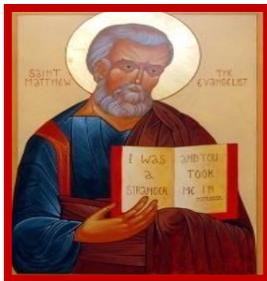


allowing us to suffer. For when ye condemn a Christian woman to pollution rather than to a lion, ye confess that a stain upon modesty is reckoned by us to be far more dreadful than any death. And still all your most exquisite cruelties produce no effect; they only induce men to join us. We are multiplied as often as you reap us. The blood of the Christians is their seed.”

This same Tertullian wrote his *Scorpiace* against the Gnostics, who taught that it was permitted under torture to deny Christ with the mouth, so long as His faith were retained in the heart. The Priscillianists afterwards taught the same, whose motto was, “Rights, perjuries, secrets, betray not.” In the *Scorpiace*, *i.e.*, an antidote against scorpions, meaning Gnostics, Tertullian treats altogether of the good of martyrdom. S. Cyprian, too, following Tertullian as a master, according to his wont, wonderfully extols the martyrs and martyrdom. In his *Epistle to the Martyrs*, among other eulogiums, he scatters the following: “The martyr is made a colleague of the Passion of Christ. The martyrs give us a school of morals: the confessors shew us the beginning of virtues. The martyrs shall be assessors with Christ in the judgment. The martyrs obtain the kingdom of heaven without delay. The martyrs receive fruit a hundred-fold. The prayer of the martyrs deserves to be heard by God. By the triumphs of the martyrs the church is made glad. Martyrdom by the baptism of blood is of all things the most excellent.”

Lastly, the Standard Bearer, the Prince and the Captain of the Martyrs, is Christ. Wherefore, the primitive bishops and fathers, as Julian the Apostate unwillingly acknowledged, “All flew to martyrdom like bees to a bee-hive,” to use S. Chrysostom’s words. S. Hubert, the successor of S. Lambert the martyr in the see of Liege, was wont to sigh because he was not his successor in martyrdom likewise. “O unhappy I,” he said, “whose sins have accumulated in such a heap that I am not worthy to be associated with such a man.”

I have collected many more notes upon Martyrdom in Hosea, c. xi. *sub finem*. See also Victor of Utica on the Vandal persecution (*lib.* 2, 3), where he relates that when many of the orthodox were thrust by Hunneric, the Arian king, like swarms of locusts, into a narrow dungeon, full of every kind of filth, where the horror of the overpowering stench was worse than any torture, even here the Martyrs sang with exultation this hymn to the Lord, “Such honour have all His Saints.”



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For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent* that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.

Matthew writes his gospel account to give us the view of Jesus as the King. He records Jesus' authority in calling the disciples: "Follow me" (Matthew 4:19), and he also records more than any of the others about Jesus' teaching concerning God's kingdom and heavenly rule.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

Continuation of Matthew 10: 11-32

Verse 11- *Into whatsoever city, &c. Worthy*, that is, apt and meet to receive the Gospel, one who fears God, and leads a good life, who desires salvation, who shows hospitality to poor and pious people, especially preachers; one who knows, as S. Jerome says, "that he is receiving a favour, rather than conferring one."

This is the sixth precept which Christ gives to His Apostles concerning hospitality, when they were going to preach to the Jews, that they should not lodge with any one who was opposed to faith in Christ, or of evil report, lest his infamy should bring discredit upon themselves. "A host," says S. Jerome, "should be chosen for his reputation among the people, and from his character with his neighbours; lest the worthiness of preaching should be besmirched by the infamy of the preacher's host."

And the rab eide, &c. Why? First, lest if the Apostles should go about from one host to another, they should appear changeable and inconstant. So S. Chrys. Secondly, not to

Providence in all persecutions and tribulations whatsoever. For He will deliver you out of them all, either by freeing you from them, or else by giving you the crown of martyrdom, and taking you to heaven, where there will be no more labour or pain.

Verse 32- *Whosoever therefore shall confess Me, &c.* From this word *confess*, martyrs were anciently called *confessors*. *Shall confess Me*. The Gr. is *ἐν ἑμοῖς*, i.e., *in Me*. For *I will confess him*, the Gr. is *ἐν αὐτῷ*, i.e., *in him*. And so Tertullan reads (*in Scorpiace c. 9*). So also S. Luke xii. 5. It is a Hebraism. For the Heb. constructs verbs of contact, whether bodily, mental, or spiritual contact, with the prep. *ִּין*. The Heb. would be *hoda bi, confess in Me*, meaning *confess Me*. This is plain from the antithesis, *shall deny Me*. Maldonatus, however, takes it differently—*shall confess*, i.e., *shall glory in Me*, answering to the Heb. *hithraddeh*, which, being in the *Hithpael*, has a reflexive force. *To confess in oneself*, i.e., *to glory*.

The meaning is, whosoever, in the presence of tyrants, being interrogated concerning the faith, shall generously and constantly confess that he believeth in Ye as the Messiah and the Son of God, him will I in like manner profess before God, and angels, and men, to be My disciple, and as such will I honour and glorify him.

Martyrdom is the confession of Christ and the profession of Christianity, even to torments and a cruel death, and therefore it is the highest love and honouring of Christ. Wherefore the Apostles and Apostolic men have most ardently desired martyrdom. S. Ignatius in his Epistle to the Romans, says, "My love is crucified. There is not in me a fire of earthly, but of heavenly fuel. And I have living water which saith inwardly, Come to the Father." S. Basil says (*Hom. 19 in S. Gordium, Mart.*), "The martyrs speedily attain to heavenly glory by a violent and premature death. They endeavour speedily to migrate from this life, which ought rather to be called a lingering death, by means of short toil." We see, therefore, that he does not call death *death*, but as S. Sophia said to her daughter Anastasia (*apud Surium, Octob. 25*), "A good thing is departure from an evil world. It is joy, gladness, pleasure, splendour, beauty, light, a sweeter and fairer than earthly light." S. Anthony, as S. Athanasius testifies, when those who were about to become martyrs in the persecution of Maximian were being carried to Alexandria, rushed out of his monastery, and followed these victims of Christ saying, "Let us advance to the glorious triumphs of our brethren, that we may join them in their conflict."

Tertullan thus concludes his apology in behalf of Christ and Christians— "Well, then, do this, O ye excellent governors, since ye will be so much more acceptable to the populace, when ye have sacrificed the Christians to them. Crucify, torment, condemn us, tear our bodies to pieces. Your wickedness is the sure proof of our innocence. God has a meaning in

Thus far Victor. He relates in the same place that Victorinus, the proconsul of Carthage, being asked by the ambassadors of King Hunneric to become an Arian, answered, “Being firm in God and Christ my Lord, I will tell ye what ye shall answer to your king: ‘Let him torment me with fire, let him expose me to beasts, let him excruciate me with every kind of torment; if I should consent unto him, it would be in vain that I have been baptized into the Catholic Church. For if this present life were all, and we did not hope for another which is indeed eternal, still even so, I would not do what he requires for the sake of a little temporal glory, and be ungrateful to Him who hath bestowed His faith upon me who believe in Him.’ At this reply the King was so enraged that no speech can express for how long and with what punishments he afflicted him. But he triumphing, and making in the Lord a happy consummation, received the martyr’s crown.” Thus Victor. Wisely spoke the martyr S. Flavian, “The body does not feel torments when the mind is in heaven, and has devoted itself to God with all its strength.”

Verse 29- *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, &c. Farthing*, this is the Roman *as*, Gr. *assarion*. It is a diminutive, and means α , *little as*. For the *assarius* was the half, not of the ancient *as*, which was a pound, but of the later *as*, which was half an ounce. So that the *assarius* was the fourth part of the *uncia*, or *ounce* of brass, and therefore of very small value. This, which Enthym. renders by *terunciola*, or *a little farthing* was the price of two sparrows in Judea in the time of Christ.

Shall not fall upon the earth. For birds live in the air, and when they are pierced with arrows, or perish from any other cause, they fall to the earth. *Without your Father: i.e.*, without His providence and pleasure. If God hath so great care and providence of these little sparrows, what will he have of you? For He is your Father, in that he hath given you reason, for similitude to Himself. And He hath re-formed you in Christ, and made you like unto Christ.

Symbolically, S. Hilary says: “The two sparrows are the body and the soul, which are born as it were sparrows, that they should fly with spiritual wings toward Heaven, but the sinner sells them for an *as*, that is, a little pleasure, to the devil, that they may go down to hell.”

Verse 30- *But the hairs of your head, &c.* That is, God from eternity hath appointed and decreed not only the number of your members, but even of your hairs. Wherefore He knows it exactly, and diligently keeps them to the number which He willeth, so that not one can fall without His special providence, as Luke saith.

Allegorically, the hairs of Christ are all the elect and those who shall be saved, for these adorn Christ as hair does the head. *Tropologically*, hairs are all the thoughts, words, and deeds of the faithful. So S. Cyril (*lib. 8 in Levit.*). Again, hairs are the minutest thoughts and intentions of the Saints. So Damascene.

Verse 31- *Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value, Syr. more excellent.* The Gr. is *διαφέρετε* *ye are preferable, ye excel*. If God have such care of sparrows, much more will he have of you. Wherefore, rest secure in the fatherly bosom of His

grieve their first host, and do him a dishonour by migrating to one worthier. Thirdly, lest any one should call them gluttonous, seekers after the luxurious boards of the rich. It must be understood that this precept applies only when they did not remain very long in the same place, so as to become burdensome to their host; for in such a case charity and prudence would recommend a change of hostel.

Verse 12- *When ye enter into a house, &c.* This was the ancient method of salutation among the Hebrews, by which they prayed for the peace and prosperity of the master of the house and his family. The Hebrews understood it of temporal blessings, but Christ of spiritual. For Christ came to the world to make peace between God, man, and angels. Wherefore when He was born the angels sang, “Peace on earth, to men of goodwill” (Vulg.).

This is the seventh precept—that they should pray for peace for their host, and by their prayer discover if he were worthy and suitable. The Apostles, therefore, pray for peace for their host, first with God, secondly with his family and neighbours and all other persons. S. Chrysogonus, says that this salutation of the Apostles was not a mere naked and verbal one, but real and efficacious, and had the power of conferring upon their host (if he were worthy) actual peace—that is to say, grace, faith, and salvation.

Verse 13- *And if the house be worthy, &c.* That is, if—as He had said a little before—the *host* be worthy, that is, a lover of peace and salvation. *But if it be not worthy, &c.* If the host refuse and reject your salutation of peace, *your peace shall return unto you*—Gr. *ἐπιστραφήτω*, *let it return*, in the sense of *shall return*. For the Heb. often uses the imperative instead of the future. Note the personification. Peace is here introduced as a person rejected by a host, and going elsewhere, and carrying the Apostles with him. If the host rejects your salutation of peace, your salutation shall not therefore be unfruitful, for there shall come to yourselves what you prayed for him, that is, peace and all prosperity. Thus shall your peace, repulsed by this unworthy host, come back to you, and lead you to some worthy host who will eagerly receive you and believe your preaching. There is a similar mode of expression in Ps. xxxv. 12, 13, to which Christ here makes an allusion. “They rewarded me evil for good,” &c.; “And my prayer shall return into mine own bosom.” So Eusebius, SS. Athanasius, and Hesychius on this Psalm expound it. The latter says, “Into the bosom of Christ, *i.e.*, the Church of the Gentiles, the prayer of Christ (turned away by the Jews) falleth.” This is what S. Paul said to the Jews: “It behoved that the Word of God should be spoken first unto you, but since ye reject it, and count yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”

Verse 14- *And whosoever shall not receive you, &c. . . . the dust of your feet.* Luke and Mark add, *for a testimony against them*. Abul. Says that the Apostles were to do this twice, once in the city and once outside the city.

They were to do it by striking their sandals against the ground, or by knocking, or rubbing them upon a stone, to brush off the dust.

You will ask, Why was this? 1. S. Jerome says, dust is shaken off as a testimony of labour, to show that they had entered the city, and the Apostolic preaching had reached it. And as Theophylact: "They testify that for their sakes they had made so long a journey, and it had profited them nothing."

2. *Shake off the dust*, as impious, on account of the impious inhabitants, that ye may signify that they are, as it were, *anathema*, and that ye will have nothing, not even their dust in common with them, as being doomed to eternal condemnation. So SS. Jerome, Theophylact, Ambrose, &c.

3. That this dust shaken off may be a witness in the day of judgment against their unbelief and wickedness. And this is why Luke adds, *for a testimony to them*, i.e., *against them*.

By this, which is the 8th precept of Christ, He tacitly bids His Apostles be of good courage, and not to be distressed, when they saw the Jews rejecting the Gospel, but as God's avengers to rise up boldly against them.

Verse 15- *Verily I say unto you, &c.* They shall be more heavily punished and condemned who reject the Apostles than the Sodomites were, who perished in the fearful fire from heaven, by which the whole Pentapolis was consumed, for an awful example to all ages.

You will ask, how can this be true, since the sin of Sodom was a very great crime contrary to nature, and crying to heaven? The sin of Sodom is reckoned amongst the worst sins, but in the catalogue of lusts, or sins against the natural law of chastity only, for, in other respects, it is certain that there are worse sins, such as heresy, infidelity, blasphemy, sacrilege, despair, hatred of God. Those therefore who rejected the Apostles, and in so doing rejected the grace and salvation of Christ, sinned far worse than the Sodomites, and that, not by a single, but by a manifold sin, viz., 1. by the sin of infidelity, 2. of disobedience, 3. of ingratitude, 4. of inhospitality, 5. of rebellion and contumacy against God, contrary to the law of nature, and of God, and against His grace so benevolently and liberally offered to them, and confirmed by so many miracles and benefits.

This denunciation has also in a measure an application to those who despise God's word, or vocation, or holy inspirations, against whom God thunders, in Prov. i. 24. "Because I called, and ye refused, I also will mock at your calamity."

S. Jerome proves from this passage that the punishments of the damned are not all equal, nor, by consequence, their faults.

Moreover Christ appositely compares those who rejected the Apostles to the Sodomites. 1. Because they were guilty of inhumanity and barbarity towards guests.

Verse 27- *What I say unto you, &c.* Since the roofs of the houses in Judea are flat, it was possible to preach from them as from a lofty pulpit. S. Jerome gives a threefold meaning. 1. What ye have heard in a mystery, that preach ye plainly. 2. What ye have learned in secret, that speak ye in public. 3. What I have taught you in this one corner of Judea, boldly evangelize to the whole world.

Mystically, S. Austin, "What I say in darkness, i.e., in fear, preach ye in the light, i.e., in the confidence of the truth."

Verse 28- *And fear not them which kill, &c.* Do not, from fear of death with which the persecutors threaten you, deny My faith, or cease from the preaching which I have commanded you, for if ye do this, ye will incur the far worse death of the soul, even its eternal death in hell. Truly does S. Chrys. say (*Hom. 5 ad pop.*) "He who is always afraid of hell will never fall into its flames."

This saying of Christ has reference to a most needful precept. He bids us that we must not, through fear of tyrants, break the faith which we have pledged to God, nor violate His law. It may be further extended to things which are counselled, not commanded; but then it is a matter of counsel, not of precept. Thus Pope S. Clement extended it to the counsel of virginity. When SS. Nercus and Achillcus, the servants of S. Flavia Domitilla, who had been betrothed to Aurelian the son of the Roman consul, counselled her to embrace virginity, and asked S. Clement to give her the veil, he answered bravely, "For you, for her, and for me, I perceive there is prepared the palm of martyrdom. But forasmuch as Christ has laid it down that we must not fear them which kill the body, let us disregard mortals, that we may plainly and wholly obey the Author of everlasting life." He therefore consecrated Domitilla, a virgin; which when Aurelian her betrothed heard, he beheaded SS. Nercus and Achilleus, and banished S. Domitilla to Pontus, where she completed her martyrdom by fire. At last S. Clement, being drowned in the sea, obtained the same palm. Thus were there four glorious victims of virginity. And the heroism of their action consisted in this—that it would have been lawful for them to persuade Domitilla to avoid the persecution by marrying Aurelian. But the love of chastity and of Christ gained the victory.

Victorinus of Utica (*lib. 3. Wandal. Persecut.*) relates that a matron named Dionysia, when she was exposed naked upon a lofty place and beaten with rods by the Arians, bravely answered, "Ye servants of the devil, that which ye think ye do to my shame is indeed my praise." And when she beheld her only son, a little child turn pale at the torments, she animated him by reminding him of hell, lest the King should say to his servants, "Cast him into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." "That is the life," she said, "to be desired which is always in possession." And strengthening her child with these words, she soon made him a martyr.

by the world, writes, "Our Blesilla will laugh, and will count it no disgrace to hear the revilings of croaking frogs, when her Master was called Beelzebub."

You will ask who and what was Beelzebub? He was the god and idol of the Ekronites. See 2 Kin. i. 2, 3, 6. He is so called from *Baal zebub*, i.e., *the lord of the fly*, or, *possessing flies*, because he was worshipped and invoked against the pest of flies. Thus among the Greeks, Jupiter had the title of *ἀπόμυος*, or *verter of flies*, because they worshipped him that he might drive away flies. Thus the inhabitants of Cyrene when swarms of flies brought a pestilence, invoked the god Achor to drive them away, as Pliny tells us (*lib. 8, c. 28*). This idol Beelzebub seems also to have had the head of a fly. For the *Sept.* translates Beelzebub, the *Lord Fly*. Similarly the Egyptians represented the god Apis with the head and figure of an ox, Anubis of a dog, Hammon of a ram, and so on. Hence the Jews called Lucifer the prince of the devils, partly in derision partly from abomination, the Fly God, or the god of flies. I say more upon Beelzebub on 2 Kin. i. ver. 2.

The Gr. codices in this place, as well as in Mar. iii. 22, and Lu. xi. 15, 18, 19, also Theophyl. and others, always read Beelzebub, which some interpret to mean, *Jupiter stercorarius*, or the *dungy Jove*: for though *zebal* in Hebrew means *a habitation*, *zebel* in Chald., Syriac, and Arabic, signifies *dung*, because the devil is, by reason of sin, most unclean, and so stirs men up to commit all uncleanness, especially the sins of drunkenness and impurity. This is perhaps the origin of the name *zebulus*, or *zabulus* which S. Hilary and others of the ancients give to the devil, unless you prefer to derive it from the Æolic *za* for *διὰ*, that is, *zabulus* instead of *diabolus*.

Verse 26- *Fear them not therefore*, &c. The Gr. is a beautiful paranomasia, or pun. *There is nothing hid which shall not be unhid, nothing covered which shall not be uncovered.*

The meaning is, "Although the Jews slander you as being not of God, but the Apostles and ambassadors of Beelzebub, yet fear ye not their derision or contempt, for God will in the end make plain your innocence and true religion, not only in the day of judgment, but even in this life." So S. Chrysos.

It might also be explained thus—"Do not fear or shrink, O My Apostles from preaching My Gospel, for although but few may believe in the beginning, that it may appear hidden and concealed, yet it shall creep on by degrees, and its truth shall at length be known, and shall shine forth through the world."

Hear S. Ambr. (*lib. de Jacob. et vit. beat. c. 8*), "It is the part of a perfect man not to succumb to those things which seem to most, terrible and dreadful, but like a brave soldier to sustain the onset of the severest troubles. Thus S. Vincent acted when his torments, he answered back the tyrant, "Thou shalt see that I have more power when I am tormented than thou hast when thou art tormenting." So too the Apostles shone the more brightly in the darkness of persecution. Of their virtue S. Bernard speaks (*Serm. xxvii. in Cant.*), "As stars shine in the night, but are unseen by day, so does true virtue, which in prosperity often appears not, become conspicuous in adversity."

2. Because as the Sodomites were admonished by Lot and despised him, so were these admonished by Apostles whom Christ sent forth for their salvation. 3. As the Sodomites were punished by fire and brimstone from heaven, so will these be punished by fire and brimstone in hell, only far more severely; because if the Sodomites had heard the preaching of Christ and His Apostles, and had seen their miracles, they would have believed and repented.

Verse 16- *Behold I send you forth as sheep*, &c. S. Jerome, by *wolves*, understands the Scribes and Pharisees: others, any enemies, or persecutors. No animal is so defenceless as a sheep. In this way Christ sends his Apostles without arms, that he may shew forth His own power in them. He does not send them as lions, but as sheep, that by means of His miraculous power they may vanquish the wolves. Listen to S. Chrys., "Let them blush, who, like wolves, persecute their adversaries, when they behold innumerable wolves overcome by a very few sheep. And assuredly, so long as we are sheep, we shall easily overcome our enemies. But when we are changed into the nature of wolves, then we are overcome, for in such a case we have no more help from our shepherd, who feeds sheep not wolves." S. Chrysogonus observes that Christ foretells coming evils and persecutions to His Apostles for four reasons. 1. That they may learn His foreknowledge. 2. That they may not suppose such things happen through lack of power in their master. 3. That they may not be suddenly overcome. 4. That they may not be troubled at the time of the Cross. Christ thus, as it were, animates His Apostles, "Come, O ye my Apostles, I am sending you to the Jews and to Infidels, who will vex you and persecute you, but think of this, that it is I who send you, I, I say, who sent Elijah and Elisha, Isaiah and the rest of the prophets to Ahab, Jezebel and Manasseh, and other wicked kings. I animated, strengthened, and protected them, and when need was, I delivered them. And when at length I permitted them to be slain by them, it was that by their blood they might set a seal to My faith and religion, and win the laurel crown of martyrdom. In the same manner I now send you: and through you I am about to do the same, yea still greater things. I will be always with you, and stand by you, that in life ye may by the innocence of sheep, and in death by the meekness of sheep, conquer all men and all things."

Therefore by these words, *Behold I send you*, are signified the Divine authority, power, assistance, and protection of Christ whereby He defends His Apostles, as it were innocent sheep, against the wolves their enemies, that they may convert them by preaching, or else nobly vanquish them by dying. He therefore that will be Christ's true servant, disciple, and Apostle, let him look upon himself as sent forth like a sheep in the midst of wolves. So let him be lavish of his life, as though he were doomed, and prepared to endure labours and crosses, yea death itself, for Christ's sake. Albanus, the Captain General of the army of Charles V., had 400 stout and resolute youths, who were prodigal of life, and devoted to death, called the forlorn

hope. In a battle, he despatched these against the strongest part of the enemy's ranks, that by their audacity and determination to die, they might throw those ranks into confusion, and so prepare the way for victory. Thus devoted and prodigal of his life let the Apostolic preacher of Christ deem himself, that he may subdue unbelievers to Christ the conqueror. Such a one blessed Xavier deemed himself, when he was going to the Indies, and said to his weeping friends: "Do merchants at such expense and such peril, prodigal of life, sail to India from zeal for earthly merchandise; and shall not I go thither for the sake of God and souls?"

Be ye therefore wise, &c. Wise, i.e., prudent. 1. "That by prudence," says S. Jerome, "ye may avoid snares, and by harmlessness or simplicity ye may do no evil. And the craft of a serpent is given as an example, because with its whole body it hides its head, to protect that wherein is its life. So too let us, by the exposure of our whole body, guard Him who is our Head—Christ; that is, let us strive to keep the faith whole and undefiled." 2. Rabanus Maurus says, that the serpent is wont craftily to choose narrow chinks, so as by passing through them, to put off his old skin. Hear Isidore of Pelusium (lib. i. epist. 26): "The serpent by crafty artifice puts off his old skin, by compressing himself into some narrow chink. So Christ wishes us, by means of the narrow way and affliction, to put off the old man and to put on instead the new man, which is renewed after His image." 3. Remigius says, Beautifully doth the Lord admonish preachers to have the prudence of serpents, because the first man was deceived by a serpent. It was as though He had said, Because the enemy was crafty to deceive, do ye be prudent to deliver. He commanded the Tree, do ye praise the virtue of the Cross. Hilary adds, He falsely promised immortality, saying, *Ye shall be as gods*; do ye promise true immortality, that they who believe shall be *as angels*.

4. The serpent has most clear sight. Whence the adage—*the eye of a serpent*. So let an Apostle behold all things with the piercing sight of his mind, that he may avoid what is evil and forward what is good.

And harmless (Vulg. simplices) as doves. Because, as Remigius says, "Simplicity without prudence is easily deceived, and wisdom is dangerous unless it be tempered with simplicity." And as S. Gregory says (lib. iv. epist. 31 ad Mauritium), "As the astuteness of the serpent sharpens the simplicity of the dove, so does the simplicity of the dove temper the astuteness of the serpent."

For *harmless* the Gr. is *ἀκέραιοι*, which (if it be derived from *ἄ*, *privative*, and *κέρας*, *a horn*) means *devoid of malice or harm, innocent, innocuous*. So S. Basil: or if from *ἄ*, *privative*, and *κεράννυμι*, *to mingle*, it is the same *asunmixed, i.e., pure, sincere*—those who, without prevarication, express with their mouths what they think in their hearts. Christ therefore bids them "by prudence avoid snares, by simplicity to do no evil," says S. Jerome.

S. Chrysostom, says, anger is not extinguished by anger, but by meekness. It is not enough to bear evils, but we must not even be troubled, which is dove like.

Theophylact, and Euthymius, remark that doves, although they be deprived of their

Jews shall disbelieve the Gospel until the end of the world, but then, a little before the judgment, they will be converted by Enoch and Elias. So S. Hilary.

Thus far are the precepts which Christ gave to His Apostles. There now follow promises and inducements by which He animates them generously to rise superior to persecutions. The first inducement is Christ himself (ver. 24), who suffered more from the Jews than they would. The second is in ver. 26, that God, after the persecutions would make manifest the truth of the Gospel to the glory of Christ and the Apostles. Thirdly, in ver. 28, that God who is the Lord of the soul is rather to be feared than the persecutor of the body. Fourth, in ver. 29. Because God has a special care for them. Fifth, ver. 32. Because God will honour them in the presence of the angels and glorify them eternally.

Verse 24- *The disciple, &c.* Christ here animates His disciples to bear persecutions, says S. Chrys. by His own example. The disciple and the servant, such as ye are to Me, O ye Apostles, ought not to seek for greater honour and applause of men than his Master has.

Verse 25- *It is enough for the disciple, &c.* That is to say, if the Jews have derided and caluminated Me, and called Me Beelzebub, *i.e.*, a friend and associate of Beelzebub-Me, who am Christ your Master and Lord, yea the Head of your family—if, I say, they have dared to do such things against Me, who have proved Myself by so many miracles to be Messiah and the Son of God, how much more will they dare to do like things to you, My disciples and servants! And if I quietly and bravely bear such things from them, how much rather ought ye to bear these things, yea even rejoice in them because ye bear them for My sake, and in bearing them are made like unto me, and are, as it were, adorned with My raiment and My ornaments!

Hear what S. Hilary says upon this passage, "Let no kind of injuries, or reproaches in any wise affright us; but let us rather embrace them as our glory, if only we may be made conformable to our Lord and His sufferings." And as Tertullian says (*lib. de bono Martyrii, c. 9.*) "Since the Lord and Master Himself has suffered persecution, betrayal and death, how much more ought His disciples and servants to fulfill the same things, lest they should seem to be superior to Him in being exempt from evil; since this ought to suffice them for glory that they are made conformable to the sufferings of their Lord and Master." Whence S. Ambrose says (*lib. 2, de Abraham: c. 7.*) "The soul going forth to war bears not before her the likenesses of eagles or dragons; but in the cross of Christ and in the name of Jesus she goes out to battle, strong with this sign, faithful to this standard."

S. Jerome (*Epist. 39, ad. Marcel.*) speaking of Blesilla, the daughter of S. Paula, who after the death of her husband became a nun, and was derided

Verse 23- *But when they shall persecute you, &c.*—Flee, “not,” says Bede, from fearing suffering, but by yielding, so that the occasion of tribulation may become the seed of the Gospel, “lest by the slaying of the preachers the preaching of the faith should be cut off, but by their fleeing it may be scattered in other places. This flight was indeed victory. For they fled not through fear, but from love to Christ, that they might propagate His faith. So the Tartars, as they flee, cast their darts at their pursuing enemies, and so transfix and slay them.

You will ask whether this be a precept, or only a permission. I reply, it is partly a precept, as when the necessity of the Church, or the faith, or peril of one’s own fall, requires flight. For “he does not deny Christ by flying, who flies lest he should deny,” says S. Chrysos. So S. Nazian. (Orat. 1 in Julian) and Athanasius (de fugâ suâ). For had he not fled from the rage of the Arians, they would have triumphed over the Homoousian faith, which seemed to stand or fall with Athanasius. It is partly of counsel, as when greater benefit is expected for oneself or others from flight. It is partly a permission, as when any one has an excessive dread of torments; and he is not bound by any necessity or obligation (as being a bishop or pastor, for example) to remain in a particular place. For otherwise it is unlawful to flee if peril, or scandal, be likely to accrue to the Faith, the Sacraments, or the Sheep, *i.e.*, the faithful. This is plain from John x. 11, 12.

Hence the example of Christ, of His Apostles, of S. Athanasius and others is a refutation of Tertullian who in his book, *de Fugâ*, contends that flight is unlawful. S. Jer. (in *Catal. Scriptor Ecclesiast. in Tertul.*) shews that this book was one of those which he wrote against the Church after he became a heretic and a Montanist.

Verily I say unto you, ye shall now have gone over, &c. The Gr. is οὐ μὴ τελέσητε, *ye shall not have finished*, that is, *traversing* and converting *the cities of Israel*. 1. S. Chrysos, explains it of the first mission of the Apostles into Judea; as much as to say, flee from the city where they persecute into another; for ye shall not have gone over all the cities of Palestine until I shall return to you, and recall you to me. But in this first mission the Apostles were kindly received by the Jews, so that there was no need for them to flee. They came back to Christ rejoicing, as we see by Luke x. 17.

2. Bede expounds thus, “Ye shall not have converted the Jews before my resurrection. After that I will return to you and send you to the Gentiles dispersed throughout the world, where you shall have a perpetual field for your labours.”

3. Others say, “Ye shall not have gone over Judea, preaching and fleeing away until I return to it in vengeance by means of Vespasian and Titus, that I may cut off the Jews who have persecuted you.”

4. And correctly, “Ye shall not by journeying and preaching, perfect in the faith of the Gospel and the religion of Christ, the cities, that is the people of Israel, to whom I am now sending you before the second advent of the Son of Man.” For as S. Paul teaches in Romans xi., it behoveth that the fullness of the Gentiles, *i.e.*, all the Gentiles must come first into the Church, and *then* all Israel shall be saved. Christ intimates that the

young ones, yet return to the same nests and masters. As though Christ said, “So also, O ye Apostles, do not ye remember the injuries done unto you, but meekly and lovingly return ye to those who have vexed and injured you, that ye may help and convert them. This is the ninth precept of Christ. The tenth follows.

Verse 17 - *But beware of men, &c. Councils*, Gr. συνέδρια, *i.e.*, sessions of magistrates and judges; lest by them ye be condemned as blasphemers of God, or rather of the gods. The Syriac has, *They shall deliver you into the house of judgments*, that is, *into the prætoria*. *Beware of men*—1, false and treacherous men, who shall bring you to councils and before judges. Such are those, who for this cause are to be guarded against by priests at this day in England, Scotland, and Japan; 2, *of men, viz.*, insidious men, who lay snares for you by means of perplexing and political questions, that they may catch some word out of your mouth against the laws or sovereigns, that they may accuse you to them; 3, *of men, i.e.*, persecutors, who seek to kill you. *Beware, i.e.*, bear yourselves cautiously, as far as may be, remembering your duty, so that ye may avoid their plots and treacheries; but above all, that ye fall not by their persecutions and threats so as to deny Christ.

Moraliter, let every one learn to beware of himself, for *man is a wolf to man*. And so no one need say, I have been born in an inauspicious time, I cannot be a martyr. There is no Nero now, no Decius now. Any one can be a martyr if he manfully resist lusts, fears, temptations, for the love of God. Thy cupidity is a Decius to thee, thy fear a Nero, thy temptation is a Julian. Thy companion persecutes thee—laughs at thee—calumniates thee. Fever, cold, asthma torments thee. If thou bear these patiently for the love of God, thou art a martyr of patience, like Job was. Gluttony goads thee to swill in wine and delicacies. Resist, and thou art a martyr of abstinence, like Daniel. Ambition attracts thee to raise thyself above others, to aim at high dignities. Pluck it from thy mind, and thou art a martyr of humility and modesty, like S. Francis. Does thy superior bid thee do hard things, which are repugnant to thy feelings? obey, conquering thyself, and thou art a martyr of obedience, like Abraham, when he offered up Isaac. Does lust titillate thee? Mortify it by fasting, crucify it by hair shirts, and thou wilt be a martyr of chastity, as Joseph was. Study, teach, preach, labour, go to the Indians, that thou mayest save perishing souls, and thou art a martyr of charity, like blessed Xavier.

Verse 18- *And in the synagogues*, where the law was read, and breakers of the law were scourged, *ye shall be beaten*: Thus Peter and the Apostles were beaten (Acts v. 40). And S. Paul says (2 Cor. ii. 24), “Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.”

And before governors, i.e., of provinces. So Paul was led as a captive before Felix and Festus, governors of Judea; James the Less before Ananias, the

High Priest, by whom he was ordered to be slain; Peter and James the Great before Agrippa, who struck off James' head. Peter and Paul were brought to Nero, under whom they at length underwent a glorious martyrdom, Thus, too, S. Andrew was led to Ægeus, the pro-consul of Achaia, by whom he was crucified; S. John to the Emperor Domitian, by whom he was placed in a cask of boiling oil, from which he gloriously came forth. From such things it will be seen that what Christ now says does not refer to this first sending the Apostles into Judea, for we do not read of any such things happening then, but of things which were to happen in their future life.

For my sake. He adds, says S. Chrysostom, an alleviation which was no small consolation, that they should suffer for Christ's sake. Wherefore when the Apostles were beaten, "they went from the Council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name."

For a testimony of my true faith which ye preach: for of this your martyrdom shall be an illustrious testimony. Hence, many who saw the constancy of the Apostles and Martyrs under their torments were converted to Christ. So S. Hilary.

Verse 19- *But when they shall deliver you, &c.* This is the eleventh precept of Christ, by which he forbids the Apostles being anxious about their answers to the questions of the governors, because He promises that He will Himself suggest to them what they shall be. The Gr. is *μη μεριμνήσητε, do not be anxious and solicitous.* He does not forbid their prudently premeditating an answer, but forbids an anxious and troubled care about it. By the martyr in his questionings and torments God must be assiduously invoked that He may inspire him with wisdom to answer, and courage to endure. This is what Luke says Christ promised, *I will give you a mouth and wisdom which none of your adversaries shall be able to gainsay or resist.* Thus it is said of S. Stephen, "They were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit with which he spake." There is a famous example of the literal fulfilment of this promise in the life of Saint Lucy of Syracuse who, when she was ordered by the governor Paschasius to sacrifice to the gods, boldly refused. The prefect said in a threatening tone, "Your words will cease when you come to be scourged." The Virgin answered, "Words can never be wanting to God's servants when the Lord Christ has said, 'When ye stand before kings and governors take no thought how or what ye shall answer, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall say, for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost which speaketh in you.'" Then Paschasius asked her, "Is the Holy Spirit in thee?" She replied, "Those who live chastely and holily are the temple of the Holy Spirit." Then he said, "I will command thee to be taken to the house of shame, and then the Holy Spirit will leave thee." The Virgin answered, "If you order me to suffer violence against my will, my chastity shall receive a double crown." Then Paschasius was inflamed with rage, and commanded her to be led to the house of shame; but by the power of God it came to pass that by no force could the Virgin be removed from the place where she stood. Observe the wonderful prudence of this Virgin, who to every question answered wisely, so that the governor was put to silence. Of a truth the Holy Ghost spake in her.

Tropologically. S. Austin (lib. iv. De Doctrinâ Christiani, c. 15) teaches that a preacher

ought to pray and study before his sermon: but for the actual time when he is speaking he ought to think that the Lord's words are applicable to a good mind—*Take no thought how or what ye shall speak, &c.*

Verse 21- *Brother shall deliver the brother to death, &c.* Because they believe in Me and preach Me. Christ fortifies beforehand the Apostles and believers by predicting the persecutions which they were about to suffer from their unbelieving relations, who (forgetful of natural ties and affections) would persecute them even unto death. As Bede says, "He foretold the future trouble, in order that, being known beforehand, they might more easily bear it." "For the darts which are seen coming are less likely to strike," says S. Hilary. As examples of the fulfilment of these words, S. Barbara was killed by her own father for the faith of Christ. So, too, was S. Christina. S. Lucia was accused by her own son Euprepus of being a Christian, and was crowned by the judge with the martyr's laurel on the 16th of September, A.D. 303. S. Wenceslas, prince of Bohemia, was treacherously killed by his brother Boleslas and his mother Drahomira, who were unbelievers. The Emperor Maximian caused his sister Artemias, a Christian, and Diocletian, his wife Serena, Pope S. Caius, and his brother S. Gabinus, with his holy daughter Susanna, his cousins, to suffer martyrdom because they were Christians.

Verse 22- *And ye shall be hated of all men, &c.* All—that is, many, almost all, as was wont to be in councils, judgment-halls, and theatres where the martyrs were. For the faith and preaching of Christ crucified was at the first new and paradoxical to the whole world. Wherefore both Jews (who were accustomed to Moses) and Gentiles (who were attached to their gods) rose up against the Apostles, who preached this doctrine, and against the little flock of believers who were converted to it.

But he that shall endure, i.e., in patience. For the Gr. is *ὁ ὑπυμείνας, he who shall sustain* these persecutions and adversities *even unto the end* at once of his persecutions and his life, *he wholly and solely shall be saved.* He shall be endowed with health, happiness, and eternal glory as the reward and crown of his patience. It is not enough to have endured and overcome once, twice, or thrice: but to win the crown we must endure and conquer to the end, according to those words in the Apoc.: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." See what I have there said. Hear S. Bernard (Epis. 129): "Perseverance merits glory for men, a crown for virtues. It is the vigour of strength, the consummation of virtues; it is a nurse of merit, a winner of reward, a sister of patience, a bulwark of sanctity. Take away perseverance, and there is neither reward for obedience, nor grace for well-doing, nor praise for fortitude."