

1-7 January

I, Ælfric, monk and mass-priest, although more weakly than is fitting for such orders, was sent in King Æthelred's day from bishop Ælfheah to a monastery which is called Cernel¹, at the prayer of Æthelmær the thane, whose birth and goodness are known everywhere. Then it occurred to my mind, trusting in God, to undertake this task, because men have need of good instruction, especially at this time, which is the ending of this world, and there will be many calamities among mankind before the end comes, according to what our Lord says, "Then shall be such tribulations as have never been from the beginning of the world. Many false Christs shall come in my name saying, 'I am Christ,' and shall work many signs and wonders to deceive mankind... And unless Almighty God shorten those days, all mankind will perish; but for his elect he will shorten those days." Everyone may the more easily withstand the future temptation, through God's support, if he is strengthened through book learning, for they shall be preserved who continue in faith to the end. Many tribulations and hardships shall come on this world before its end, and those are the proclaimers of everlasting perdition to evil men, who afterwards for their crimes suffer eternally in the swart hell. Then Antichrist shall come, work innumerable miracles, and say that he himself is God, and will compel mankind to his heresy: but his time will not be long, for God's anger will destroy him, and this world will afterwards be ended.

He compels men through wickedness to swerve from the faith of their Creator to his lies, who is the author of all lies and wickedness. Almighty God permits the impious Antichrist to work signs, miracles, and persecution; in that time there will be so much wickedness and perversity among mankind that they will be well worthy of devilish persecution - to the eternal perdition of those who incline to Antichrist, and to the eternal joy of those who by faith resist him.

God also permits that his chosen servants be cleansed from all sins through great persecutions, as gold is tried in fire.

It will now be wiser that everyone know this, and know his belief, lest anyone have to await great misery. Our Lord commanded his disciples that they should instruct and teach all people the things which he himself had taught to them; but there are too few who will teach well by instruction and example. From such commands it appeared to me that I should not be guiltless before God if I would not declare to other men, by tongue or by writings, the evangelical truth which he himself spoke.

- *Preface to the Sermons*

8-14 January

¹ now Cerne Abbas, Dorset

One thing I wish to place at the beginning of this book as an admonition, namely, as to guarding against drunkenness, as the Lord in Leviticus spoke to Aaron in these words:

Do not drink wine or strong drink, you nor your sons with you, when you go into the tent of meeting, lest you die; it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations. You are to discern between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean.

In the New Testament also the Lord admonished his disciples saying,

Take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare.

So great a vice is drunkenness that Paul an Apostle and teacher of the Gentiles bears witness that drunkards cannot possess the kingdom of God [1 Corinthians 6.9-10]. Oh how blessed are they who live for God, and not for this world, for virtue and not for vice! We must by no means yield to abominable drinkings and intoxications, after being warned by the terrible threatenings of our Lord God.

- prefixed to Vol. II of the Sermons

15-21 January

The Almighty Creator manifested himself by the great work which he wrought at the beginning, and wanted the creatures to see his greatness and dwell with him in everlasting glory, always in subjection obedient to him. For it is very disorderly if the things created should be disobedient to their Creator.

The world did not exist at first, but God himself made it, who was ever without beginning in his great glory and majesty, and the decree was ever in his resolved thought that he would make these wonderful creatures and by his great love also establish them in the life which they were to enjoy.

He with his grace enlightens all the angels of heaven and all men's hearts on earth who rightly believe on the living God, and truly forgives all men's sins who willingly bewail them; and there is no forgiveness except through his grace.

- On the Old and New Testament

22-28 January

After God created the world which he meant to create, one angel who was most eminent beheld how beautiful he was and how shining in glory, and he perceived his strength and how mighty he was. He was called Lucifer, that is "light-bearing", for the exceeding brightness of his glorious feature.

Then he thought it too base a thing for him to obey any Lord, being himself so eminent, and scorned to worship his Creator and thank him duly for what he had received. But he would not have his Maker to be Lord over him nor continue in the truth of the true Son of God who made him so fair, but he thought by treason to get the kingdom and make himself God: such was his pride. And he gathered forces earnestly to conspire with him in his wicked purpose.

Then he fell down, turned into devil with all his accomplices, from the court of God to the pains of hell as they deserved.

- *On the Old and New Testament*

29 January - 4 February

We will say to you a parable. No man may make himself a king, for the people have the option to choose as king the man who is agreeable to them²: but after he has been hallowed as king, he has power over the people, and they may not shake his yoke from their necks.

In like manner every man has his own choice before he sins, whether he will follow the devil's will or withstand it. Then, if he binds himself with the works of the devil, he cannot unbind himself by his own power, unless the Almighty God unbind him with the strong hand of his mercy.

- *Palm Sunday*

5-11 February

Adam, the first man, sinned against God and broke his Creator's commandment and obeyed the devil's teaching, and was delivered to the devil, he and all mankind, into hell-torment. Then God ever meditated from the beginning of the world how he might help mankind and resave them from the power of the devil. Then he would not send for our redemption either angel or archangel or prophets or apostles, but the Father sent his only-begotten Son to suffering and to death for the redemption of mankind. Then God manifested how great love he had and has for us, when he sent his own Child to be slain for us. Who dared desire that the Almighty King should urge to death his only-begotten Prince, and so save the servant?

The Son was not forced to become man, and afterwards suffer for us, but he was ever obedient to his Father unto death and came to us because he would bring us to his kingdom, to which we had been created.

- *Sermon on the Nativity, Vol. II*

12-18 February

Jesus taught us who love him, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” We may perceive that our Saviour loves the deed more than smooth words. Words pass away, but works remain.

Concerning the same matter the apostle Paul says, “They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him.”

The man who vows deceitfully, and gives his pledge on a matter, and turns aside from it again, how can he then have the Saviour’s help, who sees and considers his heart, and sees that he will again break his word against him? But a man must treat in earnest with his Lord, who desires us to speak with him with works; for he who speaks well and does not carry out his word condemns himself.

Now you may understand that works speak more than naked words, which have no profit. Yet there is good work in good words when a man teaches and builds up another in faith by true doctrine, and when a man utters wisdom for the needs and direction of many, to the praise of God who reigns for ever. Amen

- *On the Old and New Testament*

19-25 February

Moses the great, when he was 120 years old, departed this life and was buried by God himself, who set Joshua in his place as commander of the people. Moses had also blessed him, and God promised to be with him in mighty wonders. The book called Joshua shows how he went with the people of Israel to Abraham’s country and how he won it, and how the sun stood still while he got the victory, and how he divided the land.

Joshua is a type of Jesus, in that he brought that people into the promised land, just as our Saviour does, who leads into the kingdom of heaven such as who believe on him, if they gladden him with good works.

- *On the Old and New Testament*

26 February - 3 March

There is one origin of all things, that is God Almighty. He is beginning and end: he is beginning, because he was ever; he is end without any ending, because he is ever unended. He is King of all kings, and Lord of all lords. He holds with his might heavens and earth and all creatures, without toil, and he beholds the depths which are under this earth. He weighs all hills with one hand, and nothing may withstand his will. No creature

² In Anglo-Saxon times, the king was elected from among the men of the royal family.

may perfectly search out nor understand concerning God: greater affinity have angels to God than men, and yet they may not perfectly understand concerning God. He created those creatures that he would; through his wisdom he wrought all things, and through his will he endued them all with life.

- *Sermon on the Beginning of Creation*

4-10 March

The blind man sat at the city which is called Jericho. When Christ came to the city, the blind man received sight. That is, when Christ came to our mortality and assumed our human nature, mankind was enlightened and received sight. The man who knows nothing of the eternal light is blind. If he will not pray for the light eternal, then he [is like a blind man who] sits by the way without prayer. He who rightly believes in Christ and fervently prays for his soul's enlightening, he sits by the way praying. Whoever understands his mind's blindness, let him cry with inward heart, as the blind man cried, "Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me."

- *Shrove Sunday*

11-17 March

It happens frequently when a man is desirous to withdraw from evil and with his whole mind turn to God, that his old misdeeds which he had previously committed will then come and afflict his mind, and will still his voice, that he may not cry to God.

But what did the blind man do when the people would still him [Mark 10]? He called so much the louder, until Jesus heard his voice and healed him. So should we do also, if the devil troubles us with manifold thoughts and temptations: we should call louder and louder to Jesus, that he drive the evil temptations from our hearts, and that he enlighten our mind with his grace. But if we continue praying, then may we with our cry incline Jesus to stand, who before was passing on, and to hear our cry and enlighten our hearts with good and pure thoughts.

Evil thoughts cannot harm us, if they are not pleasing to us; but the more the devil terrifies us with evil thoughts, so much the better shall we be and dearer to God, if we despise the devil and all his temptations through God's help.

- *Shrove Sunday*

18-24 March

The body, which is visible, has life from the soul, which is invisible. If that which is invisible departs, then the visible will fall down, because it did not stand previously of itself.

The life of the body is the soul, and the life of the soul is God. If the soul depart, the mouth cannot cry, though it gape; nor the eye see, though it be open; nor will any limb do anything, if the body be soulless.

So also the soul, if God, for its sins, forsake it, it will do nothing good. No man can do anything good without God's support.

The sinful soul will not be wholly turned to nothing, though it be rendered dead to good; but it will be dead to every excellence and happiness and will be preserved to eternal death, where it will be ever continuing in torments, and yet will never perish.

- Shrove Sunday

25-31 March

Of Noah's eldest son Shem came the Hebrews, who believed on God. Abraham went by God's commandment into the land of Canaan, where his posterity dwelt afterwards. The patriarch Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, and he worshipped God with all his heart. And the God of heaven spoke often to him because of his great faith, in that he was willing to offer to God on his altar his dearest son Isaac, if God so willed [Genesis 22].

God then blessed him, and his son was unhurt. God himself also made him a promise, that through his seed should all mankind be blessed, because of his great faith and obedience towards God.

Abraham, who was ready to offer Isaac, is a type of our heavenly Father, who sent his son to die for us; and Isaac is a type of our Saviour Christ, who for us was put to death.

- On the Old and New Testament

1-7 April

Mark 10

The beginning of this passage touched our Saviour's suffering, though he did not suffer at this time; but he would, from afar and long before, make known his passion to his disciples, that they might not be too much terrified by his suffering when the time came. He cheered them by the words, "I will arise from death on the third day."

He would then strengthen and confirm their faith with miracles. And they came to the place where the blind man sat by the way, and Christ healed him before the sight of all the multitude, to the end that he might bring them to belief with that miracle.

But the miracles which Christ wrought manifested one thing by power, and betokened another thing by mystery: there was another thing hidden in those miracles, in a spiritual sense.

The one blind man betokened all mankind, who were blinded through Adam's sin and thrust from the joy of Paradise, and brought to this life which is compared to a prison. Now we are shut out from the heavenly light, and we may not in this life enjoy the light eternal, nor do we know any more about it than through Christ's teaching we read in books. This world may sometimes seem pleasant, but it is no more like the eternal world than some prison is like the light day. All mankind was blinded with lack of faith and with error; but through Christ's coming we were drawn from our errors and enlightened by faith. Now we have the light in our mind, that is Christ's faith; and we have a hope of the joy of everlasting life, though we still dwell bodily in our prison.

- *Shrove Sunday*

8-14 April

Jesus said to the blind man, "What wilt thou that I do to thee?" Do you think that he did not know what the blind man desired - he who could heal him? But he wanted the blind man to pray; for he exhorts everyone very urgently to prayers: for though he says in another place, "Your heavenly Father knoweth what ye require, before ye pray to him for anything," yet the good God desires that we should fervently pray to him; because by prayers is our heart stimulated and turned to God.

- *Shrove Sunday*

14-21 April

If one cannot obtain the means of offering a visible gift to God, let him offer an invisible one, that is, good will, which incomparably excels earthly treasures.

What is good will but goodness, so that he grieves for another man's misfortune and rejoices in another man's prosperity; loves his friend, not for the world but for good; to bear with his enemy with love; to command to no-one what he likes not himself; to help his neighbour's need according to his power, and to be willing beyond his power? What is any gift in comparison with this will, when the soul offers itself to God on the altar of its heart?

Of this the psalmist said, "God Almighty, in me are thy promises, which I will pay through praises." As if he had openly said, "Though I have not outward gifts to offer unto thee, yet will I find in myself that which I may lay on the altar of thy praise; for thou livest not by our gift, but thou art more gladdened by the offering of our hearts."

- *The Nativity of St. Andrew the Apostle*

22-28 April

The righteous God loves right judgements, but bribes perversely turn justice aside too often, contrary to the Lord's will where wrong reigns rashly. He who would be God's servant must judge rightly according to the truth, without any bribe. So shall he honour God with good conduct, and his reward shall be great at God's hand, who lives and reigns forever. Amen.

- *On the Old and New Testament*

29 April - 5 May

On spiritual joy:

That a man rejoice in God, amidst the sorrows of this hard world, so that we may not be despairing in misfortunes, nor again rejoice overmuch in prosperity. And if we lose the transitory things of this world, then we should know that our dwelling is not here but in heaven, if we hope in God. Thither we should hasten from this distress, with spiritual joy, and thus shall the sorrow be utterly overcome by our patience.

- *Lives of the Saints, Vol. I*

6-12 May

Mankind was deceived by the devil and turned from God's belief, so that they made for themselves images, some of gold, some of silver, some also of stones, some of wood, and devised names for them and worshipped them, and offered sacrifices to them. And the devils then came to their images and dwelt therein, and spoke to men as though they were gods. And the deceived human race fell on their knees to those images and said, "Ye are our gods, and we place our belief and hope in you."

Then this error sprang up through all the earth, and the true Creator, who alone is God, was despised and dishonoured.

- *Sermon on the Beginning of Creation*

13-19 May

The son of Jesse, David - that sweet psalmist of the first tribe, called Judah - was chosen by God to be king in Israel to protect them, and he reigned with a strong hand and defended that people against all nations of the Gentiles who bordered them, and always had victory. He overcame the wild bear and the fierce lioness, and when he was a boy

entered duel with the great giant called Goliath and with his sling overthrew the unbelieving giant and so put to flight the Philistines.

He represents our Saviour Christ, who is the strong champion who easily vanquishes the cruel devil and gets away from him all the faithful into his church, as David took the sheep from the wild beasts.

- *On the Old and New Testament*

20-26 May

The wise Solomon reigned forty years in full peace ever, and for his great wisdom other princes honoured him and came to him from far off countries, and he maintained the people without any war. He also built the splendid temple in Jerusalem for God, made so fair with admirable workmanship that we are not able to express.

Solomon is a type of our Saviour Christ, who brought us peace and is the Prince of peace, he who joined us to the hosts of angels and raised a church from us which is his congregation.

- *On the Old and New Testament*

27 May - 2 June

How can that man fare well, who turns his heart away from all these books and is so obstinate that he would rather always live according to his own imagination, cut off from these, so that he does not know Christ's ordinances?

The great prophet Moses says to us all, "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee." If you will not learn and be directed here, you shall learn in dreadful torments, in a place which is more loathsome, whom you despised and whose ordinances.

- *On the Old and New Testament*

3-9 June

"The king went in and beheld the guests, when he saw one man there who was not clad in a marriage garment." [Matthew 22:11]

The marriage garment betokens the true love of God and men. That love our Creator manifested to us in himself when he vouchsafed to redeem us from eternal death with his precious blood, as John the Evangelist said, "So greatly God loved this world, that he gave his only begotten Son for us." The Son of God, who through love came to men, signified in the gospel that which the marriage garment betokened - true love. Every one

of those, who with faith and baptism incline to God, comes to the marriage; but he comes not with a marriage garment, if he holds not true love. For you see that everyone is ashamed, if he is invited to a worldly marriage, to come meanly clad to that short pleasure; but a much greater shame is it for him who with a sordid garment comes to God's marriage, so that for his foul clothing he shall be cast from eternal bliss into eternal darkness.

So, as a garment adorns man bodily, so also true love adorns our soul with spiritual fairness. Though a man have full faith and give alms, and do much good, all will be vain, whatsoever he does, unless he have true love for God and for all Christian men. It is true love, that everyone love his friend well, and his foe for his good.

- 21st. *Sunday after Pentecost (Vol. I)*

10-16 June

He should be God's messenger who has love to God and to men, else he should not undertake the service. This gospel has reference to all holy teachers, who in God's church have to instruct his folk. The twelve apostles and the seventy-two disciples are the head workmen of this structure, and them we should imitate. The teacher prepares the way of God when he preaches the words of life to men, and after the preaching God himself, through the presence of his love, enlightens the hearts of men.

The teacher who undertakes preaching should not busy himself with worldly things and neglect God's culture or husbandry. It befits him that he feel anxious how he may gain to God the souls of many men by evangelical teaching, not how much he may draw to him by his power. But he who preaches so that he may here receive reward or praise, without doubt severs himself from the eternal reward.

- *On the Nativity of several Apostles (Vol. II)*

17-23 June

Jesus fled from worldly honour when he was chosen king; but he did not flee from reproach and scorn when the Jews wanted to hang him on a cross. He would not encircle his head with a golden crown, but with one of thorns, as it was done at his passion. He would not reign for a while in this life, who rules eternally in heaven.

This world is not our country, but is the place of our exile; therefore we should not set our hope on this deceitful life, but should hasten with good deserts to our country for which we were created, that is, to the kingdom of heaven.

- *Shrove Sunday*

24-30 June

“At midnight there was a cry, ‘Behold, the Bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’”
(Matthew 25.6)

Men often say, “Lo, now Doomsday comes,” because the prophecies are gone by, which were made concerning it. But war shall come upon war, tribulation upon tribulation, earthquake upon earthquake, famine upon famine, nation upon nation, and yet the bridegroom comes not. How can we then know when he will come?

As he himself said, “at midnight.” What is “at midnight” but when thou knowest not and thou expectest him not? Then will he come.

There is no creature that knows the time of this world’s ending, but God only. “Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour.” No man knows the ending of this world, not even his own ending.

Many a man would spend the greater part of his life in his lusts, and the less part in repentance, if he knew when he should end. Our ending is hidden from us, in order that we should ever dread the last day, which we can never foresee. We should therefore watch in our hearts and in faith; we should watch in hope and in true love; we should watch in good works, and (if we do some little good) do without idle boasting - that we may go into the kingdom of heaven with the pure Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with his Heavenly Father and the Holy Ghost for ever and ever. Amen.

- *On the Nativity of the Holy Virgins*

1-7 July

All creatures, heavens and angels, sun and moon, stars and earth, all beasts and birds, the sea and all fishes, and all creatures, God created and wrought in six days; and on the seventh day he ended his work, and ceased, and hallowed the seventh day, because on that day he ended his work. And he beheld then all his works that he had wrought, and they were all exceedingly good.

All things he wrought without any matter. He said, “Let there be light,” and instantly there was light. He said again, “Let there be heaven,” and instantly heaven was made, as he with his wisdom and his will had appointed it. He said again and bade the earth bring forth all living cattle, and he then created of earth all the race of cattle, and the brute race, all those which go on four feet; in like manner of water³ he created fishes and birds, and

³ Ælfric’s writing is largely based on the Vulgate, where Genesis 1:20-21 is reflected also in the English Authorised Version. The idea is not so clearly given in the Albanian version:

Latin Vulgate: Dixit etiam Deus producant aquæ reptile animæ viventis et volatile super terram sub firmamento cæli.

gave the power of swimming to the fishes, and flight to the birds; but he gave no soul to any beast, nor to any fish; but their blood is their life, and as soon as they are dead they are totally ended.

When he had made the man Adam, he did not say, "Let man be made," but he said, "Let us make man in our likeness," and he then made man with his hands, and blew into him a soul, and man is in one part eternal, that is in the soul; that will never end. The body is mortal through Adam's sin, but nevertheless God will raise the body to eternity on Doomsday.

- *Sermon on the Beginning of Creation*

8-14 July

Christ, the Redeemer of the world, came to men of the Virgin Mary as the prophets had foretold. He dwelt in this world among men, set up Christianity and he manifested by his miracles that he is the Son of God, when he raised dead men by his might, healed quickly every infirmity, turned water into a draught of wine, walked on the sea dry-foot, stilled the winds by his commanding word, cast the devils away from men afflicted even unto madness and restored their understanding.

Moreover, after he had voluntarily suffered death for our redemption, hanged on a cross, he rose also again from death on the third day and ascended into heaven to his heavenly Father with victory, and has dominion over all things, and will come again to judge all mankind, each according to his works, at the great day.

- *On the Old and New Testament*

15-21 July

God does not compel us to do good, neither does he debar us from working evil, because he has given us our own choice. This is the gift, that a man may do what he will, and this is the law, that God recompenses to every man according to his works, both in this world and that which is to come, whether good or evil.

Now if any man should wonder why God wills to give to evil men their own freedom, when he knows beforehand that they will do evil, then we say that it is not fitting for any rich king that all who serve him should be slaves and that there should not be one free man in his dominion. So likewise it is not fitting for the Almighty Lord that in all his kingdom there should not be any who serve without being strictly compelled to serve.

Authorised Version: Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth.

Albanian: Të mbushen ujërat nga një numër i madh qeniesh të gjalla dhe të fluturojnë zogjtë lart mbi tokë.

Now our freedom always needs God's assistance, because we can do no good thing without God's help. May he ever guide us in this world, and bring us through himself to the eternal life, even as he promised to all that love him. To him be praise and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

- *Lives of the Saints Vol. I*

22-28 July

Truly it is written, "Whosoever will be a friend of this world, he shall be accounted a foe of God." Christ said in some place, "The way is very narrow and steep which leads to the kingdom of heaven; and it is very wide and smooth which leads to hell-torment." The way which leads to the kingdom of heaven is narrow and steep, in order that we should gain our country with difficulty. If we desire to obtain it, we should love mercy, and chastity, and truth, and righteousness, and humility, and have true love to God and to men, and give alms according to our means, and be moderate in our food, and observe all other holy things. These things we cannot do without difficulties; but if we do them, then may we with those labours, through God's support, ascend the steep way which leads to eternal life.

The way which leads to perdition is broad and smooth, because wicked lusts bring a man to perdition. It is very soft to him, and no labour, to satiate his lust and drunkenness, and practise covetousness and pride, and rob the weak, and do whatever he feels like doing; but those evil practices and others like them lead him without labour to eternal torments, unless before his end he desist from evil and do good.

Let us take the more difficult way, that we may toil here for some time, in order to be eternally without toil.

- *Shrove Sunday*

29 July - 4 August

There was a heathen emperor named Diocletian two hundred and eighty-six years after Christ's incarnation, and he reigned twenty years - a cruel murderer. He killed all the Christians whom he could find out, and burnt churches; and this impious persecution spread unceasingly over all the earth fully ten years, until it came also even to England and there killed many who believed in Christ. One of these was Alban, the noble martyr.

A priest escaped and ran secretly to Alban's house and there lay hidden from his persecutors, and Alban received him. When the messengers came to Alban's house, Alban went out with the priest's cloak, as if he were the priest, and would not betray him. He was thereupon bound and brought to the impious judge. Then the judge

became fiendishly angry and said that he should receive the heavy punishment which he had meant for the priest, unless he quickly submitted to his shameful gods. But Alban said that he would not bow to his idolatry: "I am a Christian, and will always worship Christ. I believe in the Saviour, who is true God and made all creatures. Your sacrifices to the gods, which you offer to devils, cannot help you, but you shall receive everlasting punishments in hell."

The judge commanded men to scourge the holy martyr, but the blessed man was strengthened by God. Then the judge perceived that he could not overcome him by severe tortures, nor turn him from Christ, and commanded them to kill him by decapitation. The heathen did as the judge commanded them. He was beheaded for the Saviour's name, and departed to his Lord by victorious martyrdom and with true faith.

In that same persecution many others were also slain throughout England for Christ's faith, and departed victoriously to the true life.

- *Lives of the Saints (translation after S. H. Gem, 1912)*

5-11 August

The death of evil men is evil and miserable, because they pass from this short life to everlasting torments. And the death of righteous men is precious, for when they end this life of tribulation they will be brought to the eternal life, and then their end will be like a beginning; for they will not be dead, but will be turned from death to life.

The body, which is the garment of the soul, will await the great doom, and though it be rotted to dust God will raise it and will bring together soul and body to eternal life. And then Christ's promise will be fulfilled, who thus said, "Then shall the righteous shine as the sun in their Father's kingdom," who liveth and ruleth ever without end to eternity. Amen.

- *Palm Sunday*

12-18 August

"He who offends one of these little ones who believe in me, better were it for him that an immense millstone were tied to his neck, and he were so sunk in the deep sea." He offends another who deceives him on God's part so that his soul be lost. He who enters upon a holy office in God's church and afterwards, by instigation or by sinful life, gives evil example to others and perverts their understanding - it would be better for him that he perished alone in his worldly life, than that he in holy guise should draw others with him to perdition through his depraved morals.

- Dedication of the Church of St. Michael

19-25 August

The Jewish people showed great envy of his doctrine and meditated how they might put him to death. Now one of the twelve of Christ's companions, who was called Judas, was seduced by the instigation of the devil, and he went to the Jewish people and consulted with them how he might betray Christ to them.

Though all the people were gathered together, they could not have destroyed him if he himself had not been willing, for he came to us because he wished to suffer death for us, and so by his own death redeem from hell's torment all mankind who believe.

- Sermon on the Beginning of Creation

26 August - 1 September

"Which of you hath an hundred sheep..." Luke 15

My dearest brothers, you have heard in this evangelical lesson that the sinful approached the Saviour's voice and speech. An hundredfold number is perfect, and the Almighty had a hundred sheep when the host of angels and mankind were his possessions: but he lost one sheep, when the first-created man Adam through sin lost the food of Paradise. Then the Almighty Son of God left all the host of angels in heaven and went to earth and sought that one sheep that had escaped from him. When he found it, he bore it on his shoulders to the flock, rejoicing.

When he assumed our human nature and bore our sins, then the wandering sheep was brought back on his holy shoulders. The master of the sheep came home, having found his sheep; for Christ after his suffering, by which he redeemed mankind, arose from death and ascended to heaven rejoicing.

Greater love a general feels in battle for the soldier who, after flight, boldly overcomes his adversary, than for him who never took to flight nor yet in any conflict ever performed any deed of valour.

- The 4th. Sunday after Pentecost.

2-8 September

Gluttony makes a man eat and drink before the time, or again to take too much in food or in drink. This destroys both soul and body, because it brings upon the man much sickness, and brings him to death through immoderate drinking; it destroys also the soul, because he will often sin, when he himself does not know how he is behaving by reason of his fiendish drink. Beasts eat as soon as they have it, but the discreet man ought to

keep to his mealtime, and then also with discretion observe his regular custom; thus he may overcome gluttony.

- *Lives of the Saints, Vol. I*

9-15 September

The martyrs gave their own bodies to torments. Some were burnt in fire, some drowned in the sea, and slain with various tortures; and they gave us an example, though we should not, for any persecutions or hardships, forsake our faith and incline from Christ. Many a man is accounted a Christian in peace, who would very quickly deny Christ if he were sentenced to that to which the martyrs were sentenced: but his Christianity is not praiseworthy.

But that man's Christianity is praiseworthy, who will not for any persecution incline from Christ - neither for sword, nor for fire, nor for water, nor for hunger, nor for bonds; but ever holds his faith with the praises of God to his life's end.

- *Palm Sunday*

16-22 September

Christ is named by many names. He is called Wisdom, because the Father wrought all things through him. He is called Word, because a word is the manifestation of wisdom. The evangelist John began the evangelical memorial with the Word, thus saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." He is called Lamb, from the innocence of the lamb's nature; and was guiltless, for our redemption, offered a living sacrifice to his Father in the manner of a lamb. He is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, because through his godly strength he overcame the great devil by the victory of his passion.

- *The Nativity of John the Baptist*

23-29 September

[Concerning the Devil:

He] was formed very fair and beautiful, so that he was called "Light-bearing" (Lucifer). Then he began to wax proud by reason of the comeliness that he had, and said in his heart that he would and easily might be equal to his Creator, and sit in the north part of heaven's kingdom, and have power and sway against God Almighty. Then he confirmed this resolve with the host over which he ruled, and they all bowed to that resolve.

Now many a man will think and enquire, whence the devil came? be it therefore known to him that God created as a great angel him who is now the devil: but God did not create him as the devil: but when he was wholly corrupted and guilty towards God, through his great haughtiness and enmity, then he became changed to the devil, who before was created a great angel.

He can create no creatures, for he is not a creator, but is a loathsome fiend, and with lying he will deceive and ruin the unwary; but he may not compel any man to any crime, unless the man voluntarily incline to his teaching.

- *Sermon on the Beginning of Creation*

30 September - 6 October

And God then wrought a man of clay, and blew spirit into him, and animated him, and he became a man formed with soul and body; and God bestowed on him the name of Adam, and he was for some time standing alone. God then brought him into Paradise, and established him there, and said unto him, "Of all the things which are in Paradise thou mayest eat, and they shall all be committed to thee, save one tree which stands in the middle of Paradise: touch not the fruit of this tree; for thou shalt be mortal if thou eatest the fruit of this tree."

Why would God forbid him so little a thing, when he had committed to him other things so great? But how could Adam know what he was unless he were obedient in some thing to his Lord? as if God had said to him, "Thou knowest not that I am thy Lord, and that thou art my servant, unless thou dost that which I command, and forgoest that which I forbid thee. I say unto thee, forgo thou the fruit of one tree, and with that easy obedience thou shalt merit the joys of heaven. But if thou breakest this little commandment, thou shalt perish by death."

- *Sermon on the Beginning of Creation*

7-13 October

My brothers, behold your conduct, and see if ye yet are God's workmen. Let everyone consider what he does, and behold whether he labours in God's vineyard. He who in this present life toils for himself and not for God, is not yet come within God's vineyard. They truly toil for God who seek not their own gain through covetousness, but meditate on God's tillage, how they may suppress unrighteousness and further righteousness, and benefit other men with the diligence of true love, and they who care with watchful mind how they may gain the souls of other men to God and lead them to everlasting life.

He who lives for himself, and he who lies in his fleshly lusts, is rightly accused of idleness; for he cultivates no fruit of divine work.

- *Septuagesima Sunday*

14-20 October

“Then at last came the foolish maidens, and cried to the bridegroom, Lord, Lord, bid the gate be opened.”

The Lord said in another passage, “Knock, and it shall be opened unto you;” but we should knock now and pray for entrance to the kingdom of heaven - not then. Now is the time of mercy, and then will be the time of doom. He who will not now, at the time of mercy, correct himself by true repentance - to him shall the gate of heaven be shut at the time of doom. Alas! great bitterness of mind is in the word, “The gate was shut.” They repented that they had no oil, but their repentance was too late.

- *On the Nativity of the Holy Virgins*

21-27 October

“He who believeth and is baptised shall be saved; and he who believeth not shall be damned.” That faith is true who does not contradict by wicked practices what it believes; of which John the apostle spoke, “He who says that he knows God and holds not his commandments is a liar.” Again the apostle James says, “The faith which is without good works is dead.” Again he said, “What profiteth it thee that thou have faith, if thou hast not good works? Faith cannot save thee without works. The devils believe, but they tremble.”

The devils saw Christ in this life, in his humanity, but they fell at his feet and cried, “Thou art the Son of God, therefore thou art come that thou mightest ⁴ruin us.”

The man who will not believe in God, nor has any awe of God, is worse than a devil.

He who believes and has awe and nevertheless will not do good is like a devil.

He who rightly believes and rightly lives his life and with awe of God practises good works to the end of his life shall be saved and have everlasting life with God, and with all his saints.

- *Sermon on the Lord's Ascension*

28 October - 3 November

Judas, who betrayed Christ, was evil, though he had previously wrought miracles in the name of God. Of such men Christ said in another place, “I say unto you, many will say

⁴ ruin

to me on that great day, 'Lord, Lord, lo! have we not prophesied in thy name, and have driven devils out of mad men, and have performed great miracles in thy name?' Then I will profess to them, 'I know you not: depart from me, ye unrighteous doers.'"

My brothers, love not those miracles which can be common to the good and to the evil, but love those signs which are exclusively good men's - the signs of true love and of piety.

- *Sermon on the Lord's Ascension*

4-10 November

Neither Adam nor all mankind that have since come from him needed ever to have tasted of death, if that tree could have stood untouched and no-one had tasted of it; but Adam and his offspring would have begotten children and afterwards without death have gone to eternal life. It was not ordained him from God, nor was he compelled, to break God's commandment; for God left him free and gave him his own choice, whether he would be obedient or whether he would be disobedient.

Then he was obedient to the devil and disobedient to God, and was delivered, he and all mankind, after this life, to hell-torment, with the devil who seduced him.

But God knew, however, that he had been seduced, and meditated how he might again be merciful to him and all mankind.

- *Sermon on the Beginning of Creation*

11-17 November

God commanded Moses in Egypt that he and all the people of Israel should offer for every household a lamb of one year to God, and mark with the blood their door-posts and lintels, as on that night God's angel went and slew the firstborn child in every house of the Egyptians. The offered lamb betokened the slaying of Christ, who innocent was offered to his Father for our redemption. Now his suffering and his resurrection are our Eastertide, because he redeemed us from the thralldom of the devil.

- *For the holy Day of Pentecost*

18-24 November

Matthew 22:14

The ending of this portion from the Gospel is very awful: "many are called, but few are chosen." Behold now, the voices of us all call Christ, but the lives of us all call him not; for many deny in their practices that which they profess with their voice.

Some men have a good beginning for some while, but they end in evil.

Some have an evil beginning, and end well through true penitence.

Some begin well - and end better.

- 21st. *Sunday after Pentecost (Vol. I)*

25 November - 1 December

There are two things that we should carefully attend to:

- first, that none of us be too boldly confident in himself;
- next, that none of us despair of his neighbour, though he have fallen into sins; for the great abundance of God's mercy is unknown to us.

Let us remember our former sins, and let us contemplate the great kindness of God, how he pities our sins and moreover promises the heavenly kingdom to the truly penitent after sins. Let us therefore all cry with inward heart, as the psalmist cried, "Thou art my God and my Mercy." God's mercy goes before us, and his mercy follows us.

- *Septuagesima Sunday*

2-8 December

The merciful Lord said that there was great joy in heaven for one penitent; but he also said through his prophet, "If the righteous turn from his righteousness and impiously commit unrighteousness, I will forget all his righteousness; and if the impious repent of his impiety and do righteousness, I will not remember any of his sins."

To repentant men he is merciful, but to the procrastinating he does not promise certain life till the morrow. No sinner ought therefore to put off his own repentance till tomorrow, lest by his remissness he lose the time of God's truce.

Let every man meditate on his former deeds and also on his present conduct, and fly to the merciful Judge with weeping, while he who is righteous and merciful awaits our bettering.

He truly repents of his sins who does not repeat his former deeds; concerning which Jesus said to the bed-ridden, "Behold, now thou art healed, sin not henceforth, lest something worse befall thee."

Believing men may have great trust and hope to the human God, Christ, who is our Protector and Judge, who liveth and reigneth with the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.

- *The 4th. Sunday after Pentecost*

9-15 December

“No one is good save God only.” He who is always good will bring us who are evil to be good men, if we will eschew evil and do good. The man Adam was created good, but by his own choice and the instigation of the devil, he and all his offspring became evil. He who is sinful is evil, and there is no man in life without some sin. But our good Father will cleanse and heal us, as the prophet said, “Lord, heal me, and I shall be healed; preserve thou me, and I shall be preserved.”

Let him who desires to be good call to him who always is good, that he may make him good.

- *On the greater Litany (Vol. I)*

16-22 December

We should honour Christ's Nativity and his birthtide with spiritual joy, and adorn ourselves with good works, and busy ourselves with songs of praise to God, and shun the things which Christ forbids, which are sins and works of the devil; and love those things which God has enjoined, that is lowliness and mercy, righteousness and truth, almsdeeds and moderation, patience and chastity.

- *Sermon on the Nativity Vol. II*

23-29 December

Then at last, when the time came which God had foreseen, he sent his angel Gabriel to a maiden called Mary. Then the angel came to her and greeted her with God's words and announced to her that God's Son should be born of her, without communion of man. And she believed his words and became with child.

That child is twice born: he is born of the Father in heaven, without any mother, and again when he became man he was born of the pure virgin Mary, without any earthly father.

God the Father made all mankind and all creatures through the Son; and again, when we were ruined, he sent that same Son for our redemption.

The holy mother Mary then nourished that child with great veneration, and he grew, as other children do - without any sin.

- Sermon on the Beginning of Creation

30-31 December

Men most beloved, it has frequently been related to you concerning our Saviour's resurrection, how he, after his suffering, mightily arose from death.

The innocent lamb, which the old Israel then slaughtered, was a token according to the spiritual sense of Christ's passion, who innocent shed his holy blood for our redemption. The Israelitish people were delivered from sudden death and from Pharaoh's thralldom through the offering of the lamb, which was a betokening of Christ's passion through which we are redeemed from eternal death and the power of the cruel devil, if we rightly believe in the true Redeemer of all the world, Jesus Christ.

The typical lamb was offered at their Eastertide, and the apostle Paul said in this day's epistle that Christ is our Eastertide, who was offered for us, and on this day arose from death.

On this day God's people passed from the land of Egypt over the Red Sea, from thralldom to the promised country. Our Lord also passed at this time, as the evangelist John said, from this world to his Heavenly Father. We should follow our Head, and pass from the devil to Christ, from this unsteady world to his steadfast kingdom; but we should first, in our present life, pass from sins to holy virtues, from vices to good morals, if we desire after this transient life to pass to the life everlasting and, after our resurrection, to Jesus Christ. May he lead us to his Living Father, who gave him to death for our sins. Be to him glory and praise for that beneficence to all eternity. Amen.

- A Sermon on the Sacrifice of Easter Day