

It is, of course, a fact that events commemorated in our liturgy have a meaning beyond the purely historical interpretation. How few Christians know that this passage of the Gospel was selected for a Sunday which oscillates roughly between the end of July and the beginning of August, and that in the year 595 (in which the ancestor of our present Missal was composed by the Pope St Gregory) as well as in 1954, this 9th Sunday after Pentecost coincided with the first Sunday in August and therefore with the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple? This can only mean that such a choice was made purposely.

If we studied attentively first our Roman liturgy which is familiar to us, then other Christian liturgies, especially the Coptic and Syriac which remain much nearer to the Aramaean and Synagogal rites, we could, no doubt, discover more and more what a wealth of prayer we have in common with the Synagogue.



THREE SHORT HOMILIES OF ST JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

TRANSLATED BY J. F. T. PRINCE

Of being for nothing solicitous.

Christ teacheth that we should work for ourselves and, going without much, become content with little. Thus for Himself, He cut down even of necessities, using no beast to bear Him, but walking such distances that He became weary with His journey. Wherefore, said He: 'The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.' and of His days and nights, too, He spent most on the mountains and in the deserts. And of Him did David foretell: 'He shall drink of the brook in the way.' So then at the Well of Sychar doth John the Evangelist shew the Lord to be careless of food, treating the matter as of little import; and thus were the disciples taught, taking with them no provisions for the road. Different indeed from us, who rising from our beds are soon calling for provisions, and with earnestness, concerning ourselves with cooks and caterers. Before, then, we turn to the ordering of

our temporal accompts, let our observance be concerned with the life of the spirit that we may learn without confusion to prefer the lasting to the trivial and transitory. *Homily XXI on St John.*

Of giving place to violence.

My beloved, when it hurts not our virtue, we must render not sharpness with sharpness nor contend with the violent, giving place to their evil counsel. For know you that when darts strike upon a hard, unyielding surface, they too often rebound with a violence equal to that with which they are thrown. Yet when he that casteth the dart is met with nothing, soon he becometh weak and careth not to continue. So must we be toward the insolent: yielding and giving ground that comfortably we may abate their madness. Wherefore did Christ, knowing that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptised more disciples than John, go into Galilee to quench their envious contention, and by retiring so soften their wrath. And when, yet again, He departed into Galilee, He came not to the same place; for He went not again to Cana, but to the other side of the Sea. *Homily XLII on St John.*

Of forgiving injury and debt.

When therefore the Lord had spoken of the ancient law 'an eye for an eye', He certified that it is not our brother who has done us so great an injury, but the Demon. And he enjoined thus His hearers; 'But I say unto you that he resist not the Evil one', meaning that it is from the prompting of the Devil that men do evil things; so did the Lord take away our anger for the aggressor by transferring the blame to Satan. Let us, moreover, think not of the passing pleasure that comes from the exacting of the penalty and debt, but of that great loss which we must bear hereafter for our hardness. Let us not injure ourselves as to that which endureth forever; forgiving, rather, those who should give accompt to us of injury and debt. Thus shall we possess ourselves of the Eternal Blessing, by the grace and charity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be all glory and power, now and forever. Amen. *Homilies XVIII and XV on St Matthew.*

