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Lancelot Andrewes' Works, Sermons, Volume One
SERMONS OF THE NATIVITY
PREACHED ON CHRISTMAS DAY, 1616
Preached before King James, at Whitehall
Wednesday, December 25, MDCXVI
Transcribed by Dr. Marianne Dorman, 2001
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Psalm lxxxv: 10–11

Mercy and Truth are met together; Righteousness and Peace will kiss each other.
Truth shall spring out of the earth; and Righteousness shall look down from heaven.

*Misericordia et Veritas obviaverunt sibi; Justitia et Pax osculatæ sunt.
Veritas de terra orta est; et Justitia de Cælo prospexit.*

I have here read you two verses out of this Psalm, which is one of the Psalms selected of old by the primitive Church, and so still retained by ours as part of our office or service of this day, as being proper and pertinent to the matter of the feast, and so to the feast itself. For the meeting here specified was to be at the birth of the Messiah: so saith Rabbi Moses, and others of the Jews. Was at the birth of our Saviour: so say the Fathers with uniform consent, and *eo nomine* have made this a Christmas-day Psalm.

As his manner is, the Psalmist in it under one compriseth the type and the truth both; by those things which befell the people of the Jews, the Church typical, shadowing out those things which were to befall the Antitype of it, Christ and His Church. For *primo et proprio intentione*, it cannot be denied but the Psalm was first set according to the letter upon the turning back of the captivity of Babel. But the Prophet knew well that was not their worst captivity, nor should be their best delivery. There was another yet behind concerned them more, if they understood their own state aright which was reserved to the Messiah to free them from. To that he points. Even that the Apostle complains of wherein “the soul is led away captive under sin and Satan,” the very true Babel indeed as which bringeth with it everlasting confusion, from which Christ, the true Zerubbabel, is to set us free—us and them both.

There is a meeting here. A meeting at a birth. A birth that did them in heaven, Righteousness by name, good to behold. The meeting, in *obviaverunt*, the birth in *orta est*, the pleasure to behold it in *prospexit de Cælo*. *Prospexit* is to see with delight, as when we look into some pleasant prospect.

A meeting qualified, for the manner. For they do not meet and pass by, but meet and salute as friends with an *osculate sunt*, a sign of love begun or renewed.

This meeting is of four. Four which of themselves, *proprie loquendo*, are nothing but attributes or properties of the Divine nature, but are here by the Psalmist brought in and represented to us as so many personages. Personages, I say, inasmuch as they have here personal acts ascribed to them. For to meet, to kiss, to look down, are all of them acts personal. And look, how the Psalmist presents them so we treat of them, in the same terms the text doth.

At a birth, at *orta est*, these four meet here; at *orta est Veritas*, “the birth of Truth” *de terra*, “from the earth.” For two *ortus* there were; and this, not His *antesæcularis ortus de cælo*, “His birth before all worlds from heaven,” but His *ortus de terra*, “His temporal birth from the earth.”

Lastly, the birth of this birth, as I may say it, the effect it wrought. Of which more there are in the neighbouring verses. Here in these, besides the meeting occasioned by it, there is but one; that such a spectacle it was as it drew Righteousness itself from Heaven to look at it. Time was when Righteousness would not have done so much, not have vouchsafed a look hitherward; therefore *respexit nos Justitia* is good news. That then and ever since she has beheld the earth and the dwellers in it with a far more favourable regard than before. And all for this birth’s sake.

And when was all this? When He said of Himself, “I am the Truth,” when He was born upon earth; for *orta est Veritas*, and *natus est Christus* will fall out to be one birth. What day soever that was, this meeting was upon

it. And that was this day, of all the days of the year. The meeting and the day of this meeting here all one, and the birth of Christ the cause of both. So being this day's work, this day to be dealt with most properly.

Onward we have here four honours of this day, every one of the four giving it a blessing. 1. It is the day of *ortus Veritatis*, "Truth's birth"; 2. and the same, the day of *occursus Misericordiæ*, "the meeting here mentioned"; 3. and of *osculum Pacis*, "the kiss here expressed"; 4. and of *prospectus Justitiæ*, "righteousness' gracious respect of us." These from each of them in several. And generally, the day of reconciling them all.

Holding us to these, we are to speak of the 1. Meeting, the 2. Parties, the 3. Birth, and the 4. Effect here specified to come of it. I. Of this meeting in Christ; then II. in Christianity, not to be broken off by us but to be renewed, and specially this day.

Here is a meeting, and that is no great matter if it be no more. How many meet we as we pass to and fro daily, and how little do we regard it? But that meeting is casual.

Somewhat more there is in set meetings. It was not by hap, not *obviaverunt* simply but *obviaverunt sibi*. *Sibi* showeth they had an intent; they came forth on both sides, not to meet any fifth person, but to meet one another.

But not every set meeting is memorable; this is. I find a Psalm here made in remembrance of it. And lightly songs be not made, but *de raro contingentibus*; not of ordinary, but of some special great meetings.

The greatness of a meeting groweth three ways. 1. By the parties who; 2. the occasion whereon; and 3. the end whereto they meet. All three are in this. The parties in the first verse, the occasion and end in the second. The occasion a birth, an occasion oft of making great persons meet; and the end that comes of it, that Righteousness, who is to be our Judge and to give the last sentence upon us, beholds us with an aspect that promises favour.

The occasion and the end we shall touch anon. Now of the parties. If the parties great, the meeting great. The conjunction of the great lights in Heaven, the interview of great States on earth, ever bodes some great matter. Who are the parties here? Four as high, as excellent attributes, as there be any in the Godhead. Or, to keep the style of the text, four as great States as nay in the Court of Heaven.

These meet, and in what manner? Great states meet otherwhile in a pitched field. Not so here. This is an *obviaverunt* with an *osculatæ sunt*; they run not one at another as enemies; they run one to another, and kiss as loving friends. And that which makes it memorable indeed is, that these parties in this manner thus meet, who if all were well known were more like to turn tail than to meet. One to run from another; nay, one to run at another to encounter, rather than run one to another to embrace and kiss. Not meet at all; at least not meet thus, standing in such terms as they did.

Mercy and Peace, if they two had met, or Truth and Righteousness, they two, it had not been strange. But for those that seem to be in opposition to do it, that is it—that makes this meeting marvellous in our eyes.

Will ye stay a little and take a view of the Parties? Four they are. These four, 1. Mercy, and 2. Truth, 3. Righteousness, and 4. Peace. Which quaternion at the first sight divided itself into two and two. Mercy and Peace, they two pair well; they be *collectanæ*, as Bernard saith of them in one place, "bed-fellows," sleep together; *collectanæ*, as in another place, "sucked one milk, one breast" both. And as these two, so the other two, Truth and Righteousness, seem to be of one complexion and disposition, and commonly take part together. Of these Mercy seems to favour us; and Peace no enemy to us nor to any (seeing we must speak of them as of persons) mild and gentle persons both. For Righteousness I know not well what to say: *gestat gladium*, and I fear *non frustra*. Nor of Truth, which is *vera* and *severa*, "severe" too otherwhile. These I doubt are not like affected. The reason of my doubt. One of them, Righteousness, it is told here for great news, that she but "looked down hitherwards from Heaven." Before then she would not have done that. A great sign it is of heart-burning, when one will not do so much as look at another nor endure his sight. We cannot promise ourselves much of her. No, nor of Truth. One was so bold in a place to say, *omnis homo mendax*, and feared no challenge for it. By that it seems all stands not well with her neither. So then two for us, two against us.

For their order. Mercy is first, and Peace last. With both ends we shall do well enough. God send us to do but so with the midst! Yet this is not amiss that they which favour us less are in the midst; hemmed in on both sides, closed about with those that wish us well; and they between us and them. On the one side, Mercy before; on the other, Peace behind.

Another; that in this double meeting Mercy sorts not herself, goes not to Righteousness; nor Righteousness to her, but to Peace. A kind of cross meeting, as it were, there is—the better hope of accord. Mercy and Righteousness have no symbolizing quality at all, no hope of them; but Truth with Mercy has. There is Truth as well in the promise of Mercy as in the threat of Justice.

And it stands yet better between the other two, Righteousness and Peace. Melchizedek, which is by interpretation "King of Righteousness," the same is "King of Salem, that is of peace." He that "is after the order of Melchizedek," King of both, like enough to set accord between them two—both of them His lieges. This for the view of the Parties.

These meet here; but what is *obviaverunt* without *osculatæ sunt*? Better they met here, they were parted the one from the other. For they that meet come from divers coasts. Before this meeting they have been in divers

quarters, one from the other, and not come together thus a good while.

Their distance in place grew from their distance in affection, estranged one from the other. That they meet not I will not say; but that they meet not thus, ever before. Else, what remarkable thing were there in this meeting, or worth the composing of a Psalm, if it had been familiar with them thus to meet every other, nay any other day?

How came they then asunder that it should be a marvel to see them meet? Since naturally they are not strangers, all four in the bosom of God from all eternity,—attributes all four of His undivided Essence. So, not divided of themselves; not of themselves then. That they were divided, it was about us; the quarrel ours, that made them part company. Thus I gather it: if at Christ's birth they met, at Adam's fall they parted; if when Truth was born on earth they came together, when Truth perished from the earth they fell in sunder. That was when the first lie was told, and believed—and that was *nequaquam moriemini*—by Adam, and thereby God much wronged. So that Adam's cause it was, and so ours that first divided Heaven, yea the very attributes in God we see, and so in a sort God Himself. So they parted first. It could not be said by the Apostle that Christ “pacified all things in Heaven and in earth,” if there had not in Heaven been somewhat to be taken up.

For all this yet, I deny not but they might and did meet once before. But it was an *obvicerunt* without an *osculate sunt*; never both these till now. Out of Christ and before His birth, they met in opposition; in Christ and at His birth, did these four lights come to meet and to be in conjunction now. They met before, *obviaverunt*, but instead of *osculatæ* it was *altercatæ sunt*. While Mercy and Peace would have Adam's and our case relieved, Righteousness and Truth would by no means endure it. The plea is drawn up and reported at large by Bernard in his first Sermon upon the Annunciation. Mercy began, for out of her readiness to do good she is here, she is ever foremost. Her inclination is, or rather she herself is an inclination, to pity such as are in misery, and if she can to relieve them, yes though they deserve it not. For, which is the comfort of the miserable sinner, she looks not to the party, what he is or what he has done or deserved, but what he suffers, in how woeful and wretched case he is. And her plea is, *nunquid in vanum?* “What has God made all men for nought?” “What profit is in their blood?” It will make God's enemies rejoice. Thither it will come, if God cast them clean off. What then “will He cast them off forever, will He be no more entreated? Hath God forgotten to be gracious?” With these and such like *pii susurri*, as he calls them, did she enter into God's bowels, and makes them yearn and melt into compassion. And certainly, if there were none to stand against us, there were hope Mercy had prevailed.

But Truth must be heard too, and she lays in just matter of exception; pleads, *Deus erat Verbum*; What is God but His Word? and His word was—as to Adam, *morte morieris*, so to his sons, *anima quæ peccaverit*, “the soul that sinneth that soul shall die.” God may not falsify His word; His word is the truth. Falsify the truth? That may not be.

And then steps up Righteousness and seconds her. That God as He is “true in His word,” so is He “righteous in all His works.” So, to *reddere suum cuique*, “to render each his own,” to every one that is his due; and so to the sinner, *stipendium peccati*, “the wages of sin,” that is, “death.” God forbid, the Judge of the world should judge unjustly! That were, as before to make truth false, so here to do right wrong.

Nay, it went farther, and they made it their own cases. What shall become of me, saith Righteousness? What use of justice if God will do no justice, if He spare sinners? And what use of me, saith Mercy, if He spare them not. Hard hold there was, inasmuch as *perii nisi homo moriatur*, said Righteousness, “I die, if he die not.” And *perii, nisi misericordiam consequatur*, said Mercy, “if he die I die too.” To this it came; and in those terms brake up the meeting, and away they went one from the other. Truth went into exile, as a stranger upon earth: — *Terra Astræ a reliquit*, she confined herself in Heaven, where so aliened she was as she would not so much as look down hither upon us.

Mercy, she stayed below still. *Ubi enim Misericordia esset*, saith Hugo well, *si cum misero non esset?* “Where should mercy be, if with misery she should not be?”

As for Peace, she went between both, to see if she could make them meet again on better terms. For without such a meeting, no good to be done for us.

For meet they must, and that in other terms, or it will go wrong with us; our salvation lies a bleeding all this while. The plea hangs, and we stand as the prisoner at the bar, and know not what shall become of us. For though two be for us, there are two against us, as strong and more stiff than they.

So that much depends upon this second meeting, upon the composing or taking up this difference. For these must be at peace between themselves, before they be at peace with us, or we with God. And this is sure; we shall never meet in Heaven, if they meet no more.

And many means were made for this meeting many times, but it would not be. Where stayed it? It was not long of Mercy, she would be easily entreated to give a new meeting—no question of her. Oft she look up to Heaven, but Righteousness would not look down. Not look? not that? small hope she would be got to meet that would not look that way-ward.

Indeed, all the question is of her. It is Truth and she that hold off, but specially she. Upon the birth you see here is no mention of any in particular but of her, as much to say as the rest might be dealt with; she only it

was that stood out. And yet she must be got to meet, or else no meeting.

All the hope is, that she doth not refuse simply never to meet more, but stands upon satisfaction to her mind that so she may be content once more not to meet and argue as ere-while, but to meet and kiss; meet in a joint concurrence to save us, and set us free.

And indeed, *hoc opus*, “there lies all”; how to set a song of these four parts in good harmony, how to make these meet at a love-day, how to satisfy Justice upon whom all the stay is.

And this I say, no religion in the world doth or can do but the Christian. No choir sing this Psalm but ours, none make justice meet but it. Consequently, none quiet the conscience soundly but it; consequently, no religion but it. With all religions else at odds they be, and so as they are fain to leave them so; for means in the world have they none how to make them meet. Not able for their lives to tender Justice a satisfaction, that will make her come in. The words next before are, “that glory may dwell in our land.” This glory doth dwell in our land indeed. And great cause have we all highly to bless God That hath made “our lot to fall in so fair a ground.” That we were not born to inherit a lie; that we were born to keep this feast of this meeting. For bid any of them all but show you the way how to satisfy Justice soundly, and to make her come to this meeting; how God’s word may be true, and His work just, and the sinner find mercy and be saved for all that—they cannot. The Christian only can do it, and none else. All beside for lack of this pass by the wounded man, and let him lie still and bleed to death.

Bid the Turk. All he can say is, Mahomet’s prayer shall be upon you. Mahomet’s prayer, what is that? Say he were that he was not—a just man, a true prophet; what can his prayers do but move Mercy? But God’s justice, how is that answered? Who shall satisfy that? Not prayers;—Justice is not moved with them, hears them not, goes on to sentence for all them. He can go no farther; he cannot make Justice meet.

Bid the heathen. He says better yet than the Turk. They saw “that without shedding of blood” there was no satisfying Justice, and so “no remission of sin.” To satisfy her, sacrifices they had of beasts. But “it is impossible,” as the Apostle well notes, “that the blood of bulls or goats should satisfy for our sins.” A man sin, and a beast die! Justice will none of that. What then, will ye go as far as some did, “the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” Nor that neither. For if it were the first-born, the first-born was born in sin; and sin for sin can never satisfy. This meeting will not be there.

Bid the Jew. He can but tell you of his lamb neither. And while time was, that was not amiss; while it stood in reference to St. John Baptist’s Lamb, “the Lamb of God” this day yeaned, as having the operation, the working, in the virtue of That. That being now past, there is no more in the Jews’ than in the Gentiles’ sacrifice. Beasts both;

both short of satisfying. So for all that these can do or say, no meeting will there be had.

Only the Christian religion that shows the true way. There is One there thus speaketh to Justice, “Sacrifice and sin-offerings Thou wouldst not have; then said I, Lo, I come.” He, “of Whom it was written in the volume of the book that He should do that feat,” *corpus autem aptasdi Mihi*, “make Him a body to do it in,” and He will do it. Give Him an *ortus est*, let Him be but born, He will make them meet straight;—Justice and all. For all the world sees, if order could be taken that He, that the Son of God, the Word and Truth eternal, would say, “Lo, I come”; would take our nature upon Him, and in it, ‘lay down His soul an offering for sin’; there were good hope of contenting Justice, and that the meeting would go forward. *Deus sanguine in suo*, “God with His blood”;—what sin in the world would not that serve for? What justice in Heaven or earth would not that satisfy? If ye speak of an expiation, a ransom, an *antallagma*—Christ’s own word—a perfect “commutation,” there it is. This had, Justice will meet, embrace, kiss Mercy, shake hands, join now friends; *Inveni enim in quo repropitier*, “I have found that now, wherewith I hold myself fully content and pleased.” This way ye shall make them meet, or else let it alone forever.

Ver. 11. “Truth shall bud out of the earth; and Righteousness shall look down from Heaven.”

And this is it the Christian religion sets before us; how the Son of the Most High God of Heaven and earth took on Him our nature, that in our nature, for our nature, He might make to God (even *stando in terminis justitiæ suæ*, as the schoolmen speak, “standing on the terms of His most exact strict justice,”) a complete, full, every-way-sufficient satisfaction. And this, lo, makes the meeting. This honour hath the Christian religion above all other; this glory doth dwell in our land; that these four by Christ’s birth in it are brought not only to *obviaverunt sibi*, but even to *et osculate sunt*.

And if this be the glory, be not the shame of Christian profession that cherish in their bosoms, and entertain with stipends such as are come to this frenzy I will call it, to say, what needs any satisfaction? What care we whether Justice meet or no? that is in effect what needs *Christ*? Cannot God forgive offences to Him made, of His free goodness, of His mere mercy, without putting His Son to all this pain? Fond men! if He would quit His justice or waive His truth, He could; but His justice and truth are to Him as essential, as intrinsically essential, as His mercy; of equal regard, every way as dear to Him. Justice otherwise remains unsatisfied; and satisfied it must be either on Him or on us. For with beasts or prayers it will not be, and it will hold off till it be. If Justice be not so met with, it will meet with them; and they had better “meet a she-bear robbed of her whelps,” than meet Justice out of Christ’s presence.

To us they meet this day at the Child-house. For these great lights could not thus meet but they must portend some great matter, as it might be some great birth toward. The astrologers make us believe, that in the horoscope of Christ's Nativity there was a great trigon of I wot not what stars met together. Whether a trigon or no, this tetragon I am sure there was, these were all men in conjunction, all in the ascendant, all above the horizon at once at *orta est* "the birth of" *veritas* "the truth" *de terro* "from the earth," the occasion of drawing these four together.

Veritas will fit Christ well Who of Himself said, *Ego sum Veritas*, "I am the Truth." So is He—not that of the former verse which is but *veritas prima*, "the first Truth" within. That depends upon this. Then are the words uttered true, when there is an adequation between them and the mind. So, "the first Truth" He is.

The first and last both. For now by His coming He is the adequation of the Word and the Work, the Promise and the Performance. That way He is Truth too, the truth of all types, the truth of all prophecies; for "in Him are all the promises yes and Amen,"—yea, in the first truth; Amen, in the last. That actual verifying is the truth when all is done, and that He is by His birth.

And as truth fits His nature, so does earth man. Of whom God, "earth thou art"; to whom the Prophet thrice over, "Earth, hear the word of the Lord"; by whom the wise man, *Quid superbis?* "Why should earth be proud?" *Germinet terra Salvatorem*, "Let this earth bring forth a Saviour"—be the *terra promissionis*, the blessed Virgin, who was in this the land of promise. So was this very place applied by Irenæus in his time, who touched the Apostles' times; so by Lactantius; so by St. Hierom and St. Augustine. Those four meet in this sense, as do the four in the text. *Quid est veritas de terro orta? est Christus de fæmino natus. Quid est Veritas? Filius Dei. Quid terra? Caro nostra.* "What the truth? Christ. What the earth? Our flesh." In those words they find this feast all.

For *orta est*, it is double; therefore *de terro* is well added. Another *ortus* he had *de Cælo*; to wit, His heavenly Divine nature which as "the day sprung from on high," and He in regard of it called *oriens* by Zachary in the New Testament. But this here is *de terro*; for the word properly signifies "the shooting forth of a sprig out of the ground," and He in regard of this *ortus* called "the Branch" by Zachary in the Old.

2. And there is more in *orta*. For, it is Rabbi Moses' note, that is properly when it springeth forth of itself, as the field flowers do, without any seed cast in by the hand of man; so, saith he, should the Messiah come, take His nature not only in, but *de*, "of" the earth. Not bring it with Him from Heaven, the error of the brain-sick Anabaptist, but take it of the earth; be "the woman's seed," "made of a woman," "out of the loins of David";

Virga de radice Jesse, "the root of Jesse" nothing more plain.

3. And yet more from *orta est*. For that truth, while it is yet unaccomplished but in promise only, it is but as the seed underground, hid and covered with earth, as if no such thing were: as soon as ever it is actually accomplished as this day, then does it spring forth, as it were, is to be seen above ground; then *orta est de terro*, in very deed.

Of the effect. Now births are and have been divers times the ending of great dissensions, as was this here. For by the birth took end the two great houses; an union of them by it.

First, by this Truth is gained; Truth will meet now. That truth will come to this Truth, *tanquam minus dignum ad magis dignum*, "as the abstract to the archetype." And Truth being now born of our nature, it will never we may be sure be against our nature; being come of the earth, it will be true to his own country; being made man, will be for man now all he can.

By this means one of the opposites is drawn away from the other; got to be on our side. It is three to one now. Righteousness is left all alone; and there is good hope she will not stand out long. For, lo, here is good news; first that *respexit de Cælo*, "she yet looks down from Heaven now."

So as this birth in earth you see works in Heaven, and by name upon Righteousness there. For though there were none in Heaven but it wrought upon them, yet the Psalm mentions none but Righteousness. For of all, she the least likely; and if she be wrought on, the rest there is no doubt of. How can there? they are all won to us already.

With Righteousness it works two ways: first, "down she looks." Whether it was that she missed Truth, to see what was become of her, and not finding her in Heaven cast her eye to the earth. But there, when she beheld *Verbum caro factum*, the truth freshly sprung there where it had been a strange plant long time before, she looked and looked again at it. For a sight it was to move, to draw the eye; yes a sight for Heaven to be a spectator of, for the Angels to come down and look at, for Righteousness itself to do so too. Παράκλῃ is the Angels' word in St. Peter; διέκυψε is the Septuagint's word here. Both mean one thing. The Greek word is to "look," as we say, "wishly" at it, as if we would look *per id*, even "through it." The Hebrew word,—that is as if "Righteousness did beat out a window," so desirous was she to behold this sight.

And no marvel; for what could Righteousness desire to see and satisfy herself with, that in Him was not to be seen? A clean birth, a holy life, an innocent death; a Spirit and a mouth without guile, a Soul and a body without sin. In Him she beheld them all. Them, and whatsoever else might yield her full satisfaction. "Lay Judgment to the rule and Righteousness in the balance," nothing oblique

will be found in Him, nothing but straight for the rule; nothing *minus habens*, but full weight for the balance.

Thus when “Truth from the earth,” then “Righteousness from Heaven.” Then, but not before. Before, Righteousness had no prospect, no window open this way. She turned away her face, shut her eyes, clapped to the casement, would not abide so much as to look hither—at us, a sort of forlorn sinners;—not vouchsafe us once the cast of her eye. The case is now altered. Upon this sight she is not only content in some sort to condescend to do it, but she breaks a window through to do it. And then, and ever since this *orta est*, she looks upon the earth with a good aspect; and a good aspect in these celestial lights is never without some good influence withal.

But then within a verse after, not only “down she looks” but “down she comes.” Such a power attractive is there in this birth. And coming, she doth two things. 1. Meets first; for upon the view of this birth they all ran first and “kissed the Son.” 2. And that done, Truth ran to Mercy and embraced her; and Righteousness to Peace, and “kissed” her. They that had so long been parted, and stood out in difference, now meet and are made friends; howsoever before removed, *in ortu Veritatis obviaverunt sibi*; howsoever before estranged, now *osculatæ sunt*.

And at that birth of His well met they all, in Whom they meet all: the Truth He is, and *per viscera Misericordiæ* He came, “through the tender mercies of our God”; and He is made to us Righteousness, and He is our Peace. All meet in Him, for indeed all He is; that no marvel they all four meet where He is That is all four.

And at this meeting Righteousness she was not so off-ward before but she is now as forward, as forward as any of the rest. Mark these three.

1. Lets not Peace prevent her, as Mercy did Truth; but as Mercy to Truth first, so she first to Peace—as forward as Mercy every way.

2. Nay more forward than Mercy, for Mercy doth but meet Truth, and there is all; but she as more affectionate not only “meets Peace,” but “kisses her.” And indeed Righteousness was to do more, even to kiss, that it might be a pledge of forgetting all former unkindness, that we may be sure she is perfectly reconciled now.

3. And once more yet, to show her the most forward of them all, out of the last verse. At this meeting she follows not, draws not behind, she will not go with them; she is before, leaves them to come after and bear the train; she, as David, is before the Ark, puts St. John Baptist from his office for the time; Righteousness is his forerunner, “Righteousness shall go before,” tread the way before Him, the foremost now of all the company. By all which ye may know what a look it was she looked with from Heaven.

Thus you see Christ by His coming “has pacified the things in Heaven.” A peace of Hosannah is *pax in Cælis*; there cannot be *pax in terris* till there it be first. But no

sooner there it is, but it is peace in earth straight, which accordingly was this day proclaimed by the Angels. So by the virtue of this birth, heaven is at peace with itself; and heaven with earth is now at peace. So is earth too with itself, and a fulfilling of the text by this meeting is there too.

The Jews, they represent Truth; to them it belongeth properly. For Truth was where were *eloquia Dei*, “the oracles of God”; and they were with the Jews. The Gentiles they claim by Mercy, that is their virtue. Where was Mercy but where was Misery? and where was Misery but with them that “lay in darkness in the shadow of death?” And that was the Gentiles’ case before this *orta est*. But when “the partition wall was broken down” and the two met in one, then also in a sense Mercy and Truth together. So these two.

And so the other two likewise. For Righteousness she was where the Law was—for that Rule of Righteousness where the Covenant of the Old Testament was, “Do this and live,” the very voice of Justice. But Peace was where Christ was, in the Gospel. *Ipse est Pax nostra*, for “He is our Peace”; Peace and Peace-maker both. *Qui fecit utrumque unum*, That hath made the Law and the Gospel, the Old Testament and the New, to be bound together now both in one volume.

Thus we have done with Christ. I would now apply this meeting to ourselves another while. For I ask, did this hold, did these meet only in Christ? Do they not in Christianity likewise? Yes, there too. With Christ came Christianity; look, what in His birth now, in the new birth of every one that shall be the better by it, even the same meeting of the very same virtues all.

Mercy and Truth first to meet. Truth of confession; confession of our sins; which if with fig-leaves we seek to cover and confess not, “there is no truth in us.” And some truth there is to be, at least this truth, or no meeting with Mercy. But when this truth comes forth, Mercy meets it straight. Will ye see this meeting? *Peccavi*, said David—there is Truth. *Transtulit Dominus peccatum*, saith Nathan—there is Mercy; Mercy and Truth met together. *Homo in terris per Veritatem stimulatus peccasse se confitebatur, et Deus in Cælis per Misericordiam flexus confitentis miserabatur*. “Truth pricked man to confess his sins; and Mercy moved God to pity him confessing,” and sends Mercy to meet Truth.

Will ye go on to the other verse? It holds there too, this. For where a true confession is by man made, Truth is budded “out of the earth.” And so it must ere “Righteousness will give us a good look from Heaven.” But will, as soon as it is: for when this truth springs freely from the earth to our condemnation, immediately upon it, Righteousness shows herself from Heaven to our justification. Will ye see this too? “Lord be merciful to me a sinner”—there is truth from the earth. *Descendit domum suam justificatus*, there is Righteousness from Heaven.

But will ye mark, here are two truths, and in either verse one. This latter is the truth of *veritas orta est*, of Christ's religion. And in this treaty it was an article of *Imprimis*, Mercy not to meet any bit them that profess the truth of Christ's birth from the earth. Both these were born together; by and by upon the birth of Christ the truth, the other birth also of Christian truth, did flourish and spread itself all over the earth. The whole world before given over, and even grown over with idolatry, quite covered with the mist of error and ignorance, began then to entertain the Christian profession, and by it to "worship God in spirit and truth"—the true religion which is never true, if it have not this meeting. And this meeting it cannot have, if it have not the means of it, *ortus Veritatis de terro*.

The same say we likewise for the "Righteousness which looked down" and showed herself. It was not that of the Law which never came past the top of Mount Sinai, but a new Righteousness cast in a new mould; a Heavenly one which never saw the earth nor the earth it before, before this birth—which is the righteousness of Christ revealed in His Gospel; when that truth sprang, this righteousness looked down upon it.

Now as this of Mercy and Truth enter us; so Truth—not Truth alone, but Truth with Truth's pair—with Righteousness, carry us forward to God. Truth is not enough; not the truth of religion never so known, never so professed; not without Righteousness. Truth is but the light to guide us, Righteousness is the way to bring us thither. A light is to see by; a way is to go in; so is Righteousness. It follows straight, *ponet gressus in vio*, "Righteousness shall set us in the way" of His steps. Steps, that is the course of life. For *scienti*, by knowledge of the truth and not *facienti* by the practice of righteousness, *peccatum est illi*, saith St. James; and *plagæ multæ*, saith St. James' Master. Sin in that man that serves these two is less pardonable, and more punishable than in any other.

And then, turn Righteousness to Peace, and they will not meet barely but more than meet, "kiss" in sign there is between them more than ordinary affection. *Fac Justitiam et habebis Pacem*; St. Augustine stands much on this. "Eschew evil and do good," saith he—there is Righteousness. And then "seek Peace," and ye shall not be long in seeking it. She will come forth herself to meet Righteousness and kiss her. And this he assures us as a certain sign to know on the one side true Righteousness, for that tends to Peace not to questions and brabbles whereof there never will be end; so on the other side true Peace that kisses Righteousness comes not together like Samson's foxes by the tails, by indirect means, but clearly and fairly; such means as all the world will confess to be right and good.

Now mark the order how they stand. Mercy leads to Truth and the knowledge of it; and Truth to Righteousness, and the practice of it; and Righteousness

to Peace, and the ways of it "guides our feet" first "into the way of Peace." And such a way shall there always be, do all the controversy-writers what they can, a fair way agreed upon of all sides, questioned by none, in which whoso orders his steps aright "may see the salvation of our God," even the way here chalked out before us; to show Mercy, and speak Truth; do Righteousness, and follow Peace. And by this rule proceeding in the points whereto we are come already, even those truths wherein we are otherwise minded would in due time be revealed unto us.

This is Zachary's peace; and this of his well followed in the end will bring us Simeon's peace, *nunc dimittis in pace*; to be dismissed, "to depart hence in peace." And *pax in novissimo*, "peace at the latter end," is worth all. Peace in the end is a blessed end, and the beginning of a peace which never shall have end. Mercy our beginning, and Peace our end. This for the meeting; as in Christ, so in Christianity or the course of a Christian man's life.

Now a word for the continuance of this meeting. For I ask again, met they to part? By no means; but as they be together now, so to continue still. We had much ado to get them together thus. Now we have them so, let us keep them so in any wise. For as this meeting made Christianity first; so there is nothing mars it but the breaking it off again; no greater bane to it than the parting of these.

Let me tell you this: St. Augustine is very earnest upon this point of the keeping of Righteousness and Peace upon this Psalm and this verse, and of Truth and Mercy together in the next, upon *Misericors* and *Verax* against them that would lay hold on Mercy and let go Truth. O, saith he, that will not be; they met together, they will not part now; either without either will not be had. And so of the two to others. There be that would have Peace, and pass by righteousness. *Tu forte unam habere vis, et alteram non vis*, saith he, "you would gladly have one—Peace; and for Righteousness you could be contented to spare it. Ask any, would you have Peace? With all my heart, he will answer. There is no having one without the other; *osculantur hæ, amant hæ*, why they kiss, they love together." *Si amicam Pacis non amaveris, non amabit te Pax*, "if ye love not her friend, that is Righteousness, she will none of your love." Take that from St. Augustine.

Set this down then; Christianity is a meeting. One cannot meet. Two there must be, and they may. But it is not a meeting of two, but of two with two; so, no less than four. As Christ Himself was not one nature, so neither doth Christianity consist in any one virtue; not under four. There is a *quaternion* in Christ; His 1. Essence and His 2. Person *Ossia* and *Hypostasis*, in *Divinis*. His 3. Flesh and His 4. reasonable Soul in *humanis*. Answerable to these four are these here, these four to His four.

And as it is a meeting, so a cross meeting of four virtues that seem to be in a kind of opposition, as hath been noted. No matter for that. They will make the better refraction; the cool of one allay the heat, the moist of one temper the drought of the other. The soft virtues need to be quickened, the more forward to be kept from *altum sapere*. So are the elements of which our body, so are the four winds of which our breath doth consist which gives us life. And these in the text have an analogy or correspondence with the elements, observed by the ancients. 1. Truth as the “earth, which is not moved at any time.” 2. *Quasi fluvius pax*, saith Esay, “peace as a water-stream, the quills whereof make glad the City of God.” 3. Mercy we breathe and live by, no less than we do by air; and 4. Righteousness, she *ventura est judicare sæculum per ignem*, in that element.

You may happen to find one of these in Scripture stood much upon, and of the other three nothing said there, but all left out. Conceive of it as a figure, Synecdoche they call it. As ye have here man called earth; yet is he not earth alone, but all the other three elements as well. No more is Christianity any one but by Synecdoche, but in very deed a meeting of them all four.

It deceived the Gnostic, this place; “This is eternal life to know thee.” Knowledge, saith he, is it, as if it were all; and so bade care for nothing else but to know, and knowing live as they list. The Encratite, he was as far gone the other way; he lived straightly, and his tent was, *Non est curandum quid quique credat, id curandum modo quod quique faciat*, “So that ye hold a straight course of life, it skills not what ye hold in point of faith.” No meeting with these single virtues all.

Yes, it skills. For both these were wrong, both go for heretics. Christianity is a meeting, and to this meeting there go *pia dogmata* as well as *bona opera*—Righteousness as well as Truth. Err not this error then, to single any out as it were in disgrace of the rest; say not, one will serve the turn,—what should we do with the rest of the four? Take not a figure, and make of it a plain speech; seek not be saved by Synecdoche. Each of these is a quarter of Christianity, you shall never while you live make it serve for the whole.

The truth is,—sever them, and farewell all. Take any one from the rest, and it is as much as the whole is worth. For, as Bernard well observed, *non sunt virtutes si separentur*, “upon their separation they cease to be virtues.” For how loose a thing is Mercy, if it be quite devoid of Justice? We call it foolish pity. And how harsh a thing Justice, if it be utterly without all temper of Mercy! *Summa injuria* then, that is, “injustice at the highest.” Mercy, take Truth away, what hold is there of it? Who will trust it? Truth, take Mercy from it, it is severity rather than verity. Then Righteousness without

Peace, certainly wrong is much better—better than perpetual brabbling. And Peace without Righteousness, better a sword far. This, if you sunder them. But temper these together, and how blessed a mixture! Set a song of all four, and how heavenly a melody!

Entertain them then all four. 1. hope in Mercy; 2. faith in Truth; 3. fear of Righteousness; 4. love of Peace; *O quam præclara concordia!* O how loving a knot! How by all means to be maintained! How great pity to part it!

A little of the time now, when this meeting would be. No time amiss, no day in the year but upon entreaty they will be got to meet. Yet if any one day have a prerogative more than another, of all the days in the year on this day most kindly; the day we hold holy to the memory of this meeting; the day of *orta est*, the occasion of it. In remembrance of the first meeting then, they are apt and willing to meet upon it again; forward ever to meet the day they first met of themselves. But Christ this day born, this day to meet of course. One special end that He was born was that at His birth this meeting might be. If to-day then they should not meet, that were in a sort to evacuate Christ’s birth, if there should be a *Veritas orta* without an *obviaverunt sibi*; so that if we procure it not, we had as good keep no feast at all.

What is then the proper work of this day, but still to renew this meeting on it? For Christ’s birth we cannot entertain, but all these we must too, necessary attendants upon it every one. They be the virtues of His Nativity, these. At His birth Christ bethought Himself of all the virtues which He would have to attend on Him then; and these He made choice of then, and forever, to be the virtues of this feast.

The sooner and the better to procure this meeting, the Church meets us, as Melchizedek did Abraham, “with bread and wine,” but of a higher nature than his fare; prepares ever this day, a love-feast, whereat they may the rather meet. Where Truth from the earth may look up to Heaven and confess, and Righteousness from Heaven may look down to earth and pardon; where we may show Mercy in giving where need is; and offer Peace in forgiving where cause is; that so there may be a “meeting” of all hands.

And even so then let there be. So may our end be as the end of the first verse, in peace; and as the end of the second, in Heaven! So may all the blessings that came to mankind by this meeting, or by the birth of Christ the cause of it, meet in us and remain upon us, till as we now meet together at the birth, so we may then meet in a “perfect man in the measure of the fullness of the age of Christ”; as meet now at the Lamb’s yeaning, so meet then at the Lamb’s marriage; “be caught up in the clouds then to meet Him,” and there to reign forever with Him in His Kingdom of Glory!