

Luke: 16:1-18

From Catena Aurea:

16:1-7

1. And he said unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

2. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

3. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

4. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

5. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

6. And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

7. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

AMBROSE. From this we learn then, that we are not ourselves the masters, but rather the stewards of the property of others.

THEOPHYLACT. Next, that when we exercise not the management of our wealth according to our Lord's pleasure, but abuse our trust to our own pleasures, we are guilty stewards. Hence it follows, And he was accused to him.

AUGUSTINE. (de Qu. Ev. l. ii. qu. 34.) Or because out of the hundred measures of oil, he caused fifty to be written down by the debtors, and of the hundred measures of wheat, fourscore, the meaning thereof is this, that those things which every Jew performs toward the Priests and Levites should be the more

abundant in the Church of Christ, that whereas they give a tenth, Christians should give a half, as Zaccheus gave of his goods, (Luke 19:8.) or at least by giving two tenths, that is, a fifth, exceed the payments of the Jews.

16:8–13

8. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

9. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

10. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

11. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

12. And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

13. No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

AUGUSTINE. (ubi sup.) The steward whom his Lord cast out of his stewardship is nevertheless commended because he provided himself against the future. As it follows, And the Lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely; we ought not however to take the whole for our imitation. For we should never act deceitfully against our Lord in order that from the fraud itself we may give alms.

ORIGEN. (in Prov. 1:1.) But because the Gentiles say that wisdom is a virtue, and define it to be the experience of what is good, evil, and indifferent, or the knowledge of what is and what is not to be done, we must consider whether this word signifies many things, or one. For it is said that God by wisdom prepared the heavens. (Prov. 3:19.) Now it is plain that wisdom is good, because the Lord by wisdom prepared the heavens. It is said also in Genesis, according to the LXX, that the serpent was the wisest animal, wherein He makes wisdom not a virtue, but evil-minded cunning. And it is in this sense that the Lord commended the steward that he had done wisely, that is, cunningly and evilly. And perhaps the word commended was spoken not in the sense of real commendation, but in a lower sense; as when we speak

of a man being commended in slight and indifferent matters, and in a certain measure clashings and sharpness of wit are admired, by which the power of the mind is drawn out.

AUGUSTINE. (ubi sup.) On the other hand this parable is spoken, that we should understand that if the steward who acted deceitfully, could be praised by his lord, how much more they please God who do their works according to His commandment.

ORIGEN. The children of this world also are not called wiser but more prudent than the children of light, and this not absolutely and simply, but in their generation. For it follows, For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light, &c.

THEOPHYLACT. By the children of this world then He means those who mind the good things which are on the earth; by the children of light, those who beholding the divine love, employ themselves with spiritual treasures. But it is found indeed in the management of human affairs, that we prudently order our own things, and busily set ourselves to work, in order that when we depart we may have a refuge for our life; but when we ought to direct the things of God, we take no forethought for what shall be our lot hereafter.

AUGUSTINE. (Serm. 113.) That which the Hebrews call mammon, in Latin is "riches." As if He said, "Make to yourselves friends of the riches of unrighteousness." Now some misunderstanding this, seize upon the things of others, and so give something to the poor, and think that they are doing what is commanded. That interpretation must be corrected into, Give alms of your righteous labours. (Prov. 3:9. LXX.) For you will not corrupt Christ your Judge. If from the plunder of a poor man, you were to give any thing to the judge that he might decide for you, and that judge should decide for you, such is the force of justice, that you would be ill pleased in yourself. Do not then make to yourself such a God. God is the fountain of Justice, give not your alms then from interest and usury. I speak to the faithful, to whom we dispense the body of Christ. But if you have such money, it is of evil that you have it. Be no longer doers of evil. Zaccheus said, Half my goods I give to the poor. (Luke 19:8.) See how he runs who runs to make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; and not to be held guilty from any quarter, he says, I If hare taken any thing from any one, I restore fourfold. According to another interpretation, the mammon of unrighteousness are all the riches of the world, whenever they come. For if you seek the true riches, there arc some in which Job when naked abounded, when he had his heart full towards God. The others are called riches from unrighteousness; because they are not true riches, for they are full of poverty, and ever liable to chances. For if they were true riches, they would give you security.

AUGUSTINE. (de Quæst. Ev. l. ii. q. 34.) Or the riches of unrighteousness are so called, because they are not riches except to the unrighteous, and such as rest in their hopes and the fulness of their happiness. But when these things are possessed by the righteous, they have indeed so much money, but no riches are theirs but heavenly and spiritual.

AMBROSE. Or he spoke of the unrighteous Mammon, because by the various enticements of riches covetousness corrupts our hearts, that we may be willing to obey riches.

BASIL. (Hom. de Avar.) Or if thou hast succeeded to a patrimony, thou receivest what has been amassed by the unrighteous; for in a number of predecessors some one must needs be found who has unjustly usurped the property of others. But suppose that thy father has not been guilty of exaction, whence hast thou thy money? If indeed thou answerest, "From myself;" thou art ignorant of God, not having the knowledge of thy Creator; but if, "From God," tell me the reason for which thou receivedst it. Is not the earth and the fulness thereof the Lord's? (Ps. 24:1.) If then whatever is ours belongs to our common Lord, so will it also belong to our fellow-servant.

THEOPHYLACT. Those then are called the riches of unrighteousness which the Lord has given for the necessities of our brethren and fellow-servants, but we spend upon ourselves. It became us then, from the beginning, to give all things to the poor, but because we have become the stewards of unrighteousness, wickedly retaining what was appointed for the aid of others, we must not surely remain in this cruelty, but distribute to the poor, that we may be received by them into everlasting habitations. For it follows, That, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

AUGUSTINE. (Serm. 113.) For who are they that shall have everlasting habitations but the saints of God? and who are they that are to be received by them into everlasting habitations but they who administer to their want, and whatsoever they have need of, gladly supply. They are those little ones of Christ, who have forsaken all that belonged to them and followed Him; and whatsoever they had have given to the poor, that they might serve God without earthly shackles, and freeing their shoulders from the burdens of the world, might raise them aloft as with wings.

AUGUSTINE. (de Quæst. Ev. l. ii. q. 34.) We must not then understand those by whom we wish to be received into everlasting habitations to be as it were debtors of God; seeing that the just and holy are signified in this place, who cause those to enter in, who administered to their necessity of their own worldly goods.

AMBROSE. Or else, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that by giving to the poor we may purchase the favour of angels and all the saints.

CHRYSOSTOM. Mark also that He said not, “that they may receive you into their own habitations.” For it is not they who receive you. Therefore when He said, Make to yourselves friends, he added, of the mammon of unrighteousness, to shew, that their friendship will not alone protect us unless good works accompany us, unless we righteously cast away all riches unrighteously amassed. The most skilful then of all arts is that of almsgiving. For it builds not for us houses of mud, but lays up in store an everlasting life. Now in each of the arts one needs the support of another; but when we ought to shew mercy, we need nothing else but the will alone.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA. Thus then Christ taught those who abound in riches, earnestly to love the friendship of the poor, and to have treasure in heaven. But He knew the sloth of the human mind, how that they who court riches bestow no work of charity upon the needy. That to such men there results no profit of spiritual gifts, He shews by obvious examples, adding, He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. Now our Lord opens to us the eye of the heart, explaining what He had said, adding, If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? That which is least then is the mammon of unrighteousness, that is, earthly riches, which seem nothing to those that are heavenly wise. I think then that a man is faithful in a little, when he imparts aid to those who are bowed down with sorrow. If then we have been unfaithful in a little thing, how shall we obtain from hence the true riches, that is, the fruitful gift of Divine grace, impressing the image of God on the human soul? But that our Lord’s words incline to this meaning is plain from the following; for He says, And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own?

AMBROSE. Riches are foreign to us, because they are something beyond nature, they are not born with us, and they do not pass away with us. But Christ is ours, because He is the life of man. Lastly, He came unto His own.

THEOPHYLACT. Thus then hitherto He has taught us how faithfully we ought to dispose of our wealth. But because the management of our wealth according to God is no otherwise obtained than by the indifference of a mind unaffected towards riches, He adds, No man can serve two masters.

AMBROSE. Not because the Lord is two, but one. For although there are who serve mammon, yet he knoweth no rights of lordship; but has himself placed upon himself a yoke of servitude. There is one Lord,

because there is one God. Hence it is evident, that the power of the Father and the Son is one: and He assigns a reason, thus saying, For either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.

AUGUSTINE. (de Qu. Ev. lib. ii. q. 36.) But these things were not spoken indifferently or at random. For no one when asked whether he loves the devil, answers that he loves him, but rather that he hates him; but all generally proclaim that they love God. Therefore either he will hate the one, (that is, the devil,) and love the other, (that is, God;) or will hold to the one, (that is, the devil, when he pursues as it were temporal wants,) and will despise the other, (that is, God,) as when men frequently neglect His threats for their desires, who because of His goodness flatter themselves that they will have impunity.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA. But the conclusion of the whole discourse is what follows, Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Let us then transfer all our devotions to the one, forsaking riches.

16:14–18

14. And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

15. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

16. The Law and the Prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

17. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

18. Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

THEOPHYLACT. But the Lord detecting in them a hidden malice, proves that they make a pretence of righteousness. Therefore it is added, And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men.

THEOPHYLACT. And therefore ye are an abomination to Him because of your arrogance, and love of seeking after the praise of men; as He adds, For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

AMBROSE. Not that the Law failed, but that the preaching of the Gospel began; for that which is inferior seems to be completed when a better succeeds.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Hom. 37. in Matt. Pseudo-Chrys. Hom. 19. op. imp.) He hereby disposes them readily to believe on Him, because if as far as John's time all things were complete, I am He who am come. For the Prophets had not ceased unless I had come; but you will say, "how" were the Prophets until John, since there have been many more Prophets in the New than the Old Testament. But He spoke of those prophets who foretold Christ's coming.

AMBROSE. For the Law delivered many things according to nature, as being more indulgent to our natural desires, that it might call us to the pursuit of righteousness. Christ breaks through nature as cutting off even our natural pleasures. But therefore we keep under nature, that it should not sink us down to earthly things, but raise us to heavenly.

AUGUSTINE. (de Quæst. Ev. l. ii. q. 87.) They also do violence to the kingdom of heaven, in that they not only despise all temporal things, but also the tongues of those who desire their doing so. This the Evangelist added, when he said that Jesus was derided when He spoke of despising earthly riches.

THEOPHYLACT. For that to the imperfect the Law spoke imperfectly is plain from what he says to the hard hearts of the Jews, "If a man hate his wife, let him put her away," (Deut. 24:1.) because since they were murderers and rejoiced in blood, they had no pity even upon those who were united to them, so that they slew their sons and daughters for devils. But now there is need of a more perfect doctrine. Wherefore I say, that if a man puts away his wife, having no excuse of fornication, he commits adultery, and he who marrieth another commits adultery.

AMBROSE. But we must first speak, I think, of the law of marriage, that we may afterwards discuss the forbidding of divorce. Some think that all marriage is sanctioned by God, because it is written, Whom God hath joined, let not man put asunder. (Matt. 19:6.) How then does the Apostle say, If the unbelieving depart, let him depart? (Mark 10:9, 1 Cor. 7:15.) Herein he shews that the marriage of all is not from God. For neither by God's approval are Christians joined with Gentiles. Do not then put away thy wife, lest thou deny God to be the Author of thy union. For if others, much more oughtest thou to bear with and correct the behaviour of thy wife. And if she is sent away pregnant with children, it is a hard thing to shut out the parent and keep the pledge; so as to add to the parents' disgrace the loss also of filial affection. Harder still if because of the mother thou drivest away the children also. Wouldest thou suffer in thy lifetime thy children to be under a step-father, or when the mother was alive to be under a step-mother? How

dangerous to expose to error the tender age of a young wife. How wicked to desert in old age one, the flower of whose growth thou hast blighted. Suppose that being divorced she does not marry, this also ought to be displeasing to you, to whom though an adulterer, she keeps her troth. Suppose she marries, her necessity is thy crime, and that which thou supposest marriage, is adultery.

But to understand it morally. Having just before set forth that the kingdom of God is preached, and said that one tittle could not fall from the Law, He added, Whosoever putteth away his wife, &c. Christ is the husband; whomsoever then God has brought to His son, let not persecution sever, nor lust entice, nor philosophy spoil, nor heretics taint, nor Jew seduce. Adulterers are all such as desire to corrupt truth, faith, and wisdom.

From Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture:

16:1–8 The Parable of the Prudent Steward

If God Rewrites Our Documents of Sin, Do Not Rewrite What God Has Blotted Out.

Origen: What the Gospel of “the unjust steward” says is also an image of this matter. He says to the debtor [of one hundred measures of wheat], “Take your bill, sit down, and write eighty,” and the other things that are related. You see that he said to each man, “Take your bill.” It is evident from this that the documents of sin are ours, but God writes documents of justice. The apostle says, “For you are an epistle written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart.”² You have in yourselves documents of God and documents of the Holy Spirit. If you transgress, you yourself write in yourselves the handwriting of sin. Notice that at any time when you have approached the cross of Christ and the grace of baptism, your handwriting is fastened to the cross and blotted out in the fountain of baptism. Do not rewrite later what has been blotted out or repair what has been destroyed. Preserve only the documents of God in yourself. Let only the scripture of the Holy Spirit remain in you. Homilies on Genesis 13.4.³

Jesus Recommends the Foresight, Prudence and Ingenuity of the Steward.

Augustine: Why did the Lord Jesus Christ present this parable to us? He surely did not approve of that cheat of a servant who cheated his master, stole from him and did not make it up from his own pocket. On top of that, he also did some extra pilfering. He caused his master further loss, in order to prepare a little nest of quiet and security for himself after he lost his job. Why did the Lord set this before us? It is

not because that servant cheated but because he exercised foresight for the future. When even a cheat is praised for his ingenuity, Christians who make no such provision blush. I mean, this is what he added, “Behold, the children of this age are more prudent than the children of light.” They perpetrate frauds in order to secure their future. In what life, after all, did that steward insure himself like that? What one was he going to quit when he bowed to his master’s decision? He was insuring himself for a life that was going to end. Would you not insure yourself for eternal life? Sermon 359a.10.4

16:9–13 Teachings About God and Mammon

Using Transitory Things for Heavenly Riches.

Ephrem the Syrian: He told another parable of the steward, who was accused in the presence of his master. The shrewdness of this unjust steward was praised in the presence of his master. He unjustly wasted the initial treasures and then unjustly and cunningly cancelled the later debts. He was praised because he acquired what was to be his by what was not his, namely, his friends and supporters. Through what was not his, Adam got something that was not his, namely, thorns and pains. ⁵ O children of Adam, buy for yourselves those things that do not pass away, by means of those temporary things that are not yours! Commentary on Tatian’s Diatessaron 14.21.6

Do Not Exclude from Alms Those You Judge Unworthy.

Augustine: Mammon is the Hebrew word for “riches,” just as in Punic the word for “profit” is mammon. What are we to do? What did the Lord command? “Make yourselves friends with the mammon of iniquity, so that they too, when you begin to fail, may receive you into eternal shelters.” It is easy, of course, to understand that we must give alms and a helping hand to the needy, because Christ receives it in them.... We can understand that we have to give alms and that we must not really pick and choose to whom we give them, because we are unable to sift through people’s hearts. When you give alms to all different types of people, then you will reach a few who deserve them. You are hospitable, and you keep your house ready for strangers. Let in the unworthy, in case the worthy might be excluded. You cannot be a judge and sifter of hearts. Sermon 359a.11–12.7

Riches are a Loan from God Not to Be Left Idle.

Chrysostom: You know that many high standing people renege on repayment of a loan. They are either resistant with a bad attitude or unable to pay because of poverty, as it often happens. In the case of the

Lord of all, there is no room for thinking this. On the contrary, the loan is proof against loss. He guarantees to return in good time one hundred percent of what was deposited, and he keeps life everlasting in reserve for us. In the future, what excuse will we have if we are negligent and fail to gain a hundredfold in place of the little we have, the future in place of the present, the eternal in place of the temporary? What excuse will we have if we heedlessly lock our money behind doors and barricades, and we prefer to leave it lying idle? Instead, we should make it available to the needy now, so that in the future we may count on support from them. Remember that Scripture says, “Make friends with ill-gotten gains so that, when you go down in the world, they may welcome you into their eternal dwellings.” Homilies on Genesis 3.21.⁸

If Unfaithful in What is Another’s, Who Will Give You What is Your Own.

Cyril of Alexandria: Anyone may readily learn the meaning and view of the Savior’s words from what follows. He said, “If you have not been faithful in what is another’s, who will give you what is your own?” We again say that what is another’s is the wealth we possess. We were not born with riches, but on the contrary, naked. We can truly affirm in the words of Scripture that “we neither brought anything into the world, nor can carry anything out.”⁹ ...

Let those of us who possess earthly wealth open our hearts to those who are in need. Let us show ourselves faithful and obedient to the laws of God. Let us be followers of our Lord’s will in those things that are from the outside and not our own. Let us do this so that we may receive what is our own, that holy and admirable beauty that God forms in people’s souls, making them like himself, according to what we originally were. Commentary on Luke, Homily 109.¹⁰

The Steward Serves God by Seeking His Mercy While Giving Relief to the Poor.

Ambrose: “No servant can serve two masters,”¹³ not because there are two, but the Lord is One. Although there are those who serve mammon, he still does not possess any rights to sovereignty, but they impose on themselves the chains of slavery. Power is not just, but slavery is unjust. He says, “Make for yourself friends of the mammon of iniquity,” so that by giving to the poor, we may match the grace of the angels and all the saints for ourselves. He does not rebuke the steward. By this, we learn that he does not belong to the Lord himself but to the riches of others. Although he has sinned, he is praised because he sought help for himself in the future through the Lord’s mercy. He fittingly mentions the mammon of iniquity, because greed tempted our dispositions with different enticements of wealth, so that we were willing to be the slaves of riches. Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 7.244–45.¹⁴

16:14 The Pharisees Love Money

Lovers of Money Will Not Possess the Purse that Cannot Be Taken Away.

Cyril of Alexandria: Being lovers of money, they repeatedly did not judge matters before them according to what was agreeable to the laws of God. On the contrary, they judged inequitably and in opposition to God's will....

Since it says that the Pharisees were lovers of money, they derided Jesus for directing them by his healthful doctrines to praiseworthy conduct and making them want saintly glories. He tells them that it was their duty to sell their possessions and distribute them to the poor. They would then possess in heaven a treasure that could not be stolen, purses that could not be harmed, and wealth that would not have to be abandoned. Commentary on Luke, Homily 110.2

16:15 The Way of the Pharisees

The Pharisees are Liars Among the Altars.

Cyril of Alexandria: Let us see the cause of their wickedness. The passion of greed possessed and tyrannized their heart. Their mind was in subjection even against its will. It was humbled under the power of wickedness and bound as it were by inevitable bonds....

The Savior of all spoke many things to them but saw that they would not change from their crafty purposes and passions. They preferred rather to abide in their innate folly. He began to correct them sternly, calling them by the very occasion. He shows that they are hypocrites and liars in wait among the altars. They are eager for the glory due to righteous and good people, but in reality, they are not like these. They are not eager to receive the approval of God. Commentary on Luke, Homily 110.3

16:16–17 Teaching About the Law and the Prophets and the Kingdom of God

The Good News of God's Kingdom is Opened Through the Violence of Christ's Death and Resurrection.

Cyril of Alexandria: He says that Moses and the company of the holy prophets announced beforehand the meaning of my mystery to the inhabitants of earth. The law declares by shadows and types that I should

even endure the death of the flesh to save the world and by rising from the dead abolish corruption. The prophets also spoke words meaning the same as the writings of Moses. He says, "It is not strange or not known before, that you reject my words and despise everything that would benefit you. The word of prophecy concerning you and me extends until the holy Baptist John. From the days of John, the kingdom of heaven is preached, and everyone takes it by force."⁴ The kingdom of heaven here means justification by faith, the washing away of sin by holy baptism, and sanctification by the Spirit. It also means worshiping in the Spirit, the service that is superior to shadows and types, the honor of the adoption of children, and the hope of the glory about to be given to the saints. Commentary on Luke, Homily 110.⁵

Jesus' Baptism by John.

Ephrem the Syrian: The Law and the Prophets reached as far as John did, but the Messiah is the beginning of the New Testament. Through baptism, the Lord assumed the justice of the Old Testament in order to receive the perfection of the anointing and to give it in its fullness and entirety to his disciples. He ended John's baptism and the law at the same time. He was baptized in justice, because he was sinless, but he baptized in grace because all others were sinners. Through his justice, he dispensed from the law, and through his baptism, he abolished baptism [of John]. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 4.2.⁶

To Take the Kingdom by Force.

Cyril of Alexandria: He says that the kingdom of heaven is preached. The Baptist stood in the middle saying, "Prepare the way of the Lord."⁸ He has also shown that he is already near and, as it were, within the doors, even the true Lamb of God who bears the sin of the world. Whoever hears and loves the sacred message takes it by force. This means that he uses all his eagerness and strength in his desire to enter within the hope. He says in another place, "The kingdom of heaven is taken by violence, and the violent seize upon it."⁹ Commentary on Luke, Homily 110.¹⁰

16:18 How Words of Torah Stand in the Kingdom of God

Immorality is Not a Condition for Divorce.

Augustine: Who are we to say that someone commits adultery in taking another woman after he puts away his wife, and that another who, in doing this, does not commit adultery? The Gospel says that everyone who performs such an act commits adultery. If everyone who marries another woman after the dismissal of his wife commits adultery, this includes the one who puts away his wife without the cause of immorality and the one who puts away his wife for this reason. Adulterous Marriages 9.11

Marriage Reflects the Relationship Between Christ and His Chaste and Loving Church.

Ambrose: He had above proposed that the kingdom of God should be preached. When he had said that one tittle cannot fall from the law, he added, "Everyone who puts away his wife, and marries another, commits adultery." The apostle rightly admonishes, saying that this is a great sacrament concerning Christ and the church. ¹² You find a marriage that doubtlessly was joined by God, when he himself says, "No man comes to me, unless my Father who sent me has drawn him." ¹³ He alone could join this marriage. Solomon mystically said, "A wife will be prepared for a man by God." ¹⁴ The man is Christ, and the wife is the church that is a wife in love and a virgin in innocence. Do not let him whom God has drawn to the Son be separated by persecution, ¹⁵ distracted by extravagance, ravaged by philosophy, tainted by Manichaeus, perverted by Arius, or infected by Sabellius. ¹⁶ God has joined; let not a Jew separate. All who desire to defile the truth of faith and wisdom are adulterers.... Come, Lord Jesus, to find your bride not tainted or polluted. She has not defiled your house or disregarded your commandments. Let her say to you, "I found him whom my soul loved." ¹⁷ Let her lead you into the house of wine. Wine makes glad the heart of man. ¹⁸ Let the Spirit saturate her. Let her recognize the mystery and speak the prophecy. ¹⁹ Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 8.9–12.20