him to be set there in front of our very eyes. Ho there, member of Christ, ho there, athlete of Christ; look upon him who for your sake hung upon the cross. He was being crucified, you are being stoned. He said, *Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing* (Lk 23:34). What do you say? Let me hear. Let me see whether I may at least be able to imitate you.

First the blessed Stephen stood and prayed for himself, and said, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*. When he had said that he knelt down, and on his knees he said, *Lord, do not hold this crime against them. Saying this, he fell asleep* (Acts 7:59-60).¹⁵ Oh what blissful sleep, what true and perfect rest! There you are, that's what resting really is — praying for enemies.

But I have a little question, please, to ask you, Saint Stephen. Please explain to me, I don't know what it means, why you prayed for yourself standing, and knelt for your enemies. Perhaps he will give us an answer we can understand: "I prayed for myself standing, because I had no difficulty in praying and obtaining a favor for myself, as one who served God faithfully." There's no difficulty in praying for the just. That's why he prayed for himself standing.

Then it came to having to pray for the Jews, for the slayers of Christ, for the slayers of the saints, for his own executioners who were stoning him; he thought of their colossal, their extreme disloyalty, which it would be very hard to pardon — and he knelt down.¹⁶

Kneel down in this vineyard, doughty worker. Kneel down, I say, for the work of this vineyard, doughtiest of workers. You have done great work, quite outstanding, quite beyond praise. You have dug very deep to pull up hatred of your enemies from your heart.

Turning to the Lord etc.

NOTES

1. The CCL editor adds to this title: *On the words of the prophet Micah, What shall I fittingly offer the Lord; how justice is to be observed and how mercy is to be loved*. In fact, the preacher recapitulates what he said in the previous sermon about judgment, and then goes on to talk, rather idiosyncratically, about justice. He doesn't get on to mercy, but at the end the reader may conclude that it has been included in fact under justice.

For the date and place of the sermon, preached a week after Sermon 48, see note 1 on that sermon.

2. See Mt 20:1-16. The dollar is *denarius*, which could perhaps more suitably, as well as precisely, be rendered by "tenner," which in colloquial English in Britain means a £10

note. This would just about be a minimum day's wage there in 1987.

3. See the end of Sermon 48, note 10.

4. See Mi 6:6-8.

5. Without doubt an etymology to out-etymology all etymologies. Did he invent it himself, or get it from someone else? It is faithfully reproduced by Isidore of Seville (7th century) in his *Etymologies*, X, 99 (PL 82, 377) though the word he is discussing is *fidelis*, not *fides*. Really impossible to reproduce in English; one could get "fai" from "fact," but hardly "th" from "said."

6. *Libera fronte*, with a free forehead. "Effrontery" comes from *frons*, "forehead," as the seat of boldness and/or shame.

7. He seems to be taking it as all one quotation from the same text, though he really knew that this is not so, because the sentence from Romans is part of the famous text that he read at the moment of his conversion, in response to the child's voice singing *Tolle lege, tolle lege* (*Confessions*, 29).

8. See 1 Cor 15:53.

9. *Et prodat amico quod texerat animo*. The *animo* is ambiguous; it could mean ". . . what he had concealed in his mind," that is, what he had kept to himself. The Maurists read *quod texerat inimico*, fairly clearly the emendation of a puzzled copyist.

I am not sure how this all fits in with his injunction to judge as you see. But I think he is saying what John Henry Newman insisted on so frequently: that it is not for us to attribute motives to our opponents; all we are at liberty to pass judgment on is their actions or policies.

10. Omitting here *Non venenum parasti*, "you haven't prepared any poison," with the Maurists and most manuscripts. CCL inserts it on the authority of the manuscripts of the primary collection. But it is out of place here, and has surely crept in by a copyist's error. The cue for it is the same as in the next sentence but one.

11. *Fit missa catechumenis*. Here we have the word *missa* (Mass) in its original significance. It is only later text books that will refer to the first part of the Mass (in which the sermon is preached) as "the Mass of the catechumens."

12. Reception of the sacrament. It was still the form not to mention the eucharist in the presence of the unbaptized, though this so-called "discipline of the secret" must have been getting pretty threadbare by Augustine's time.

13. That is, to be forgiven.

14. He is speaking in the world of Roman games, when the execution of malefactors (and not so long ago, of Christians) was made a matter of popular entertainment in the amphitheaters of the great cities. He also means that this passage from Acts is due to be read the next day. See Sermon 48, note 1.

15. The text says nothing about Stephen standing while he made his first prayer, though it is implied by going on to say that he then knelt down. But Augustine is possibly conflating in his mind Stephen's earlier words, *Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God*.

16. The point is not that wicked people are harder to pray for, that it's harder to extract some favor from God for them; but that it's very hard for us to forgive them, and so we have to put a lot of effort into making ourselves pray for them. That's why he tells the doughty worker in the vineyard to kneel down; he has hard work to do, making himself forgive his enemies. He has to kneel down to get his arm in the hole to pull up that hatred by its roots.

SERMON 49A

FRAGMENT FROM A SERMON ON THE PROPHET'S WORDS:
*THAT A MAN SHOULD LOVE JUSTICE AND MERCY AND JUDGMENT, AND
BE PREPARED TO WALK WITH THE LORD HIS GOD*

*Date: uncertain*¹

1. *When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, made from a woman, made under the law* (Gal 4:4). People are upset by “made from a woman,” because we confess that he was born of a virgin.² It’s only of man that we confess he was made; God is always the one who makes, he cannot be made in order to be. God cannot be made; but he is made into, or becomes, something for someone, in the way in which it is said of him, *Lord, you have become* (or have been made into) *a refuge for us* (Ps 90:1); and, *The Lord has become* (has been made) *my helper* (Ps 30:10). How many things he has been made into, though he never was made at all! Now the Lord Christ was made man, in order to be—in order for him who was always the creator to be a creature. While remaining God, you see, he became man in order to become what he was not, not in order to stop being what he was.

So this is what he was made from the virgin; why then “from a woman”? Because in Hebrew, which is the first language of scripture, the word “woman” just signifies a person’s sex, not any loss of virginity. Read how when the woman was fashioned, it says *God pulled out one of his ribs* (that is, the man’s) *and built it into a woman* (Gn 2:21). That is the sense in which Mary is a woman; in that sense she was told, before she gave birth, before she conceived, *Blessed are you among women* (Lk 2:42).

NOTES

1. This fragment is preserved by Bede. The Maurists printed it as a footnote to sermon 48 (PL 38, 316, note b). The text Bede says the sermon was preached on is Micah 6:8, which

is why it comes here in the series.

There is no means of dating the fragment. The two points Augustine is making in it are quite frequently made elsewhere. In particular, the point about God the "not-made," the unchanging one, being made or becoming various things for us is discussed at some length in his work *The Trinity* V, 16, 17. He would have been engaged on that section of the work probably about 408 AD.

2. The Latin *mulier* also means "wife." The point would be better made in English if one translated (which one cannot really do) "made from a wife," in the sense in which Chaucer introduced his character, the wife of Bath.

SERMON 50

SERMON AGAINST THE MANICHEES, ON WHAT IS WRITTEN IN THE PROPHET HAGGAI: *MINE IS THE GOLD AND MINE IS THE SILVER*

Date: before 396¹

Contentious comparisons by the Manichees

1. The Manichees cast a slur on the prophet Haggai, and blame him unfairly for what he said, with God speaking in person, *Mine is the gold and mine is the silver* (Hg 2:8). They are always eager to make contentious comparisons between the gospel and the old law, to show up each part of scripture as contradicting and disagreeing with the other, and so they put the question like this: "In the prophet Haggai," they say, "it's written, *Mine is the gold and mine is the silver*; but in the gospel our savior called this kind of iniquity *mammon* (Lk 16:9), and the blessed apostle wrote about its use to Timothy with the words, *But the root of all evils is avarice, which some people, setting their hearts on, have turned away from the faith and involved themselves in many sorrows* (1 Tm 6:10)."

That's how they set the question; or rather it's how they bring a charge against the old scriptures, through which the gospel was foretold, from the gospel which was foretold through them. If they had really set a question, they might have done some questioning perhaps, and if they had done some questioning, they might perhaps have found a solution.

2. Why do the poor wretches not understand the reason why the Lord, speaking in Haggai, said *Mine is the gold and mine is the silver*? It's in order that those who don't want to share what they have with the poor should understand when they hear the commandments about showing pity that God is not ordering them to give away their own property but his; and that those who do make handouts to the poor should not assume they are doing it with what belongs to them, or else instead of being confirmed in the role of mercy, they would perhaps be puffed up with the hot air of pride. *Mine*, he says, *is the gold and mine is the silver*, not yours, you wealthy ones of the earth. So why do you shy away from

giving from what is mine to the poor, or why, when you do give from what is mine, do you think so highly of yourselves?

God distributes riches wisely

3. And do you want to see how just a judge gold and silver are the property of? They bring torment to the soul of the miser, they are a great help to the plans of the kindhearted. As the divine justice distributes its property, good deeds are thereby publicized and sins are thereby punished. Gold and silver, you see, and every kind of earthly possession are both a means of exercising humanity and of punishing greed. When God bestows such things on good people, he shows by their example how many things are thought lightly of by the mind whose real wealth is the one who bestowed them. After all, it can only be obvious that you think lightly of something if it has come into your possession. Of course, even people who don't have such things can think lightly of them. But whether they are pretending, or really are uninterested, only God, who is the inspector of hearts, can see.² People, on the other hand, if they are to imitate such virtue, can only observe the spirit of genuine indifference to wealth in the hands that are giving it away.

When, on the other hand, God concedes such things to bad people, he shows by their example how even the actual good things that God lavishes on us may cause agonies to the mind, to which the giver of such largesse has grown cheap. The good he provides with opportunities to do good; the bad he torments with fear of possible losses. And that's why, if either sort lose their gold and silver, the first will retain their heavenly wealth with a light heart, while the latter will find both their houses empty of temporal goods, and of eternal goods their consciences emptier still.

Good use of created things

4. His, therefore, are gold and silver, who knows how to use gold and silver. Even among men, after all, it's when people make good use of things that they are said to have them. What they don't treat rightly, they don't hold lawfully. And if they claim as their own what they don't hold lawfully, it won't be the voice of honest owners, but the loud mouth of impudent squatters.

Therefore, if a man cannot improperly call his own, not what he has amassed with foolish and iniquitous greed, but what he has managed with the most farsighted authority and the fairest moderation, how much more can God truly and properly call gold and silver his own, which he first supplied with the most bountiful generosity and now administers with a right royal justice, so that without his sovereign will and pleasure gold and silver cannot be possessed either by the bad for the punishment of their avarice, or by the good for their practice of the works of mercy. They, of course, are unable to call these things into being, or so to arrange

their distribution that they are available to one person and lacking to another.

5. Now if gold and silver were given over to the power solely of the bad, they would quite rightly be regarded as bad. If solely to the good, they would quite rightly be regarded as a great kind of good. Again, if they were lacking solely to the bad, poverty would be seen as a great punishment. If, however, they were lacking solely to the good, poverty would be seen as the highest happiness.

As it is, if you wish to be assured that gold can be properly possessed, the good possess it too. If you wish to be assured that gold does not make them good, the bad possess it too. Again, if you wish to understand how poverty is not the same as misery, there are some poor people who are happy. If you wish to understand how poverty is not the same as happiness, there are some poor people who are miserable.

Thus God, the author and controller of things, has so distributed gold and silver among men and women, that on the one hand they may be appreciated as good in their own way and by nature, though not the highest good or even a particularly important one; and on the other they may show, according to their place in the scheme of things, how worthy of praise is the author of the universe; that meanwhile the good should not be lifted up by having them in plenty, nor cast down by lacking them altogether; while the bad, for their part, would be dazzled and blinded when offered the chance of acquiring them, racked with rage and grief when the chance was snatched away.

The mammon of iniquity in the gospel

6. Things, therefore, that have been called into being both in praise of their author and for the proving of the good and the punishment of the bad cannot in any way rightly be disparaged. And God can most truly call that his own which he not only created with the most lavish generosity, but also dispenses with the most farsighted moderation. When, however, the Lord in the gospel calls this sort of thing *the mammon of iniquity* (Lk 16:9), he signifies that there is another kind of mammon, that is other riches, which only the just and good can possess, and so the reason it is called the mammon of iniquity is that iniquity calls it riches. Justice, however, knows that there are other riches, with which the inner person is adorned, *who*, as the blessed Peter says, *is rich before God* (1 Pt 3:4). They are called just riches, because they are distributed to the good who justly deserve them. They are called true riches, because whoever has them will lack nothing.

These on the other hand are called unjust riches, not because gold and silver are unjust, but because it is unjust to regard them as riches, since they don't eliminate need. The more, you see, anyone loves them and holds them to be important, the more he will be burnt up by the need for them. So how can they really be riches, seeing that as they increase,

needs increase with them, and that the more plentifully their lovers are supplied with them, they don't bring satisfaction, but simply inflame greed?

Do you regard someone as rich who would need less if he had less? We see people, do we not, who were delighted with small profits when they only had a small amount of money. But once they begin to have plenty of what is genuinely gold and silver, but for all that is false riches, then offer them a small margin of profit, and now they turn it down. You imagine that they are now satisfied, but it is not true. Having more money, you see, does not close the jaws of avarice, but stretches them wider; instead of cooling greed, it makes it hotter. They spurn the cup, because they are thirsting for the river. So should we call them wealthier, then, or needier than ever, people who began by wishing to have something in order not to need it, but who now have more and more, in order not to need less?

No person is per se bad

7. But this is not the fault of gold and silver. Let us suppose someone of tender heart has found a treasure. The kindness of his heart works, does it not, so that hospitality is shown to strangers, the starving are fed, the naked clothed, the needy assisted, captives redeemed, churches are built, the weary are refreshed, the quarrelsome pacified, the shipwrecked set on their feet again, the sick cured—material resources distributed on earth, spiritual ones stored up in heaven? Who does all this? The good and kindhearted person. What does he do it with? Gold and silver. Whom is he serving when he does it? The one who says, *Mine is the gold and mine is the silver* (Hg 2:8).

Now, brothers, I think you can see what a great mistake it is, what lunacy indeed, to project onto the things which people misuse the offense of the people who misuse them. If gold and silver, after all, can be blamed simply because people warped by avarice and neglecting the commands of the almighty creator are carried away by an abominable kind of lust for these things that he brought into being, then let us blame every single creature of God, because, as the apostle says, some perverse people *worshiped and served the creature rather than the creator, who is blessed for ever* (Rom 1:25). Let us also blame this sun, which these same Manichees as we all know, not understanding that it is a creature, never cease to worship and adore as though it were the creator—or at least some sort of part of him.

Why, then, do they too not blame it, seeing that people very often pick the most iniquitous quarrels about the use of sunlight in their buildings? To get its rays pouring more generously and unrestrictedly into their windows, they often set about having other people's houses pulled down, and pursue with the bitterest resentment any who oppose them, even if they oppose them with every right of justice on their side. If, then, some

powerful man unjustly and heinously oppresses one of the weak over the use of sunlight, plunders him, drives him into exile or even to his death, is it an offense on the part of the sun which he is determined to have the use of more abundantly? Or is it not rather the iniquity of the one who is misusing it, who, being greedy to acquire a wider spread of temporal light for the eyes of his body, fails to open the chamber of his heart to the light of equity?

True and false riches

8. From such considerations these people ought to be able to understand that either they should not blame gold and silver although gold and silver are constantly being fought over by greedy and grasping people; or else they should transfer their complaints from earth to heaven, and from glittering metals to the stars and the sun itself, when unjust people are so frequently locked intransigently in implacable conflict over the sun's own light. At the same time they might as well learn the difference between this visible light and the light of justice.³ For it can indeed happen that the more greedily people want to enjoy this light, the more blindly they fail to see the light of justice. What I am saying is that man cannot be justified by any creature, but that in order to be able to use all creatures justly, he needs to be justified by the creator.

And so it is that the Lord himself, while as a just judge he everywhere condemns avarice, shows as a true teacher the proper use of the earth's resources, in that very place which these people wish to bring forward as contradicting the prophet. What he says is, *Make yourselves friends with the mammon of iniquity* (Lk 16:9). That is to say, that which constitutes the mammon of iniquity ought not to be your mammon. For you will only be able to make just use of a supply of earthly resources, and make friends with it *who may receive you into eternal lodgings* (Lk 16:9), if you do not regard it as mammon for yourselves, that is, if you do not suppose that it can make you rich, since your riches (since there are true riches which will deliver you from every kind of want) are not to be compared with earthly wealth.

But in order to come to the well-merited enjoyment of those riches, you must first make good use of this wealth, which is not true riches, and is not yours, because it is unjustly called riches. It does not, in fact, eliminate want, and it is thought to be riches by the wicked, who imagine that it puts them beyond the reach of need. You, however, should be setting your hearts on other riches, ones, that is, that are true and your own. *But if you have not been faithful in the unjust mammon, who will give you the true? And if you have not been faithful in what is another's, who will give you what is your own?* (Lk 16:11-12).

The treasure hidden in the field

9. It should, though, be obvious that the Manichees are in their usual way misrepresenting what the prophet says. Anyone who gives even a cursory glance at the context of this passage will discover that the prophet was not talking about this silver or gold which puts silly Avarice in a frenzy, but rather about the sort which the apostle mentions when he says, *But if anyone builds on the foundation of gold and silver, precious stones . . .* (1 Cor 3:12). This gold and silver constitutes that rich treasure which the Lord himself assures us was found in a field by a marvelously and admirably avaricious man, who sold everything he had to buy it.⁴ The prophet, you see, is in his accustomed figurative way foretelling the Lord himself and the times of the new age, that is of the Church, when he says, *There is still one little while, and I will shake heaven and earth, and sea and dry land, and I will set all the nations quaking. And there shall come the one desired by all the nations, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord of hosts. Mine is the gold and mine is the silver, says the Lord of hosts. Great shall be the glory of this latest house, more than of the first, says the Lord of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, says the Lord of hosts* (Hg 2:6-9).

There shall come the one desired by all the nations

10. If these people were willing not to be dogs to whom we are told not to give what is holy, or pigs before whom we are forbidden to cast pearls,⁵ but instead really desired to ask and receive, to seek and find, to knock and be opened to,⁶ how soon they would be able to perceive, perhaps even without the help of any commentator and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit himself, that all this refers without any obscurity to the new people's, that is the Christian people's,⁷ whose high priest is Jesus the Son of God at the very least in the place where it says, *There is still one little while, and I will shake heaven and earth, and sea and dry land, and I will set all the nations quaking. And there shall come the one desired by all the nations.*

Clearly it is about the latest, that is to say the second, coming of the Lord, when he is going to come in glory,⁸ that this verse is uttered when the prophet says, *And there shall come the one desired by all the nations.* After all, when he first came in mortal flesh by the virgin Mary, he was not yet desired by all the nations, because they had not yet believed. But now that the gospel seed has been scattered abroad through all the nations, the desire of him is kindled among all nations. Throughout all the nations, you see, there are and there will be his elect, who say with all their heart in prayer, *Your kingdom come* (Mt 6:10). But his first coming sowed the seed of mercy before that of judgment, while it is in judgment that the glory of his second coming will be conspicuously revealed.

First, therefore, it was necessary for the heavens to be shaken, when

the angel announced to the virgin that she would conceive him, when a star led the magi to worship him, when angels yet again told the shepherds where he was born;⁹ for the earth to be shaken, when it was disturbed by his miracles; for the sea to be shaken, when this world roared and raged with persecutions; for the dry land to be shaken when those who believed in him hungered and thirsted for justice;¹⁰ finally, for all the nations to be shaken when his gospel ran everywhere to and fro.¹¹ Then at last would come the one desired by all the nations, as indeed according to the prophecy he is going to come. And this house shall be filled with glory, that is the Church.¹²

The glory of God's house

11. And so it was only after that he added, *Mine is the silver and gold*. All wisdom, you see, which is metaphorically signified by the name of gold, and the *sayings of the Lord, sayings that are chaste, silver assayed in the fire of the earth, seven times refined* (Ps 12:6), so all such silver and gold is not men's but the Lord's, in order that *whoever glories* (since the house shall be filled with glory) *may glory in the Lord* (2 Cor 10:17). That high priest, you see, who dwells in this house, our Lord Jesus Christ, was pleased to offer himself as an example of humility, to ensure the return of man who had gone out from paradise through pride, as he declares in the gospel when he cries out, *Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart* (Mt 11:29). Therefore, to prevent anyone in his house, that is in the Church, from getting a swollen head if he managed to think or say anything rather wise and wanted it to look as if it were his very own, just notice what an excellent cure he is told of by the Lord God: *Mine is the gold and mine is the silver*. In this way, you see, what follows will come to pass, that *great shall be the glory of this latest house more than of the first*.

The first house, that is the citizens of the earthly Jerusalem, *being ignorant*, as the apostle says, *of the justice of God and seeking to establish their own justice, did not submit themselves to the justice of God* (Rom 10:3). Just see whether it is not these people who have been unable, as long as they call the gold and the silver their own, to attain to the eternal glory of the latest house. And yet when the prophet says *Great shall be the glory of this latest house more than of the first*, he indicates that even the first one itself was not without some glory. The apostle also talked about it when he said, *For if what is being nullified comes through glory, much more will that which remains come in glory* (2 Cor 3:11).

12. Now the last verse, which concludes this oracle of the prophet's: *And in this place, it goes, I will give peace, says the Lord of hosts*. What can in this place signify, if not that he is possibly pointing out something earthly, almost you might say with his finger? After all, what but a body can be contained in a place? So it would not be far-fetched for us to

understand here the ultimate resurrection of the body, in which the most perfect bliss will find its term, when no more does *the flesh lust against the spirit, nor the spirit against the flesh* (Gal 5:17). For *this perishable thing will put on imperishability, and this mortal thing will put on immortality* (1 Cor 15:53). There will not be another law in our members fighting against the law of our minds,¹³ because *in this place I will give peace, says the Lord of hosts.*

The error of the Manichees

13. Can anyone, I ask you, be so deaf to the divine words that they do not know what the prophets say about thinking lightly of earthly gold and silver? These fellows, you see, in order to take people in, trot out this text from the apostle where he says, *Avarice is the root of all evils, and some people setting their course by it have strayed from the faith, and involved themselves in many sorrows* (1 Tm 6:10);¹⁴ and they do it in such a way as to suggest that you can easily find some book of the old scriptures where avarice is not treated as culpable, and properly execrated and condemned. But because we are now discussing gold and silver, why do they not listen to the prophet when he says, *But their silver and their gold will not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord* (Ez 7:19)? Any who are thirsty only have to listen to this text and let it sink into the marrow of their souls, and they will surely turn their backs totally on the allurements of false felicity and throw themselves into the arms of God, putting off the old man in order to clothe themselves with immortality.¹⁵

But why should we spend any longer dealing with this question? I am sure it is perfectly clear to your graces that the sect of the Manichees uses fraudulent, not honest, means with the unlearned to get them to set parts of the scriptures above the whole, the new above the old; they pick out sentences which they try to show contradict each other, in order to take in the unlearned. But just in the New Testament itself there is no letter of the apostle or even book of the gospel in which that sort of thing cannot be done, so that any one book may be made to look as if it contradicted itself in various places, unless the reader pays very careful attention to its whole composition and design.

NOTES

1. For the date of this sermon see Sermon 1, note 1; also Sermon 12, note 1, which should be consulted for background information on the Manichees and their beliefs.

2. See Wis 1:6.

3. For the importance of light and the sun in Manichaeism see Sermon 12, note 1.
4. See Mt 13:44.
5. See Mt 7:6.
6. See Mt 7:7.
7. A very odd construction, *ad* followed by the genitive. Some other noun must be presumably understood, as when we say "I am going to St Paul's (church)," or "I will meet you at Antonio's (restaurant)." But here there is no such obvious location to be understood, and I think Augustine simply forgot to put in a suitable word like "situation" or "condition"—so I leave it hanging in the English also.
8. See Mt 16:27.
9. See Lk 2:27-37; Mt 2:2-9; Lk 2:9-14.
10. See Mt 5:6.
11. See Wis 3:7.
12. There is an ambiguity about whether the Church is being identified with the house or with glory. While the former is more likely, and quite unambiguously the case in the next section, the latter is perfectly possible.
13. See Rom 7:23.
14. The text is quoted with several variations from the quotation of it in section 1 above, which are reflected in my translation.
15. See Eph 4:22; 2 Cor 5:4.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

Abbreviations of Names

(B)	Anne Marie La Bonnardiere	(M)	Christine Mohrmann
(Ba)	Tarcisius van Bavel	(Maur)	Maurists
(Be)	Bonifatius Fischer (Beuron)	(Me)	Frits van der Meer
(D)	Michel Denis	(Mo)	Paul Monceau
(DB)	Donatien De Bruyne	(Mor)	Germain Morin
(Ét)	Raymond Étaix	(P)	Othmar Perler
(F)	Georges Folliet	(Po)	Suzanne Poque
(K)	Adalbert Kunzelmann	(V)	Pierre-Patrick Verbraken
(L)	Cyrille Lambot	(W)	André Wilmart

Abbreviations of Works

CCL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina (Turnhout-Paris, 1953ff.)
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna, 1866ff.)
MA	<i>Miscellanea Agostiniana</i> (2 vols.; Rome, 1930-31). The first volume is <i>Sermones post Maurinos reperti</i> , ed. G. Morin
NBA	Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana (Rome: Città Nuova Editrice)
PL	Patrologia Latina, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1878-90)
PLS	Patrologiae Latinae Supplementum, ed. A. Hamann (Paris, 1957ff.)
PW	<i>Paulys Realencyklopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> , new ed. by G. Wissowa et al. (Stuttgart, 1893ff.)
RB	<i>Revue bénédictine</i> (Maredsous, 1884ff.)
SPM	<i>Studia Patristica et Mediaevalia</i> I (= C. Lambot, <i>S. Aurelii Augustini Sermones selecti duodeviginti</i>) (Utrecht, 1950).

Short Titles of Frequently Cited Works

Borgomeo,	<i>L'Eglise P. Borgomeo, L'Eglise de ce temps dans la prédication de saint Augustin</i> (Paris, 1972)
Mohrmann,	<i>Etudes C. Mohrmann, Etudes sur le latin des chrétiens</i> I (Rome, 1958); II (Rome, 1961)
Mohrmann,	<i>Sondersprache C. Mohrmann, Die altchristliche Sondersprache in den Sermones des hl. Augustinus I. Einführung, Lexikologie, Wortbildung</i> (Latinia Christianorum Primaeva 3; Nijmegen, 1932)
Pontet,	<i>L'exégèse M. Pontet, L'exégèse de saint Augustin prédicateur</i> (Théologie 7; Paris, 1946)
Poque,	<i>Augustin d'Hippone S. Poque (ed.), Augustin d'Hippone. Sermons pour la Paque</i> (SC 116; Paris, 1966)
Verbraken,	<i>Etudes P.-P. Verbraken, Etudes critiques sur les sermons authentiques de saint Augustin</i> (Instrumenta Patristica 12; Steenbrugge-The Hague, 1976)

Nr.	Theme	Date	Edition
20	Ps 50:12	391 (K) after 391 (Be)	PL 38:137-141 CCL 41:261-267
20/A	Ps 56:2		Lambot 24 RB 60 (1950) 10-16 CCL 41:269-274
21	Ps 63:11	around 416 (B) winter (P)	PL 38:141-148 CCL 41:276-286
22	Ps 67:3	after March 399 (M) 400-405 (K, L, Be)	PL 38:148-155 CCL 41:289-301
22/A	Ps 70:4		Mai 15 MA 1:296-300 CCL 41:303-306
23	Ps 72:24	January 20 413-415 around 410 (Me) 412-416	PL 38:155-162 CCL 41:309-319
23/A	Ps 74:2		Mai 16 MA 1:300-303 CCL 41:321-323
24	Ps 82:2	Sunday June 16, 401	PL 38:162-167 CCL 41:326-333
25	Ps 93:12	winter c. 410 winter 411-412 (P) winter c. 412 (B) after 396 (K, Be) winter 412-413 (P)	PL 38:167-171 CCL 41:335-339
25/A	Ps 93:12-13		Morin 12 RB 36 (1924) 187-192 Mai 1:635-640 CCL 41:341-345
26	Ps 94:6; Gal 3:21	October 18, 417 (Maur) October 18, 418 (K, L, Pl) 417-418 (Be)	PL 38:171-178 CCL 41:348-359
27	Ps 95:1-3; Rom 9:18-19	418 406 (Po)	PL 38:178-182 CCL 41:361-366
28	Ps 104:3	May 27, 397 (L) after May 24, 397 (P)	PL 38:182-185 CCL 41:368-371
28/A	Ps 115:11		Fransen 1 RB 84 (1974) 252
29	Ps 117:1	Vigil of Pentecost May 23, 397 (L) May 23, 418 (P)	PL 38:185-187 CCL 41:373-376
29/A	Ps 117:1	Vigil of Pentecost May 23, 397	Denis 9 MA 1:39-42 CCL 41:378-380
30	Ps 118:33; Rom 7:14	412-416 412-416 or 419 (Bo)	PL 38:187-192 CCL 41:382-389
31	Ps 125:5	before 405	PL 38:192-196 CCL 41:391-396
32	David and Goliath	September 403 September 17, 403 (P) 405-411	PL 38:196-207 CCL 41:398-411 PL 38:207-209 CCL 41:413-416
33	Ps 143:9		Denis 23 MA 1:136-141 CCL 41:418-422
33/A	Ps 145:2	September 11, 410	PL 38:209-213 CCL 41:424-427
34	Ps 145:2	May 17/24, 418	

Nr.	Theme	Date	Edition
35	Prv 9:12	before 410	PL 38:213-214 CCL 41:429-431
36	Prv 13:7-8	before 410 (K, L, Be) 410-413 (B)	PL 38:215-221 CCL 41:434-443
37	Prv 13:7-8	before 410 (K, L, Be) 410-413 (B)	PL 38:221-235 CCL 41:446-473
38	Restraint and Endurance		PL 38:235-241 CCL 41:476-487
39	Ecl 5:8-9		PL 38:241-244 CCL 41:489-492
40	Ecl 5:8	Augustine's ordination anniversary as bishop 395-396 after 396 (Be) after 395 or 400 (K) after 400 (?)	Frangipane 2 MA 1:189-200 PL 38:244-247
41	Ecl 22:28		PL 38:247-252 CCL 41:495-502
42	Lk 6:37 Is 1:11 Ps 139:1		PL 38:252-254 CCL 41:504-506
43	Is 7:9 2 Pt 1:18		PL 38:254-258 CCL 41:508-512
44	Is 53:2-9		PL 38:258-262 CCL 103:583-587
45	Is 57:13 2 Cor 7:1	408-411 before 420 (Mo)	PL 38:262-270 CCL 41:515-526
46	Ez 34:1-16	409-410 after June 17, 414 (L) 408 (Be) 410-411 (Bo)	PL 38:270-295 CCL 41:529-570
47	Ez 34:17-31	409-410 after June 17, 416 (L) after February 12, 405 (B)	PL 38:295-316 CCL 41:572-604
48	Mi 6:6-7	Sunday May after May 26, 418	PL 38:316-320 CCL 41:606-611
49	Mi 6:6-8	Sunday after May 26, 418	PL 38:320-326 CCL 41:614-623
49/A	Mi 6:8		PL 38:316b RB 84 (1974) 252-253
50	Hg 2:8	391-393 (L, Be) 394-395 (K, B)	PL 38:326-332 CCL 41:625-633

For the complete Chronological Table refer to Section III, Volume I, pages 138-163

INDEX OF SCRIPTURE

(The numbers after the scriptural reference refer to the particular sermon and its section)

Old Testament		
Genesis		
1:26	43, 3	1:21
1:31	29, 1	2:10
2:21	49/A, 1	21, 9; 22/A, 2; 25/A, 3; 45, 2
3:1	46, 28	22/A, 3
3:19	45, 4	
22:18	22, 4; 46, 33; 47, 22	Psalms
49:9	37, 2	2:8
		46, 11. 33. 35; 47, 30
Exodus		2:11-12
20:12	45, 2	30, 10
20:17	26, 9	3:9
33:11	23, 14	23, 10
33:13	23, 14	8:4
33:19	27, 3	24, 5
		11:1
Deuteronomy		47, 27
5:8	33, 3	11:5
5:11	33, 3	34, 8; 35, 2
5:17-21	33, 4	11:6
6:4	33, 3	47, 7
32:39	24, 7	12:6
		50, 11
Joshua		14:4
15:8	46, 40	46, 23
		15:5
2 Chronicles		38, 8
6:18	23, 7	16:5
		47, 30
Job		18:28
1:9	22/A, 2	37, 10
		19:4
		46, 24
		19:4.6
		32, 23; 46, 34
		19:5
		44, 6
		19:6
		22, 3. 7; 46, 34
		19:22
		22, 1
		20:6
		45, 7
		21:11
		44, 7
		22:16-17
		27, 5
		22:16-18
		22, 1
		22:27
		46, 35; 47, 28
		22:27-28
		46, 33
		24:1
		39, 2
		27:4
		37, 30
		27:9
		20, 2
		27:14
		40, 1
		30:10
		49/A, 1
		32:5
		29/A, 4
		32:8
		24, 4
		32:9
		43, 3
		34:5
		25, 1; 28/A, 1
		34:12-13
		25, 6
		34:18
		21, 2; 41, 7
		35:14
		41, 7

36:6-7	23, 11	76:5	39, 5
36:7	23, 10	78:47	43, 3
36:8	23, 12; 32, 6	80:1	46, 23; 47, 3
36:9	23, 10; 28, 2; 28/A, 1	80:2	46, 23
37:1	25/A, 1	80:5	46, 12
37:2	25/A, 1	83:1	24, 1. 4. 7; 46, 17
37:4	21, 1	84:4	33/A, 1; 37, 30
38:9	25, 5	85:12	26, 15; 30, 10
39:6	38, 6	88:5	26, 10
39:11	29/A, 2	90:1	49/A, 1
40:2-3	33, 5	90:12	46, 38
40:4	47, 29	94:12	25, 1
41:4	20, 1. 2. 3; 29, 3	94:12-13	25/A, 1
42:3	31, 5	94:13	25, 3
42:6	47, 9	94:13-14	25, 7
45:2	27, 6	95:2	47, 8
46:4	32, 6	95:4	47, 17
49:2	20/A, 9	95:6	26, 1. 3
50:11	37, 8	95:6-7	47, 1
50:21	47, 5	95:7	47, 13
51:1	20, 2	96:1	27, 1; 33, 5; 46, 33. 40
51:3	20, 2; 29/A, 4	96:1-3	27, 2
51:8	23, 1; 28, 2	96:2	27, 2
51:9	29/A, 4	97:11	21, 1
51:9-10	20, 2	98:3	46, 34
51:10	20, 1. 2	100:3	26, 1. 2. 4. 5. 12
52:2	32, 17	103:9	29/A, 2
52:8	25/A, 4	103:14	24, 3
55:12-13	46, 36	104:24	29/A, 2
56:7	26, 14	105:3	28, 1
56:8	31, 5	108:5	47, 19
56:10	48, 1	110:3	44, 6
56:10-11	47, 27	111:10	37, 3. 29
57:1	20/A, 1. 9	113:3	37, 6
61:2	47, 17	115:8	24, 2
62:8	29, 5	116:10	28/A, 1
62:10	25/A, 2	116:11	28/A, 1
64:10	21, 1. 3	116:12	28/A, 1
68:2	22, 1. 2. 6	116:16	37, 7
68:9	23:16	118:1	29, 1. 5; 29/A, 1. 4
68:30	47, 23	119:62	37, 7
68:35	43, 1	119:67	29/A, 2
69:28	33/A, 4	119:71	25, 5
71:4	22/A, 1. 4	119:133	30, 1. 6. 10
72:8	37, 12	119:134	30, 5
72:11	45, 6; 46, 33	119:162	37, 4
73:1	29/A, 2; 47, 29	121:1-2	46, 17
73:1-3	48, 3	121:4	47, 3
73:11	48, 4	126:5-6	31, 4
73:12	48, 4	126:6	31, 1. 6
73:13	48, 4	138:6	21, 2
73:14	48, 4	139: 7-8	23, 6
73:15	48, 5	140:1	42, 3
73:23	23, 1. 5	141:3-4	20, 2; 29, 3
73:28	32, 28	142:5	25, 1; 45, 4
75:1	23/A, 1. 4	144:3-4	32, 9. 16

144:4 32, 4
 144:8 32, 24, 27
 144:9 32, 5, 8; 32, 9; 33, 1
 144:11 32, 22
 144:12 32, 25
 144:12-15 32, 27
 144:13 32, 25, 26
 144:13.14 32, 27
 144:15 32, 28
 146:2 33/A, 1
 146:3 33/A, 3
 146:4 33/A, 3; 47, 22
 146:5 33/A, 4; 47, 29
 148:5 23, 15; 24, 1
 149:1 34:6
 149:2 34, 6, 7

Proverbs

3:12 29/A, 1
 9:12 35, 1
 10:12 47, 17
 13:7 36, 1, 5, 7, 11
 13:8 36, 7, 9, 10
 20:8-9 25/A, 1
 22:2 39, 6
 23:26 34, 7
 30:12 47, 17, 18
 31:4 37, 6
 31:10 37, 2, 3
 31:11 37, 4
 31:12 37, 5
 31:13 37, 6
 31:15 37, 7, 8
 31:16 37, 8, 9
 31:17 37, 10
 31:18 37, 10, 11
 31:19 37, 12, 13
 31:20 37, 14
 31:21 37, 15, 16
 31:22 37, 17, 18
 31:23 37, 19
 31:24 37, 20, 21
 31:25 37, 22
 31:26 37, 23
 31:27 37, 24
 31:28 37, 25, 26
 31:29 37, 27
 31:30 37, 29
 31:31 37, 29, 30

Song of Songs

1:6 46, 35, 36
 1:7 46, 36
 2:2 37, 27

2:4 21, 3; 37, 23

Wisdom

1:11 36, 10
 5:3.8-9 22, 3
 7:16 48, 1
 8:21 20, 2

Sirach

2:1 46, 10
 2:1-3 38, 5
 2:4-5 38, 6
 2:14 20, 2; 47, 17
 5:7 20, 3, 4; 39, 1
 5:8 40, 5
 22:23 41, 1, 5
 31:9 23, 4
 31:12 31, 2

Isaiah

1:11-12 42, 1
 3:14 37, 19
 5:7 47, 29
 5:17 46, 37
 7:9 43, 7
 26:9 37, 7
 40:6-7 25, 6
 40:6.8 20/A, 9; 25/A, 1; 33/A, 3
 42:14 47, 4, 5
 53:2 44, 1, 3
 53:2-3 27, 6
 53:3 44, 4
 53:7-8 44, 6
 53:8 44, 6
 53:9 44, 7
 53:46 44, 5
 54:3 37, 6, 12
 55:1 37, 20
 57:13 45, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
 58:7 47, 25
 58:10 46, 38

Jeremiah

1:5 26, 1
 3:15 46, 23
 17:11 46, 28
 18:8 22, 6
 31:31-32 25, 1

Ezekiel

7:19 50, 13

18:4 35, 2
 18:21 20, 3, 4
 33:2-6 46, 20
 33:7-9 46, 20
 33:11 40, 2
 34:1-2 46, 2
 34:2 46, 2
 34:3 46, 9, 15
 34:3-5 46, 3
 34:4 46, 10, 13, 14, 15
 34:5 46, 16
 34:6 46, 17, 18
 34:7 46, 19
 34:8 46, 19
 34:9 46, 20
 34:10 46, 21, 23
 34:11 46, 23
 34:12 46, 23
 34:13 46, 24; 47, 20
 34:14 46, 24, 25
 34:15 46, 25, 26, 30, 37
 34:16 46, 26, 27
 34:17 47, 3, 6, 7, 14
 34:18-19 47, 9
 34:20 47, 15
 34:21 47, 16, 19
 34:22 47, 19
 34:23 47, 20, 27
 34:23-24 47, 21
 34:24 47, 21, 24
 34:25 47, 22, 23
 34:26 47, 24
 34:27 47, 25, 26
 34:29 47, 28
 34:30-31 47, 29
 34:31 47, 30

Daniel

2:34 45, 6
 2:35 45, 6

Micah

6:6-8 48, 2

Habakkuk

2:4 49, 2, 4, 5
 3:3 46, 38, 40

Haggai

2:6-9 50, 9
 2:8 50, 1, 7

New Testament**Matthew**

3:1 24, 2
 5:3 36, 7
 5:6 28, 2; 37, 7; 45, 4
 5:8 22/A, 4
 5:9 23, 16
 5:15 37, 11
 5:15-16 46, 5
 5:16 47, 13
 5:17 33, 2
 5:25 40, 5
 5:28 45, 8; 46, 9
 5:45 29/A, 2
 6:1 47, 13
 6:2 47, 13
 6:3 32, 22
 6:5 25/A, 2
 6:10 47, 7; 50, 10
 6:12 47, 7, 23; 49, 8
 6:19-20 36, 5
 6:21 37, 9; 38, 7
 7:3-4 49, 7
 7:22 37, 27
 7:26 46, 22
 8:10-11 46, 34
 10:41-42 41, 6
 10:42 39, 6
 11:10 37, 19
 11:25 29, 2
 11:25-27 24, 4
 11:28 30, 8; 41, 5
 11:28-29 30, 9
 11:29 24, 4; 30, 9; 50, 11
 13:27 47, 6
 13:28 47, 6
 13:28-29 47, 6
 13:30 47, 6
 13:37-39 47, 18
 13:39 47, 6
 15:14 46, 21
 15:19 45, 9
 15:28 37, 21
 16:26 36, 9
 17:5 43, 5
 19:6 45, 5
 19:16-17 38, 7
 19:18-21 38, 7
 19:28 37, 19
 20:22 20/A, 6
 20:22-23 20/A, 8
 22:13 31, 6
 22:37 34, 7
 22:39 34, 8

23:3 46, 9. 21. 22
 23:10 23, 1
 23:26 45, 9
 24:24-25 37, 27
 25:31 37, 19
 25:31-32 47, 6
 25:31-33 25/A, 1
 25:34 25/A, 1
 25:34-35 37, 29
 25:34.41 47, 4
 25:35-40 42, 2
 25:40 25, 8; 38, 8
 25:41 22, 3; 23/A, 1; 25/A, 1
 25:42 36, 9
 26:38 31, 3
 26:39 31, 3
 27:57-66 44, 7
 28:5 44, 7
 28:13 44, 7

Mark

6:3 44, 3
 6:37-38 42, 1
 9:23 43, 8. 9
 9:24 43, 9
 10:21 38, 7

Luke

2:42 49/A, 1
 6:37-38 42, 1
 8:15 47, 17
 10:20 33/A, 4
 10:35 46, 4
 12:16-20 32, 27
 12:17 36, 9
 12:20 36, 9
 12:35 46, 5
 12:43 37, 15
 12:46 37, 15
 14:11 23/A, 4
 16:9 41, 6; 50, 1. 6. 8
 16:11-12 50, 8
 16:19 33/A, 4
 16:19-20 41, 4
 16:20 33/A, 4
 16:20-21 33/A, 4
 16:21-22 33/A, 4
 16:22-23 41, 4
 16:25 41, 5
 16:25-26 41, 4
 16:27-28 41, 4
 16:29 41, 4
 16:31 41, 4
 18:10 36, 11

18:11-12 36, 11
 18:13 36, 11
 18:14 36, 11
 19:5 25, 8
 19:10 20, 1
 23:21 44, 6
 23:34 44, 4; 49, 9. 11
 23:46 25, 7
 24:20 37, 2
 24:25 47, 10
 24:44.46.47 44, 6
 24:46 46, 40
 24:47 46, 32; 47, 26

John

1:1 23, 15; 26, 7; 27, 6; 34, 2;
 44, 3
 1:1-2 26, 6; 37, 18
 1:1-3 20/A, 8; 23/A, 3; 36, 3; 45, 5
 1:3 44, 6
 1:14 22, 10; 23/A, 3; 36, 3; 37, 18;
 47, 21
 1:29 26, 15
 2:19 37, 2
 3:14-15 37, 2
 3:29 23, 1
 4:22.24 21, 2
 5:46 41, 4
 6:29 49, 2
 6:44 30, 10
 6:51 28, 2; 45, 4
 8:34 33, 3
 8:44 28/A, 1
 8:46 26, 10
 8:48 44, 3
 8:58 22, 1
 10:16 46, 30
 10:18 31, 3
 10:27 46, 23. 29. 30. 32
 10:30 47, 20
 13:34 33, 2
 14:9-10 47, 20
 14:21 27, 6
 14:23 23, 6
 14:27 24, 4; 47, 22
 14:28 47, 20
 14:30 26, 10; 29, 2
 14:31 26, 10
 15:5 30, 8
 15:15 27, 5; 45, 10
 16:12 27, 5
 17:24 41, 7
 19:30 37, 2
 21:15-17 46, 23. 30
 21:17 46, 30. 37

Acts

1:7-8 46, 40
 7:51-52 49, 10
 7:59-60 49, 11
 21:10-13 22, 2
 21:14 22, 2

Romans

1:17 26, 5
 1:24 32, 19
 1:25 50, 7
 2:4 40, 2; 47, 5
 2:5-6 47, 5
 2:21 46, 22
 2:21-22 47, 5
 3:4 28/A, 1
 4:17 26, 4
 4:25 45, 5
 5:5 23, 7, 8; 34, 2
 5:6-7 23/A, 2
 6:12 30, 6
 6:13 30, 6
 7:12-13 26, 10
 7:14 23, 3; 30, 1
 7:14-15 30, 3
 7:15 30, 3, 4
 7:25 26, 5; 26, 12
 8:15 33, 1
 8:20 33, 3
 8:24 23, 12; 27, 5
 8:24-25 27, 5
 8:25 37, 8
 8:31 37, 15
 9:15 27, 3
 9:18-20 27, 3
 9:20 26, 13, 15
 9:21 26, 13
 10:3 50, 11
 11:23 32, 16; 46, 18
 11:30-32 27, 7
 11:33 26, 13; 27, 6
 11:34-35 26, 14
 11:34-36 27, 7
 11:35-36 26, 14
 12:11 22, 7
 13:8-10 33, 2
 13:13 49, 3
 14:12 35, 2

1 Corinthians

1:10 46, 30
 1:11-13 46, 17
 1:13 46, 17

1:20 46, 28
 1:26-28 43, 6
 1:29 47, 13
 1:31 47, 13
 2:3 23, 2, 3; 37, 23
 2:6 23, 4
 2:11 30, 3
 2:14-15 23, 4
 3:1-2 23, 4
 3:4 27, 4
 3:6-7 43, 8
 3:12 50, 8, 9
 3:17 23, 7; 24, 1
 4:3 49, 2
 4:5 47, 23; 49, 4
 4:6 23, 17
 4:7 30, 10; 35, 3; 43, 2
 9:7 46, 3
 9:11 37, 20
 10:4 46, 10
 10:13 46, 12, 13
 10:24 32, 10
 10:32 47, 12
 10:33 47, 12
 12:16 35, 1
 12:26 46, 7
 13:1 37, 3
 13:1-3 37, 28
 13:13 41, 3
 14:1 41, 3
 15:22 23, 11
 15:33 35, 1
 15:53 50, 12

2 Corinthians

1:12 47, 12
 2:15 28, 2; 31, 2
 3:11 50, 11
 4:17-18 37, 8
 5:6 31, 5; 38, 3
 5:6-7 27, 6; 33/A, 1
 5:7,6 21, 1
 5:10 46, 14
 5:15 37, 5
 5:17 26, 12
 6:10 37, 14
 6:11 37, 23
 6:16 23, 7
 7:1 45, 1, 2, 6, 8, 9
 8:9 36, 3, 5
 8:13 25/A, 4; 42, 2
 8:21 47, 12
 9:6 31, 2
 9:7 31, 5
 10:17 46, 30; 50, 11

12:8-9 47, 17
 12:14 37, 20
 13:3 46, 12

Galatians

1:10 47, 12
 2:21 26, 9
 3:19 26, 9
 3:21 26, 11
 3:22 26, 9
 3:27 37, 16
 4:4 49/A, 1
 4:14 37, 19
 4:14-15 46, 7
 4:16 46, 7
 4:22-23 33, 1
 5:17 25, 4; 30, 4; 50, 12
 5:19-22 37, 28
 6:4 35, 2
 6:5 35, 2
 6:9 31, 2
 6:10 31, 2
 6:14 27, 6

Ephesians

1:4 26, 4
 2:3 26, 15
 2:8 26, 14
 2:8-9 23/A, 1
 2:13-12 37, 21
 2:14 25, 7; 47, 22
 4:7 32, 11
 4:26 49, 7
 5:8 28/A, 1; 49, 3
 5:31-32 45, 5
 6:2 33, 4
 6:12 22/A, 5

Philippians

2:6 44, 3; 46, 11
 2:6-7 47, 20
 2:6-8 41, 7
 2:7-8 30, 9
 2:7-11 47, 20
 2:9 37, 2
 2:21 37, 5; 46, 2
 4:5-6 21, 2
 4:11 46, 4
 4:14 46, 4
 4:15 37, 20
 4:17 37, 14; 46, 4; 47, 25

Colossians

3:3 25/A, 1; 41, 5
 3:3-4 25/A, 1
 3:4 36, 4
 3:9 32, 4

1 Thessalonians

2:7 23, 3
 5:5 49, 3

1 Timothy

2:5 26, 7; 47, 21
 4:4 21, 3
 4:12 46, 9
 6:7 39, 2
 6:8-10 25/A, 2
 6:9 39, 3
 6:10 50, 1, 13
 6:17 25/A, 4; 36, 2, 5, 6; 39, 4
 6:17-18 25/A, 2
 6:18 25/A, 4; 39, 4, 5
 6:19 25/A, 4; 36, 6; 39, 5

2 Timothy

2:19 37, 15
 3:12 46, 11
 3:16 23, 3
 4:2 46, 14
 4:6-8 31, 3

Titus

2:7 46, 9
 3:5 27, 5

Hebrews

12:6 46, 11
 12:14 23, 18
 13:17 35, 3

James

1:17 23, 15; 26, 14
 2:13 41, 4
 3:1-2 23, 2
 3:14-15 23, 17
 4:6 23/A, 4; 30, 2
 4:14 33/A, 2, 3

1 Peter

2:5 24, 2
 2:22 29, 2
 3:4 50, 6

2 Peter

1:18-19 43, 5
 1:19 49, 3

1 John

1:5 28/A, 1
 2:19 47, 17

3:2 21, 1; 23, 16; 27, 6; 38, 3;
 49, 3
 3:8 22/A, 5
 3:15 49, 7
 3:16 31, 2
 4:8.16 21, 2; 23, 8. 9. 13
 4:10 34, 2
 4:16 34, 3
 4:18 23, 7; 33, 1
 5:17 30, 1

Revelation

19:10 46, 17

INDEX

(prepared by Joseph Sprug)

A

Abraham, 20A:9; 22:1, 4; 33:1
Adam, 22:9, 10; 22A:3; 23:11; 26:2,
11, 13; 33A:2; 37:9; 45:4, 5;
46:28
adultery, 30:7; 45:8, 9
adversity, 20:2
advice: be wise for self and
neighbor, 35:1
Africa, 46:18, 37, 38
afterlife:
 good people, bad people, 38:2
 perfect happiness, 50:12
 time of sight, 38:3
 true life, 39:5
 see also eternal life
Agabus (prophet), 22:2
allegory in Scripture, 32:6
Alleluia, 29A:1
almsgiving:
 sins cleansed by, 42:1
 test for the rich, 39:6
angel(s): 20A:4, 5; 27:6; 37:19
 the annunciation, 50:10
 created good, 29:1
 fellow servant, 46:17
 God's word, 28:4
 harvest time, 47:16, 18
 harvesters, 47:6
 made from man, 45:10
 riches, 37:25
anger: speck becomes beam, 49:7
Annunciation, The, 50:10
arrogance, 30:10
attachment, 38:7; 46:18

avarice, 25A:2; 38:6; 41:3; 50:1, 4,
6, 8, 9, 13

B

badness:
 bad luck, 32:19
 desire for bad life, 20:4
 drain the dregs of, 35:1, 3
 good fortune of bad people,
 48:4
 life events, bad people, 48:8
 responsibility, 35:2
 source of, 29:4; 29A:2
 willing, 30:3
baleful days, 25:3-4; 25A:3
banquet, 28:2
baptism: clothed: putting on
 Christ, 37:16
beggar, 32:23
belching, 20A:8
belief/believers:
 Christ as mediator, 26:7
 God as cause, 26:5
 help my unbelief, 43:9
 human condition without, 26:3
 seeing into your heart, 49:2
 serve God with fear, 30:10
 understanding and, 43:4, 7-8, 9
 without, every man a liar, 28A:1
benefits: credit God, not self, 26:15
bishops (as shepherds):
 accountable to God, 46:2
 bad example, 46:9
 bad shepherd: the enfeebled
 not strengthened, 46:13
 bad shepherds: do what they
 say . . . 46:22

blind leading the blind, 46:21
 charge over Christians, 46:2
 division and ugliness, 46:37
 feed and rest, 46:24
 feeding themselves, not the
 sheep, 46:2, 3, 19
 feeding with judgment, 46:27
 God: "I myself will be . . ."

- 46:25, 26

 good shepherds, 46:23, 26
 grapes from thorns (symbol),

- 46:22

 heretical, 46:21
 indifference to heresies, 46:15
 lamps enlightening the people,

- 46:5

 listen to Scripture, 46:33
 milk from the sheep, 46:5
 mountains of Israel, 46:25
 my sheep hear my voice, 46:29,

- 30, 32

 pastors are sheep also, 47:2
 Paul as example, 46:7
 permissiveness, 46:8
 sheep that have gone astray,

- 46:14-17, 21, 23

 silence is dangerous, 46:20
 souls with inner paralysis, 46:13
 strengthening the feeble sheep,

- 46:10, 12

 teachers, 23:1
 temporal support

- (contributions), 46:3

 test: voice of Christ, 46:31, 32
 unity, 46:30, 37
 voice: lamb or partridge, 46:31
 wool clothing, 46:6
 blessedness, 32:28
 blood: money as, 21:7
 boasting, 36:11
 body: temple, 23:6; 24:1
 born again, 32:27
 bread:

- living, 45:4, 5
- price of, 37:20

building foundation, 20A:7
 business man, 21:4

C

Canaanites, 37:21
 captivity: redemption, 27:2-3
 carnal people, 23:3, 4
 cattle, 23:11
 charity:

- acquiring, 34:7
- Christ present in his poor, 38:8;
 - 42:2
- cymbal clashing, 37:3
- dearness, 34:7
- fervor, 46:38
- fruit of the Spirit, 37:28
- fullness of the law, 33:2
- give yourself, 34:7
- God's promises, 32:14
- greater than faith/hope, 41:3
- in the heart, 47:23
- just man's reward, 41:6
- kindheartedness, 50:7
- neighbor in poverty, 41:1
- one-piece tunic of Christ, 22:1
- opportunities to do good, 50:3
- sharing with the poor, 50:2
- support of bishops, 46:5
- unity, 46:18
- see also* love

 chastity: valiant woman, 37:10
 cheating, 38:4
 cheerfulness: good works, 31:3, 5
 children:

- discipline; love, 21:8
- filial piety, 45:2
- Job's, 22A:2
- son and father, 45:2

 children of God: peacemakers,

- 23:16-17

 Christ, *see* Jesus Christ
 Christian life:

- chosen by Christ, 43:6
- from fear to love, 32:8
- imitation of Christ suffering,
 - 46:10

- new life, 32:25
 persecution, 46:11
 preached everywhere: why so
 much evil? 31:5
 summer/winter, 36:4
 take my yoke, 30:9
- Christians:**
 anxious to hear shepherd's
 voice, 47:4
 bishops and their flocks, 46:2
 care for weaker "sheep," 47:14
 divisions among, 47:28
 fruit of the trees, 47:25
 God's possession, 47:30
 good and just, 47:18
 judging between sheep and
 sheep, 47:6, 7, 9, 14, 19
 justification, 26:9
 listen, while there is still time,
 47:5
 peace with one another, 24:4
 pleasing others, 47:12
 reason for being, 47:18
 as sheep, 47:1-30
 strong; characteristics, 47:16
 temporal life not so good,
 33A:3
 vineyard: house of Israel, 47:29
 waiting for judgment, 47:3
 your kingdom come, 47:7
- Church:**
 body of Christ, 45:5
 bridegroom in heaven, 47:19
 bridegroom: Songs of Songs,
 46:35-36
 clothes for husband (Christ),
 37:17
 distaff and spindle, 37:13-14
 glory, 50:10
 goats and sheep, 46:37
 God's praise found in, 34:6
 growth, 44:2
 husband's confidence in, 37:4
 mother, 22:9, 10
 mother of martyrs, 37:1
 mountain, 45:6, 7
- precious stones in, 37:3
 proof: mouth of God, 47:19
 prophecied, 22:4; 50:9
 redeemed by Christ, 37:2
 root and tree, 44:2
 shepherd and flock, 46:34
 sinners in, 47:18
 spread throughout the world,
 47:17
 valiant woman (Proverbs) a
 figure of, 37:1-30
 vine and twigs (symbols), 46:18
 works for husband's good, 37:5
 zealous maidservant of the
 Lord, 37:7
see also bishops; heresy
- circumcellions, 47:17
 city set on a hill, 37:2
 clothing: honor, 46:6
 comfort, 20A:8
- commandments:**
 attaining eternal life, 38:7
 love of God, 27:6
 response to, 32:23
 shepherd's voice, 47:4
 teaching, 47:9
see also ten commandments
- companions (the word), 46:36
- conduct:**
 direct my steps, 30:1-2
 open to others, 47:11
see also conversion
- confess (confessing to God):**
 blaming the devil, 20:2
 calling God's name, 23A:4
 God already knows your sin,
 29A:4
 God is good, 29:1
 goodness of God, 29A:2
 humble before God, 23A:1
 man punishes; God frees, 29A:3
 pour out your hearts, 29:6
 practice encouraged, 22:8
 praising or repenting, 29:2, 4;
 29A:1
 set free by God, 29A:3

- sins, not excuses, 29:3
 today, before judgment day, 47:8
 in the Trinity, 29:2
 unwillingness, 29A:3
 conscience:
 cleansing, 47:7, 8
 courage, 37:13
 good, 25A:3
 known to others, 47:23
 open to God, 47:11
 rich in, 36:4
 sweet taste, 37:10
 testimony of, 47:12-13
 consolation: bishops' role, 46:12, 13, 40
 constancy, 41:1-2
 contributions (support), 46:4
 conversion (moral):
 almsgiving and prayer, 39:6
 change for the better, 39:6
 forgiveness on day of, 39:1
 postponing day of, 40:3-5
 procrastination, 20:4; 40:5
 corruption, 21:8
 courage: suffering, 46:10
 covenant: old and new, 25:1, 2
 covetousness, 26:9
 creation:
 a Creator necessary, 43:1
 first humans, 26:1-5
 God, who is like you? 24:1
 goodness of, 21:3; 29:1
 grace, 26:12
 man's role in, 43:3
 mystery, 23:15
 seventh day, 33:3
 sheep made for Creator to feed, 47:1
 see also mankind; temporal . . .
 criminals, 20:2
 cross:
 peace, 25:7
 prophecy, 37:2
 crucifixion, *see* Christ
 crying:
 good deeds, 31:6
 just men, 31:4
 people of God, 47:17
 sowing in tears, 31:1-6
 weep before the Creator, 47:1
 see also tears
 Cyprian, Saint, 37:3
 Cyrenaean, 46:41

D

 darkness: afterlife, 31:6
 daughters: term for "heresies," 37:27
 David and Goliath, 32:2-4, 9, 12, 18, 25-26
 David, King: prefigure of Christ, 47:20, 21
 dead:
 raised up, 26:11
 who ever came back? 41:4
 dearness, 34:7
 death:
 choosing to die, 40:6
 distress, 38:6
 fear of, 38:7
 incarnation and, 23A:3
 merry-making at the end, 31:4
 riches lost, 39:5
 sin and, 26:10
 threats, 36:10
 troubled by, 31:3
 uncertain day of, 39:1
 see also afterlife; judgment day
 decalogue, *see* ten commandments
 deceit, 23:5
 deformity, 27:6
 delight, 21:1, 3, 9, 10
 spiritual, 23:12
 demons:
 Christ and, 44:3
 worship, 24:6
 desert: solitude, 47:23
 desires:
 harmful, 25A:2
 lofty, 20A:5, 6
 see also greed; lust

despair, 20:1, 2; 40:2, 3
 desperation, 20:3
 despising, 20A:3
 devil:
 dead stones (people), 24:2
 deliverance from, 22A:4-5
 enemy, 22A:5
 excuse for sin, 20:2; 29:3
 fool at his end, 46:28
 glee over being blamed, 20:2
 Goliath as symbol of, 32:7
 greed and fear used by, 32:11, 13
 Job and, 22A:1-3; 25A:3
 letter "d" in, 32:6
 martyrs overcome, 32:26
 original sin and, 27:2
 partridge as symbol of, 46:28
 discipline, 21:8
 distaff, 37:13-14
 dogs, 50:10
 Donatus/Donatists, 33:5; 37:3; 45:7; 46:14, 17, 18, 33, 37, 39, 41; 47:17, 28
 dreading, by masters, 23:2
 drink: fountain of life, 23:12
 drunkenness (enjoyment of good things), 23:12

 E
 ear: food: sound, 28:4
 earnest, and pledge, 23:8-9
 earthly goods, *see* temporal goods
 Egypt, 46:37, 38
 Elijah, 39:6
 Elisha, 26:11
 emptiness: spiritual, 36:11
 end of the world, 38:11; 46:2; 47:18
 endurance, 20:2, 8; 38:1, 5, 11
 Christian strength, 46:13
 enemy:
 delivery from, 22A:1, 5
 flesh vs spirit, 30:4
 friend's enemy, 49:6
 praying for, 49:11
 enjoyment: provision for, 36:6

eternal fire, 22:3; 23:18; 23A:1; 25A:1; 47:4
 eternal goods:
 divine distribution, 50:3
 investment in, 38:8
 love for, 45:3
 see also temporal goods
 eternal life:
 Christians in this life, 33A:3
 eternal rest, 33:3; 33A:3, 4
 haven of our labors, 37:30
 keep the commandments, 38:7
 praise in, 33A:1
 promise of, 22:10
 threat to, 32:16
 time lovers and, 38:2
 see also afterlife
 Eunomians, 46:18
 evangel (the word), 45:5
 Eve, 22:9, 10; 22A:3; 45:5; 46:28
 evil:
 baleful days, 25:3-5
 body members as weapons of, 30:6
 Christ preached everywhere, 31:5
 examples of wrongdoing, 40:4
 fear of, 32:15
 God will condemn evil deeds, 23A:1
 human creation, 23A:1
 iniquity as master/mistress, 30:1, 8
 love of iniquity, 35:2
 people prospering, 25A:1
 suffering evil, being evil, 48:8
 surplus wealth, 32:20
 see also badness; sin
 example:
 bishops leading bad lives, 46:9
 care for weaker brethren, 47:14
 excuses, 29:3
 exile: tears, 31:5
 eye: light as food of, 28:3
 eyes of the mind, 21:7

F

faith:

- believe while you don't see, 38:3
- Canaanite woman, 37:21
- claim no credit for self, 26:15
- clinging to God, 22A:4
- David vs Goliath, 32:3
- delight in the Lord, 21:1
- grace, 32:9
- hearts firmly fixed in, 38:5
- just person lives by, 49:2
- justice of God, 27:6
- justified through, 26:9
- last things, 48:7
- needs tending, 43:8
- paid/kept as same time, 36:8
- poor man, rich in faith, 41:2
- received; value, 43:2
- reward, 33A:1
- riches, 25A:3
- seeing, 21:5, 7
- start of a good life, 43:1
- temporal values and, 47:30
- toilsome time, 38:4
- faithfulness: in slaves, 21:6; 36:8
- falsehood, 32:10
- famine, 47:28
- fate, 20:2
- faults: God angry/gentle with, 24:7
- fear:
 - devil and, 32:11, 13
 - love and, 24:1
 - old/new covenants, 33:1
 - restraint on sinning, 45:8
 - serving the Lord with, 30:10
 - temptation, 32:15
 - ten commandments, 32:8
- fear of God:
 - sanctification, 45:9
 - wisdom, 37:29
- field (valiant woman), 37:8-9
- first man, *see* Adam
- fisherman, 43:6
- flatterers, 41:5
- flesh:
 - grass, 25:6; 33A:3; 45:10

- sinful, 27:2
- spirit and, 30:4; 45:8, 9
- food: light for the eye, 28:3
- forgiveness of sin:
 - all sin forgiven, 23A:2
 - by Christ, 32:12
 - day of conversion, 20:4
 - He delivers you from yourself, 42:3
 - prayer, 22:6; 47:7
 - prophecy, 44:6
 - see also* repentance
- forgiving:
 - enemies, 49:8-9
 - forgive and you will be forgiven, 42:2
 - a form of kindness, 42:1
- fortune: good/bad, 20A:1
- foundation, building, 20A:7
- fountain of life, 23:10, 12
- free choice/will, 23A:1
 - Pelagian error, 26:2, 8
 - without God, a bad thing, 26:3
- freedom, 33:1
- friend: stand by, even in poverty, 41:1-3
- fruit trees, *see* trees
- future events, 22:1, 2
- future life, *see* afterlife; eternal life

G

- gentleness, 24:4
- Gethsemane, 31:3
- gift of God, 32:23
- girdles, 37:21
- giving:
 - a form of kindness, 42:1
 - give and you will be given, 42:2
- gladness, 31:3
- glory:
 - of God's house, 50:11
 - in the Lord, 47:13
- gnashing of teeth, 31:6
- goats, *see* sheep
- God:
 - anger, 24:7

- approving, 48:2
 cheating, 38:4
 chief shepherd, 46:18
 conditions for seeing, 23:18
 contact with (humble prayer),
 45:7
 dearness, 21:4
 do not keep quiet or grow
 gentle, 24:4, 7
 face to face with (Moses), 23:14
 fairness and justice, 27:7
 faithful and trustworthy, 38:10
 Father, and the Church, 22:9, 10
 Father as shepherd, 47:21
 Father's testament of peace,
 47:22
 first faith, then sight, 22A:4
 foreknowledge, 26:4
 God will come from the Afric,
 46:38-40
 goodness of, 29:1; 29A:2
 gratitude to, 24:1
 hearing Word of, 28:4
 his children will see him as he
 is, 23:16
 image of, *see* image of God
 inscrutable/unsearchable ways,
 26:13-15; 27:7
 judge, 47:7
 just in what He allows, 48:7
 keeping himself for those who
 love him, 22A:4
 keeping quiet (as judge), 47:5, 8
 learning from, 30:9
 letter "d" in, 32:6
 light, no darkness, 28A:1
 love—
 commandments, 27:6
 freely, 22A:1
 God is love, 21:2; 23:8-9, 13;
 34:3
 in hope, 21:1; 32:16
 love beyond words, 21:2
 loving/having, 34:5
 profit from our love, 34:8
 merciful and just, 22:5
 mystery, 23:15
 not grasped by thought, 21:2
 oath: I live, 46:19
 our whole/true good, 22A:2
 patience, 47:5
 possessed equally by all, 47:30
 possession of, 32:28
 praise the word of, 47:27
 reaching him, 47:30
 realize his justice, 48:6
 refusing his gift, 32:23
 repenting (change of sentence),
 22:6
 revealed and concealed, 23:14
 riches of wisdom and
 knowledge, 27:7
 seeing face to face, 38:3
 shepherd, 47:3, 20
 sing his praises, 34:6
 spirit, 21:2
 unchanging, 23:15
 united to; sin, 29:6
 visiting the temple (human
 body), 23:6
 wait patiently, 40:1
 walking about in us, 23:8-9
 who is like you? 24:3
see also Jesus Christ; faith;
 Holy Spirit; sin; Trinity;
 trust; worship
 godless: Lazarus and the rich man,
 33A:4
 gods, 24:2, 3, 6
 gold, 21:3, 4, 5, 7, 10; 23:9; 32:21;
 34:5; 36:3, 8; 38:6; 50:1-13
 Goliath, 32:2-4, 7, 9, 12, 18, 25-26
 good days, 25:5-6, 7
 good deeds, *see* good works
 good people:
 life events and, 48:8
 rich, 36:4
 upright of heart praised, 21:1-10
 good things:
 all received from God, 26:14, 15
 desire for, 29:5
 enjoyment beyond telling, 23:12

- everything created by God, 21:3
 life, valued the highest, 20:4
 restraint, 38:1, 5
 this life, 41:5
 good works:
 cheerfulness, 31:3, 5
 crying, 31:6
 distaff and spindle, 37:13-14
 harvest, 25:8
 hearing and acting, 23A:1
 let works shine before men,
 47:13
 redemption and, 23A:2
 rich in, 36:6; 39:4
 sabbath, 33:3
 seeking praise for, 47:13
 sharing riches, 25A:4
 sowing in tears, 31:2
 but unwilling to suffer, 46:13
 see also charity
 goodness:
 judgment day, 47:6
 man's original state, 26:3
 neighbor's, 35:3
 power, 29:1
 responsibility, 35:2
 source, 29A:2
 start: right faith, 43:1
 willing, 30:3
 gospel, 25:1
 grace:
 belief and, 32:12
 creation; justification, 26:12
 helps fulfill the law, 32:8
 justification, 26:9
 merit and, 26:14
 nature and, 26:4, 5
 Pelagian error, 26:8
 prefigured: milk and honey,
 25:1
 punishment and, 23A:2
 reliance on, 32:9
 riches of God, 27:6
 saved by, 23A:1
 source, 26:10
 symbolism, 32:7
 unsearchable ways of God,
 26:13, 15
 grass, 25:6; 25A:1; 45:10
 greed, 32:11, 13, 14, 19, 22; 38:6;
 45:2; 46:13; 50:6
 possessions, 50:3
 soul's riches, 36:9
 temptation, 32:14
 wish to be rich, 39:3
 see also avarice
 guilt, 30:3
- ### H
- Haggai, 50:1
 hand: left/right, 32:22
 happiness:
 celestial/terrestrial, 32:22, 27
 heaven, 45:10
 poverty and, 50:5
 right hand, left hand, 32:22
 temporal/worldly things, 21:8;
 32:18, 24
 harlot, 37:20
 harvest time, 47:6
 hate, 24:3; 49:5-6
 desire for revenge, 49:9
 hate is a murderer, 49:7
 speck of anger, 49:7
 healing, 20:1; 30:5
 health:
 good people, bad people, 38:2
 Job, 22A:3
 hearing the word, 23:1; 23A:1
 heart:
 anguish, 47:17
 belief, 49:2
 charity in, 47:23
 clean, 20:1, 2; 23:18
 cleaned by confessing, 23A:4
 give to God, 34:7
 gold vs faith, 21:7
 impossible to read, 49:4
 invest in, 36:8
 lifting up to God, 25:2
 lowliness of, 45:7
 peace, 25:7

- purified, seeing God, 22A:4
 rejoice, 28:1
 revealing thoughts of, 49:4
 rich persons investing in, 36:11
 sin, 45:9
 sound and meaning, 28:4
 treasure, 37:9
 uprightness praised, 21:1-10
 word of God in, 32:13
- heavenly:
 glory, 45:10
 home, 38:11
 see also kingdom of heaven
- hell, 28:4; 32:13; 41:5
- Helper (Lazarus), 33A:4
- Hercules, 24:3, 6, 7
- heresy and heretics:
 all agree against unity, 47:27
 astuteness of heretics, 46:29
 bad "daughters," 37:27
 companions of Christ, 46:36
 devil and, 46:28
 divisions among Christians,
 47:28
 excuse: following our bishops,
 46:21
 indifference to, 46:15
 motive for separation, 47:18
 pride, 46:18
 prong of their yoke, 47:26
 rebaptizers in Africa, 46:37
 testament, 47:22
- hill: symbol of Christ, 47:24
- Holy Spirit, 22:7; 23:8-9; 29A:1;
 32:6; 33:3
 love God with God, 34:3
- honor:
 clothing, 46:6
 seeking, 39:2
- hope, 20A:1; 21:1; 22A:4; 23:12;
 24:5; 27:5; 32:16; 45:10; 47:1,
 23, 25
 Christ, head of the Church, 45:5
 giving up, 20:3
 perishing from, 20:3; 40:3
 perverse, 20:4
- uncertainty of riches, 36:5
- house of God, 27:1
- human affairs: God seen as
 uninterested in, 48:4-5
- human beings, *see* mankind
- human condition, 24:5
- humility:
 Christ's example, 23A:3, 4;
 41:7; 50:11
 contact with God, 45:7
 endurance, 20A:8
 foundation, 20A:7
 God draws near to the humble,
 21:2
 grace to the humble, 30:7
 Incarnation as model, 30:9
 learning justification, 25:5
 rich people, 36:1-2, 5
 sons of Zebedee, 20A:6
 trust and, 20A:2
 see also pride
- hunger, 36:9; 37:7
- husband and wife, 45:5
- hymn: praise God, 33:5
- hypocrits, 37:15A0
- I*
- idols, 22:4; 47:11
- image of God: nothing dearer to
 God, 20A:2
- immortality, 20A:5, 7; 49:3; 50:13
 true riches, 36:3
- incarnation:
 born of a virgin, 49A:1
 Christ proceeded without
 receding, 28:5
 clothes of a slave, 20A:3
 learning humility from, 30:9
 our death and, 23A:3
 passion and, 22:1
 poverty, 36:3
 purpose, 26:7
 unchanged as creator, 47:20
- infant: crying/laughing, 31:4
- iniquity, *see* evil
- insensitivity, 47:10

investment: temporal or eternal,
42:2

J

James, son of Zebedee, 20A:6

jealousy: evil-doers, 25A:1

Jerusalem: God's house, 50:11

Jesus Christ:

ascended into heaven, 46:40

awaken faith in, 38:10

body (the Church), 45:5

brethren, 36:5

burial, 44:7

crucified, 37:2; 44:4, 6

crucifixion: forgiveness, 49:9

crucifixion: the tunic, 22:1

crucifixion: thief hanging with
Christ, 22:3

deformed (Isaiah), 27:6; 44:4

despised, 20A:3

destitute for sake of mankind,
39:6

equality with the Father, 30:9

eternal life promised by, 22:10

find/attend him in the poor,
25:8

flesh of, 27:2

food nourishing without
perishing, 28:2

gentle and humble of heart, 24:4

God and man, 37:17

grace through, 26:12

guards at his tomb, 44:7

head of the Church, 45:5

hidden as God, 20A:3

hill (symbol), 47:24

hold fast, in his poverty, 41:7

human and divine, 44:6

humbled: death on the cross,
41:7

humility, 23A:3, 4; 32:13; 50:11

interior beauty, 44:3

Jewish blindness re, 44:5-6

judge, 25A:1

justice and wisdom, 28:2

justifies the unjust, 23A:2

king, 45:6

learn from me, 24:4

martyrs confessing, 31:2

mediator, 26:7; 47:21

mercy, 32:12

mountain of God, 45:5, 7

name of, 47:20

our peace, 25:7; 47:22

persecuted, 44:2

poverty, 36:3

power over death, 31:3

prefigured by David, 32:5;
47:20, 21

prophecies concerning, 38:10;
44:1; 47:20

redeeming the captives, 27:2

resurrection foretold by, 44:6

rich, became poor, 41:7

role as God-man, 20A:4

second commandment, 33:3

see the Father in, 47:20

son of man, 23:11

sorrowful unto death, 31:3

suffering, 22:1; 46:10, 11

transfiguration, 43:5

virgin birth, 44:6; 45:6; 49A:1

wizard or magician, 43:5

Word incarnate, 26:7

Word of God, 23A:3

Word: unchanging God, 23:15

see also Incarnation; Mystical
Body of Christ

Jews:

blindness about Christ, 44:5-6

disbelief in resurrection, 41:4

praying for, 49:11

scattered over the earth, 45:7

Job:

delight in the Lord, 21:9

motivation, 45:2

testing, 22A:1-3; 25A:3

John, Apostle: love(-d), 20A:8; 34:2

John, son of Zebedee, 20A:6

Joseph in Egypt, 37:20; 46:23

Joseph of Arimathea, 44:7; 46:41

joy:
 everlasting; heaven, 45:5, 10
 rejoice, 28:1
 sowing in tears, 31:1-6
 Judas, 22:1, 5; 46:23
 judgment:
 bishops/God feeds with, 46:27
 fruit trees, 25A:1
 God finds you, 48:2
 love the person, hate the vice,
 49:5-6
 of others, 49:4
 perverse, 48:2
 self, 49:5
 judgment day:
 bishops and, 46:2
 conspicuous in the gates, 37:19
 final judgment, 47:4
 foretold, 22:4
 harvest time, 47:6, 16
 sheep and goats, 47:17
 Son of Man will come in glory,
 37:19
 sorting time, 48:7
 strong and feeble sheep, 47:15
 just person/people:
 crying, 31:4
 evil days, 25:4, 5
 hard life, 32:19
 victorious, 32:26
 justice:
 arrogance, 30:10
 desire for, 32:21
 free choice, 26:2
 God and sinners, 22:5, 6
 God: no unfairness, 27:3, 4, 6
 hatred of vice, 49:7
 light of, 50:8
 living by, 49:2
 rich people, 25A:2
 right judgment, 48:2
 sacrifice and, 49:1
 wages: age when hired, 49:2
 work of God, 49:2
 justification:
 confessing, 23A:4
 grace; the Law, 26:9, 12

K

kindness:
 rewarded, 20A:9
 sins cleansed by, 42:1
 kingdom of heaven, 23A:1; 32:14
 sale price: rich and poor, 39:6
 kneeling, 49:11

L

laboring: come to me, 30:8
 lamps: bishops as, 46:5
 land:
 flowing with milk and honey,
 25:1
 of the living, 45:4
 last day of life, 22:8
 last things, 48:7
 laughing, 31:4
 law (O.T.):
 David's five pebbles, 32:5
 instructed by the Lord, 25A:1
 number symbolism, 32:5, 7
 spiritual/carnal, 30:1, 3
see also Torah
 Lazarus (beggar), 20A:9; 33A:4
 meaning: "Helped," 33A:4
 poor man, rich man (Luke 16),
 41:4-5
 laziness, 38:6
 liar: everyman, 28A:1
 Libya, 46:41
 lie; deceit, 23:5
 life:
 desire for, 25:6
 ending with merry-making, 31:4
 events: do judgment, do justice,
 48:8
 falsity of, 36:6
 God seen as unconcerned,
 48:4-5
 highest value, 20:4
 last day, 22:8
 long, 33A:2
 long/bad life desired, 20:4; 40:5
 a mist, 24:5
 span shrinks with aging, 38:5

true life in afterlife, 39:5
 vines, 43:3
see also afterlife; conduct
 light: food for the eye, 28:3
 linen, 37:6, 18
 listener, perfect, 23:4
 listening, 28:4; 47:5
 living stones, 24:2
 loftiness, 20A:7
 love:
 because we are loved, 34:2
 burden made light by, 30:10
 charity sings the new song, 33:1
 clean heart, 23:18
 drinking, 23:13
 earthly, 34:4
 exchanging, 35:2
 fear and, 24:1
 of God, *see* God: love
 loved but not seen, 34:4
 lover profits by, 34:8
 loving kindness, 20A:9
 loving/having, 34:5
 means having plenty of room,
 23:7
 nearness of God, 21:2
 of neighbor: ten
 commandments, 33:4, 5
 new commandment, 33:2
 old/new covenants, 33:1
 promises: God or world, 32:14
 rightly, 23:13
 seeing God, 22A:4
 self and neighbor (command),
 34:8
 sinful, 21:3
 sing the new song, 34:1, 6
 Stephen (martyr) as example,
 49:10
 unity, 32:5
 vices of friends, 49:6
 whole heart, mind, strength,
 34:7
 see also charity
 lower things, 21:3

lust:
 bad pastors, 46:9
 consent withheld, 30:7
 defilement of the flesh, 45:8
 flesh vs spirit, 25:4; 30:4, 6
 holding on to, 30:4
 refraining from, 20:3; 34:5
 thoughts and wishes, 45:9
 M
 Maccabees, 32:15
 maidservants, 37:7, 10
 Mambre, 23:16
 mammon of iniquity, 41:6; 50:6, 8
 Manichees, 37:17; 50:7, 9, 13
 mankind (human beings):
 creation of, 22:7; 26:1-5
 all creation subject to, 20A:3
 endowed (created) with free
 will, 26:8
 flesh and spirit (created), 30:4
 hierarchy in creation, 43:3
 humans made into angels, 45:10
 image of the creator (mind,
 reason, judgment), 24:3;
 26:4; 43:3
 nothing if God is unknown,
 32:9, 12
 original condition of, 26:1
 people: living/dead stones, 24:2
 praise-making creature, 29:1
 sheep of God's pasture, 26:5
 trusting in, 32:9
 see also original sin
 manna, 45:1
 manumission of slaves, 21:6, 7
 marriage, 21:1
 martyrs:
 Church as mother of, 37:1
 confessing Christ, 31:2
 false gods, 24:6
 God's non-intervention, 32:15
 seed of their blood, 22:4
 sowing in tears, 31:1, 3
 master (teacher):
 dangerous office, 23:1
 fellow pupil, 23:2

material benefits, 37:20
 materialistic people, 23:4, 5
 meaning, 28:4-5
 mediator: Christ as, 26:7
 mercy:
 confessing one's sins, 29:3
 divine, 23:11; 27:1-7
 God and sinners, 22:5
 great sinner, 20:2
 poor man, rich man (Luke 16),
 41:4-5
 praise of, 29A:1, 2
 psalm 57, 20A:1-9
 merit: grace and, 26:14
 merry-making (Ps 126:56), 31:4,
 5, 6
 mind:
 sanctification of, 45:9
 seeing with eyes of the, 21:7
 sound and meaning, 28:4
 mirror, 49:5
 misery: poverty and, 50:5
 mistress: sin as, 30:1
 money, 21:7; 41:1
 monomachy, 32:3
 mortality, 22:9; 23A:3; 49:3
 Moses, 23:14, 16; 41:4
 books of, *see* Torah
 mother-love, 23:3
 Mount of Olives, 46:40
 mountain(s):
 authors of the Scriptures, 46:24
 Christ: mountain of God, 45:5,
 6, 7
 stone becomes, 45:6
 symbol for pride, 46:17
 Synagogue and Church, 45:6
 murder: hatred as, 49:7
 muslins, 37:20
 mystical body of Christ:
 each member a part in, 24:5
 inheritance from Christ, 22:10

N

name: written in heaven, 33A:4

nature:
 grace and, 26:4, 5
 healing, 30:5
 necessities, 37:30; 39:6
 neighbor:
 advice: be wise for, 35:1
 commanded to love, 33:4, 5
 concerned interest, 35:3
 meaning: Christ, 41:7
 poverty; charity, 41:1, 5
 true love of, 35:2
 netherworld: Lazarus (beggar) in,
 41:4
 new covenant:
 Donatists and, 33:5
 song: love, 34:1
 New Testament:
 law (gospel), 25:1
 source, 26:10
 night, 37:7
 noonday, 46:38
 Numidia, 46:39

O

obedience, 35:3
 old age, 33A:2
 Old Testament: source, 26:10
 olive tree, 25A:4
 original sin, 26:3; 27:2; 30:2

P

pagans, 24:6; 26:4, 6, 7
 paradise, 25:3
 paralytic soul, 46:13
 pardon, 20:2; 22:6
 parents and children:
 goodness/badness, 35:2
 poor and rich, 45:2
 Parmenian, 46:17
 partridge:
 devil symbol, 46:28
 quarreling, 46:29
 pastoral work, *see* bishops
 patience, 40:1; 47:6, 17
 Paul, Saint:
 imprisoned, 46:4
 new covenant, 25:2

- suffering foretold by prophet, 22:2
- teacher, 23:2
- peace:
- Christ is, 25:7
 - cross and, 25:7
 - heavenly, 50:12
 - pursuit; seeking, 23:18; 25:7
 - testament of, 47:22, 28
- peacemakers: children of God, 23:16-17
- Pelagians, 26:2, 8
- Pentapolis, 46:41
- people of God, 24:5; 50:11
- perfection: Donatists, 47:17
- perishing, 20:3
- persecution:
- Christian life of suffering, 46:11
 - growth of the Church, 44:2
- perversity, 48:2
- Peter, Saint:
- body of the Church, 46:30
 - common man, 43:6
 - feed my sheep, 46:23, 30, 37
 - "living stones," 24:2
- Pharisee: publican and, 36:11
- Philistines, 32:25
- Photinus, 37:17
- pigs, 50:10
- pleasing others, 47:12
- pleasing the Lord, 47:1
- pleasure:
- delight in the Lord, 21:8, 9
 - restricting, 38:1; 46:10
 - senses, 28:2
- pledge, and earnest, 23:8-9
- poor:
- bellies of, storerooms for good works, 36:9
 - bones of, 33A:3
 - charity to neighbor, 41:1, 5
 - children and parents, 45:2
 - Christ is destitute in, 38:8
 - citizen of kingdom of heaven, 38:9
 - despising, 25A:3
 - disdaining/ignoring, 41:6
 - find/attend Christ in, 25:8
 - generosity to, 45:4
 - God feeds, through the rich, 39:4
 - justice, 32:27
 - Lazarus, 33A:4
 - porters for the rich, 38:9
 - rich man as brother of, 36:5
 - rich tested by, 39:6
 - in spirit (blessed), 36:7
 - spiritually poor, 36:10
 - supply their lack, diminish your load, 25A:4
 - threats, 36:10
 - trust in God, 20A:9
 - valiant woman, 37:14
- possessions:
- fear of losses, 50:3
 - greed, 50:3
 - loving/having, 34:5
- potter, 26:13
- poverty:
- Christ, 36:3
 - hold fast with neighbor in, 41:7
 - misery and, 50:5
 - the valiant woman, 37:25
- praise:
- be what you sing, 34:6
 - confessing to God, 29:4; 29A:1
 - eternal life, 37:30
 - heaven, 45:10
 - praise God, 33:5; 33A1:1
 - seeking, for good works, 47:13
 - valiant woman, 37:23, 26
 - what the Lord gives, 48:1
- prayer:
- commending, in tears, 31:5
 - contact with God, 45:7
 - intention, 40:7
 - unheard, 21:8
 - weapon against the devil, 22A:5
- preaching: saying His thing, 46:1
- precious stones, 37:3
- pride (the proud):
- David and Goliath, 32:12, 26

division; heresies, 46:18
 God withstanding, 30:7
 good and bad "mountains,"
 46:17
 humbled, 36:11
 redemption and, 30:2
 riches and, 36:2, 5, 7; 39:4
 rising against God, 25:2
 smoke, 22:8
 struggle with, 33A:2
 transgressors, 26:9
see also humility
 profit, 22A:2
 promise(s):
 guarantees, 40:7
 mountain, 45:3, 5
 reward for self-cleansing, 45:1-2
 promised land, 25:1; 45:4
 prophecy:
 Church in, 22:4
 crucifixion of Christ, 22:1
 judgment day, 22:4
 told as happening in the past,
 22:1, 2
 warnings, 22:3
 prophets: poor man, rich man
 (Luke 16), 41:4
 prosperity, 20:2; 32:22, 27; 38:1
 enjoying friend's p., 41:2-3
 evil people, 25A:1
 proud, *see* pride
 providence: God's way, 22:2; 26:15
 publican, 36:11
 punishment:
 grace and, 23A:2
 use of possessions, 32:27
 purification:
 cleansing self of every defilement,
 45:1, 3, 6, 8
 cleansing the inside, 45:9
 by endurance and restraint, 38:1

Q

quarreling, 23:17; 46:29

R

rain showers, 47:24
 razor, 32:17
 reason: image of God, 43:3
 rebaptizers in Africa, 46:37, 38
 redemption:
 Christ's mortal flesh, 27:2
 grace, 23A:2
 human malice, 30:5
 mercy unlimited, 22:9
 pride and, 30:2
 slaves, 21:6, 7
 soul; riches, 36:7, 9
 repentance:
 dangers to guard against, 20:3
 drawn to by God's patience,
 40:2
 foretold, 44:6
 fruitful sorrow, 22:3, 6
 God healing/forgiving, 20:3
 God is leading to, 47:5
 Psalm 51, 20:1
 responsibility: for good and evil,
 35:2
 restraint, 38:1, 5, 11
 resurrection of the body, 23A:3;
 31:6; 37:25-26; 50:12
 reward:
 cleansing self of defilements,
 45:1
 good people, bad people, 38:2
 rich (riches; rich people):
 all good people are rich, 36:4
 bones of, 33A:3
 buried treasures, 38:8
 children and parents, 45:2
 clinging to treasures, 38:7
 fear of death, 38:7
 good people, bad people, 38:2
 good things: this life, 41:5
 good works, 25A:4; 36:6
 hell: too late for just desires,
 41:5
 humbled, 36:1, 5
 immortality, 36:3
 inner wealth (virtues), 25A:3;
 36:7

investment in hearts, 36:11
 justice, 25A:2; 32:27
 Lazarus and, 33A:4
 mammon of iniquity, 50:6
 money as temptation, 39:3
 motive for worship, 22A:2-3
 poor man's brother, 36:5
 pride, 36:2, 5, 7; 39:4
 redemption of the soul, 36:7, 9
 Scripture and, 36:1
 sharing good times, 41:3
 test: help the poor, 39:6
 transfer assets to heaven, 38:9
 treasure in heaven, 36:5
 trust in God, 20A:9
 uncertainty, 36:5
 use of created things, 21:10
see also charity; poor; sharing;
 treasure; wealth
 room (love), 23:7
 root: prophecy re Christ, 44:1

S

sabbath: third commandment, 33:3
 sacrifice:
 appeasing God, 49:1
 offer yourself, 48:2
 reward for, 20A:2
 sadness, 31:3; 35:3
 saints:
 eternal joy, 31:6
 hold fast to God and Church,
 22:9
 tears, 31:6
 testimony of, 48:4, 5
 sales, 37:20
 salvation:
 grace, 23A:1
 hope, 27:5
 sanctification:
 body and spirit, 45:9
 fear of God, 45:9
 perfected, 45:8, 9
 pursuit of, 23:18; 45:1
 Saul (later Paul), 24:7

Saul, King, 32:3
 savior, 43:1
 scripture(s):
 allegory in, 32:6
 attentive to readings, 32:2
 authors as "mountains," 46:24
 Christ and the Church, 46:33
 feed in good health, 46:24
 heretics disagree on, 47:27
 medicine, 32:1
 no grounds for blaming, 23:3
 past tense, future meaning, 27:5
 spiritual, 23:3
 treat as face of God, 22:7
 value of riches in, 36:1
 second coming, 50:10
 self:
 deliver you from your (bad)
 self, 42:3
 praise God for your good
 points, 48:2
 self-accusation, 20:2, 4
 self-indulgence, 21:3
 senses:
 human/animal life, 43:3
 pleasure, 28:2
 sermon: composed of letters and
 syllables, 47:30
 serpent: sin, 20:2
 servant, 32:23
 servile works, 33:3
 servitude: earthly goods, 25:2
 sharing, 20A:8; 25A:4; 36:6; 39:5
 shaving, 32:17
 sheep:
 Christians as, 47:1-30
 goats and, 25A:1
 God's disposition, 26:15
 shepherds: bishops as, 46:1-41
 shouting, 24:5
 sickness, 49:6
 sign of the cross, 32:13
 silence: bishops as shepherds, 46:20
 silver, 21:4, 5, *see also* gold
 Simon of Cyrene, 46:41

- sin(s):
 always before me, 29A:4
 bad use of things, 21:3
 cleansed by alms/kindness, 42:1
 conversion delayed, 20:4
 defilements of the spirit/the flesh, 45:8
 disordered usage, 21:3
 effort against, 22:9
 enemy of God, 47:7
 God is carrying our sins, 47:5
 God turns his face away, 20:2
 healing hurt caused by, 20:1
 heavy-laden, come to Christ, 30:9
 inner enemies, 42:3
 justifying, 22:8
 loving badly, 21:3
 mistress, 30:1
 Pauline teaching, 26:10
 preference for earthly things, 32:14
 proper to man, 32:10
 punishment, 20:2; 29:6
 refrain from bad will, deeds, thoughts, 45:8
 reigning in the body, 30:6
 remedy for guilt, 47:7, 8
 repent and confess, 29:6
 self-accusation, 20:2, 4
 serpent, 20:2
 slave of sin, 47:26
 will and decision, 20:1
 works of the flesh, 37:28
see also confess; forgiveness; repentance
- singing: new man, 22A:1
- sinner(s):
 good fortune, 32:19
 man's creation, 22:7
 perish, from face of God, 22:1
- slave(-s; -ery):
 bad slave, 37:15
 divine master, 37:20
 entrusting goods to, 39:6
 faithful, 21:6-7; 36:8; 38:8
 fear, 33:1
- sleeping: temporal life as, 39:5
 sluggishness, 30:6
 smoke, vanishing, 22:8
 solitude, 47:23
 Solomon's temple, 23:7
 song: cheer; love, 34:1
 sons of men, 23:11
 soul:
 body weighs down, 30:4
 fool, taken away this night, 32:27
 gain whole world; lose soul, 36:9
 loving/hating, 29:5
 redemption; riches, 36:7, 9
 rest in God, 33:3
 sound, 28:4-5
 speech: slipping up, 23:2
 spindle, 37:13-14
 spirit:
 and flesh, 30:4; 45:8, 9
 lust (war), 25:4
 spiritual goods, 37:20
 spirituality, 23:4
 Stephen, Saint, 42:3; 49:10-11
 stone(s):
 became a great mountain, 45:6
 people: living and dead, 24:2
 stream (the word), 32:6-7
 strength:
 characteristics, 47:16, 17
 Hercules, 24:6
 stupidity, 47:10
 success: worldly, 25A:2
 suffering:
 Christian life, 46:10
 endurance, 20A:8
 God's will be done, 22:2
 good people, bad people, 38:2
 unwilling or unable to endure, 46:13
 warning by God, 22:3
 summer, 25A:1; 36:4; 38:6
 sunlight, 50:7
 superfluities, 32:17, 19
 superstition, 24:6

T

tax collector, 36:11
 teacher:
 attitudes, 47:10
 master, a dangerous office, 23:1
 tears:
 become my bread day and
 night, 31:5
 everlasting, 31:6
 saints, 31:6
 sowing, reap joy, 31:1-6
 temple:
 human body, 23:6; 24:1
 of Solomon, 23:7
 temporal goods:
 attachment to, 38:7; 46:18
 disdaining, 45:3
 diversity of fortunes, 47:30
 eternal life and, 38:2
 God as distributor, 50:3
 good use of created things,
 21:10; 50:4
 temporal life:
 happiness, 32:18, 22, 27
 lot of Christians in, 33A:3
 threats; evils, 32:16
 temptation:
 beyond what is bearable, 46:12
 good/bad things in life, 20A:1
 greed, 32:14
 storm: faith is sleeping, 38:10
 ten commandments:
 cheerful fulfillment, 32:8
 fear, 32:8
 first three, 33:3
 harp strings, 33:1, 2
 number symbolism, 32:5, 7
 seventh-tenth, 33:4
 two tables, 33:2
 testament: old and new, 25:1, 2
 thorns: heresies, 37:27
 threats, 32:15, 16; 36:10
 Tigisi, 46:39
 time:
 conversion "tomorrow," 20:4
 uncertainty of tomorrow, 40:5

tolerance, 47:17
 tongue:
 refrain from evil, 25:6, 7
 valiant woman, 37:23
 Torah:
 justification; grace, 26:9
 number five (symbolism), 32:7
 source, 26:10
 transgressors, 26:9
 treasure:
 banking in heaven, 38:9
 eternal/temporal goods, 38:8
 tree:
 judgment: fruit trees, 25A:1
 roots, 20A:7
 withered, 36:4
 Trinity:
 confessing in, 29:2
 feeding Christ's flock, 47:20
 unity of the godhead, 33:3;
 47:21
 troubles:
 beyond what is bearable, 46:12
 psalm 126, 31:4
 trust:
 excessive, 20:3
 first commandment, 38:5
 mercy of God, 20A:1-9
 poor/rich trust in God, 20A:9,
 10
 in princes, 33A:3
 self not to put trust in, 20A:2
 truth:
 error and, 46:41
 God as, 28:5; 32:10
 masters, 23:2
 understanding, 23:5

U

ugliness, 49:5
 unbelief:
 in Christ, 43:9
 darkness, 49:3
 understanding:
 belief and, 43:4, 7-8, 9
 carelessness in, 47:10

image of God, 43:3
 of truth, 23:5
 ungodly, the, 40:2
 unity:
 in the creation, 24:3
 forced, 46:41
 good shepherds, 46:30, 37
 heretics all agree against, 47:27
 love, 32:5
 upright of heart, 29A:2; 48:3
 see also good (-ness)
 usury, 38:8; 42:2

V

valiant woman (Proverbs):
 figure of the Church, 37:1-30
 vice:
 hating, 49:5-7
 inner struggles, 40:7
 speck or beam in eye, 49:7
 virgin birth, 44:6; 49A:1
 "without hands," 45:6
 virtues:
 holding in; holding out, 20:2
 inner wealth, 25A:3; 36:7
 treasure, 21:8
 voice:
 sound, 28:5
 witnessing with, 24:5

W

waiting, 40:1
 war:
 David and Goliath, 32:3
 lust, 25:4
 warnings, 22:3
 wax, 22:1-10
 wealth:
 danger: evils, 32:20
 indifference to, 50:3
 Job and the devil, 22A:3
 one's surplus, another's
 necessities, 39:6
 transfer, 36:5
 see also rich
 weeds, 47:6, 18

weeping, *see* crying; tears
 well-being, 33A:3
 wickedness, *see* evil
 widow's two farthings, 39:6
 wife: spiritual and fleshly works,
 37:6
 will of God, 32:18; 45:3
 wine, 21:3
 wineskins, 36:2
 winter, 36:4
 wisdom:
 be wise for self and neighbor,
 35:1
 cunning, 46:28
 divine, 27:7
 fear of the Lord, 37:29
 greed and, 38:6
 love of, 38:6
 as noonday, 46:38
 woman:
 announcements (bible), 45:5
 charm deceitful, beauty vain,
 37:29
 distaff and spindle, 37:13-14
 double cloaks for husband,
 37:17
 earthly love, 34:4
 farsighted in faith and hope,
 37:8
 Hebrew usage of the word,
 49A:1
 her children enriched, 37:25-26
 husband not anxious re home,
 37:15-16
 light of hope, 37:11
 opened her mouth with care,
 37:23
 superlative way: charity, 37:28
 useful work, 37:12
 valiant woman (Proverbs),
 37:1-30
 valor and elegance, 37:22
 wool, 37:6; 46:6
 word of God:
 foothold in the heart, 32:13
 rain showers (image), 47:24

Word, The, *see* Jesus Christ
words: letters in, 32:6
work:
 valiant woman, 37:10
 works of mercy, 50:4
world:
 pilgrim exiles in, 38:11
 promises of, 32:14
worldliness: earth and its fullness,
 39:2
worldly;
 goods, 32:24
 success, 25A:2
 well-being, 38:1
 see also temporal . . .

worship:
 gods as senseless objects, 24:3
 good times and bad, 32:28
 Job vs the devil, 22A:1-3
 motive, 22A:3
 old/new covenants, 25:2
 riches as motive, 22A:2
wrestling, 22A:5
wrongdoer, 22A:1, 4

Y

yoke, 30:9-10

Z

Zacchaeus, 25:8; 39:6; 47:30
Zebedee, sons of, 20A:6, 8

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



3 9015 03743 9026



