

JOHN OF DAMASCUS

SERMON II ON THE DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS

[171] THERE is no one in existence who is able to praise worthily the holy death of God's Mother, even if he should have a thousand tongues and a thousand mouths. Not if all the most eloquent tongues could be united would their praises be sufficient. She is greater than all praise. Since, however, God is pleased with the efforts of a loving zeal, and the Mother of God with what concerns the service of her Son, suffer me now to revert again to her praises. This is in obedience to your orders, most excellent pastors, so dear to God, and we call upon the Word made flesh of her to come to our assistance. He gives speech to every mouth which is opened for Him. He is her sole pleasure and adornment. We know that in celebrating her praises we pay off our debt, [172] and that in so doing we are again debtors, so that the debt is ever beginning afresh. It is fitting that we should exalt her who is above all created things, governing them as Mother of the God who is their Creator, Lord, and Master. Bear with me you who hang upon the divine words, and receive my good will. Strengthen my desire, and be patient with the weakness of my words. It is as if a man were to bring a violet of royal purple out of season, or a fragrant rose with buds of different hues, or some rich fruit of autumn to a mighty potentate who is divinely appointed to rule over men. Every day he sits at a table laden with every conceivable dish in the perfumed courts of his palace. He does not look at the smallness of the offering, or at its novelty so much as he admires the good intention, and with reason. This he would reward with an abundance of gifts and favours. So we, in our winter of poverty,* bring garlands to our Queen, [172] and prepare a flower of oratory for the feast of praise. We break our mind's stony desire with iron, pressing, as it were, the unripe grapes. And may you receive with more and more favour the words which fall upon your eager and listening ears.

What shall we offer the Mother of the Word if not our words? Like rejoices in like and in what it loves. Thus, then, making a start and loosening the reins of my discourse, I may send it forth as a charger ready equipped for the race. But do Thou, O Word of God, be my helper and auxiliary, and speak wisdom to my unwisdom. By Thy word make my path clear, and direct my course according to Thy good pleasure, which is the end of all wisdom and discernment.

To-day the holy Virgin of Virgins is presented in the heavenly temple. Virginity in her was so strong as to be a consuming fire. It is forfeited in every case by child-birth. But she is ever a virgin, before the event, in the birth itself, and afterwards. To-day the sacred and living ark of the living God, who conceived her Creator Himself, takes up her abode in the temple of God, not made by hands. David, her [174] forefather,* rejoices. Angels and Archangels are in jubilation, Powers exult, Principalities and Dominations, Virtues and Thrones are in gladness: Cherubim and Seraphim magnify

God. Not the least of their Praise is it to refer praise to the Mother of glory. To-day the holy dove, the pure and guileless soul, sanctified by the Holy Spirit, putting off the ark of her body, the life-giving receptacle of Our Lord, found rest to the soles of her feet, taking her flight to the spiritual world, and dwelling securely in the sinless country above. To-day the Eden of the new Adam receives the true paradise, in which sin is remitted and the tree of life growl, and our nakedness is covered. For we are no longer naked and uncovered, and unable to bear the splendour of the divine likeness. Strengthened with the abundant grace of the Spirit, we shall no longer betray our nakedness in the words: "I have Put off my garment, how shall I put it on?" The serpent, by whose deceitful promise we were likened to brute beasts, did not enter into this paradise. He, the only begotten Son of God, God himself, of the same substance as the Father, took His [175] human nature of the pure Virgin. Being constituted a man, He made mortality immortal, and was clothed as a man. Putting aside corruption, He was indued with the incorruptibility of the Godhead.

To-day the spotless Virgin, untouched by earthly affections, and all heavenly in her thoughts, was not dissolved in earth, but truly entering heaven, dwells in the heavenly tabernacles. Who would be wrong to call her heaven, unless indeed he truly said that she is greater than heaven in surpassing dignity? The Lord and Creator of heaven, the Architect of all things beneath the earth and above, of creation, visible and invisible, Who is not circumvented by place (if that which surrounds things is rightly termed place), created Himself, without human co-operation, an Infant in her. He made her a rich treasure-house of His all-pervading and alone uncircumscribed Godhead, subsisting entirely in her without passion, remaining entire in His universality and Himself uncircumscribed. To-day the life-giving treasury and abyss of charity (I know not how to trust my lips to speak of it) is hidden in immortal death. She meets it [176] without fear, who conceived death's destroyer, if indeed we may call her holy and vivifying departure by the name of death. For how could she, who brought life to all, be under the dominion of death ? But she obeys the law of her own Son, and inherits this chastisement as a daughter of the first Adam, since her Son, who is the life, did not refuse it. As the Mother of the living God, she goes through death to Him. For if God said: "Unless the first man put out his hand to take and taste of the tree of life, he shall live for ever," how shall she, who received the Life Himself, without beginning or end, or finite vicissitudes, not live for ever.

Of old the Lord God banished from the garden of Eden our first parents after their disobedience, when they had dulled the eye of their heart through their sin, and weakened their mind's discernment, and had fallen into death-like apathy. But, now, shall not paradise receive her, who broke the bondage of all passion, sowed the seed of obedience to God and the Father, and was the beginning of life to the whole human race ? Will not heaven open its gates to her with rejoicing ? Yes, indeed. Eve listened to the serpent, adopted [177] his suggestion, was caught by the lure of false and deceptive pleasure, and was condemned to pain and sorrow, and to bear children in

suffering. With Adam she received the sentence of death, and was placed in the recesses of Limbo. How can death claim as its prey this truly blessed one, who listened to God's word in humility, and was filled with the Spirit, conceiving the Father's gift through the archangel, bearing without concupiscence or the co-operation of man the Person of the Divine Word, who fills all things, bringing Him forth, without the pains of childbirth, being wholly united to God? How could Limbo open its gates to her? How could corruption touch the life-giving body? These are things quite foreign to the soul and body of God's Mother. Death trembled before her. In approaching her Son, death had learnt experience from His sufferings, and had grown wiser. The gloomy descent to hell was not for her, but a joyous, easy, and sweet passage to heaven. If, as Christ, the Life and the Truth says: "Wherever I am, there is also my minister," how much more shall not His mother be with Him? She brought Him forth without pain, and her death, also, was painless. [178] The death of sinners is terrible, for in it, sin, the cause of death, is sacrificed. What shall we say of her if not that she is the beginning of perpetual life. Precious indeed is the death of His saints to the Lord God of powers. More than precious is the passing away of God's Mother. Now let the heavens and the angels rejoice: let the earth and men be full of gladness. Let the air resound with song and canticle, and dark night put off its gloom, and emulate the brightness of day through the scintillating stars. The living city of the Lord God is assumed from God's temple, the visible Sion, and kings bring forth His most precious gift, their mother, to the heavenly Jerusalem, that is to say, the apostles constituted princes by Christ, over all the earth, accompany the ever virginal Mother of God.

It seems to me not superfluous to bring forward and insist on the past types of this holy one, the Mother of God. These types succinctly announced the Divine Child whom we have received. I look upon His Mother as the saint of saints, the holiest of all, the fragrant urn for the manna, or rather, to speak more truly, the fountain taking its rise in the [179] divine and far-famed city of David, in Sion the glorious; in it the law is fulfilled and the spiritual law is portrayed. In Sion, Christ the Law-giver consummated the typical pasch, and God, the Author of the old and the new dispensation, gave us the true pasch. In it the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, initiated His disciples unto His mystical feast, and gave them Himself slain as a victim, and the grape pressed in the true vine. In Sion, Christ is seen by His apostles, risen from the dead, and Thomas is told, and through Thomas the world, that He is Lord and God, having in Himself two natures after His resurrection, and consequently two operations, independent wills, enduring for all ages. Sion is the crown of churches, the resting-place of disciples. In it the echo of the Holy Spirit, the gift of tongues, His fiery descent are transmitted to the apostles. In it St John, taking the Mother of God, ministered to her wants. Sion is the mother of churches in the whole world, who offered a resting-place to the Mother of God after her Son's resurrection from the dead. In it, lastly, the Blessed Virgin was stretched on a small bed.

[180] When I had reached this point of my discourse, I was obliged to give vent to my own feelings, and burning with loving desire, to shed reverent yet joyful tears, embracing, as it were, the bed so happy and blest and wondrous, which received the life-giving tabernacle and rejoiced in the contact of holiness. I seemed to take into my arms that holy and sacred body itself, worthy of God, and pressing my eyes, lips, and forehead, head, and cheeks to hers, I felt as if she was really there, though I was unable to see with my eyes what I desired. How, then, was she assumed to the heavenly courts? In this way. What were the honours then conferred upon her by God who commands us to honour our parents? The cloud which enclosed Jerusalem as with a net, by the divine commands, brought together eagles from the ends of the earth, those who are spread over the world, fishing for men in the various and numerous tongues of the spirit. By the net of the word they are saving men from the abyss of doubt and bringing them to the spiritual and heavenly table of the sacred and mystical banquet, the perfect marriage feast of the Divine Bridegroom, [181] which the Father celebrates with His Son, who is equal to Himself and of the same nature. "Where the spirit is," says Christ the Truth, "there shall the eagles be gathered together." If we have already spoken concerning the second great and splendid coming of Him who spoke these words, it will not be out of place here by way of condiment.

Eye-witnesses, then, and ministers of the word were there, duly ministering to His Mother, and drawing from her a rich inheritance, as it were, and a full measure of praise. For is it a matter of doubt to any one that she is the source of blessing and the fountain of all good? Their followers and successors also were there, joining in their ministry and in their praise. A common labour produces common fruits. A chosen band from Jerusalem were there. It was fitting that the foremost men and prophets of the old law, they who had foretold God the Word's saving birth of her in time, should be there as a guard of honour. Nor did the angelic choirs fail. They who obeyed the king heartily (kata gnwmhn) and consequently were honoured by standing near Him, had the right [182] to serve as a body-guard to His Mother, according to the flesh, the truly blessed and blissful one, surpassing all generations and all creation. All those were with her who are the brightness and the shining of the spirit, with spiritual eyes fixed upon her in reverence, and fear, and pure desire.

We hear divine and inspired words, and spiritual canticles appropriate to the parting hour. On this account it was meet to praise His boundless goodness, His immeasurable greatness, His omnipotence, the generosity surpassing all measure in His dealings with us, the overflowing riches of His mercy, the abyss of His tenderness; how, putting aside His greatness, He descended to our littleness with the co-operation of the Father and the Holy Spirit. Again, the supersubstantial One is supersubstantially created in the virginal womb. Being God He became man, and remains according to this union perfect God and perfect man, not giving up the

substance of His Godhead nor ceasing to be of the same flesh and blood as we are. He, who fills all things and governs the universe with one word, took up His abode in a narrow place, and the material body of [183] this blessed one received the burning fire of the Godhead, and as genuine gold it remained intact. This has taken place because God willed it, since His good pleasure makes things possible which could not happen without it. Then followed a strife of praise, not as if each was seeking to outdo the other--for this is vainglorious and far from pleasing to God--but as if they would leave nothing undone for the glory of God and the honour of God's Mother.

Then Adam and Eve, our first parents, opened their lips to exclaim, "Thou blessed daughter of ours, who hast removed the penalty of our disobedience! Thou, inheriting from us a mortal body, hast won us immortality. Thou, taking thy being from us, hast given us back the being in grace. Thou hast conquered pain and loosened the bondage of death. Thou hast restored us to our former state. We had shut the door of paradise; thou didst find entrance to the tree of life. Through us sorrow came out of good; through thee good from sorrow. How canst thou who art all fair taste of death? Thou art the gate of life and the ladder to heaven. Death is [184] become the passage to immortality. O thou e trully blessed one! who that is not the Word could have borne what thou hast borne?"*

All the company of the saints exclaimed, "Thou hast fulfilled our predictions. Thou hast purchased our present joy for us. Through thee we have broken the chains of death. Come to us, divine and life-giving receptacle. Come, our desire, thou who hast gained us our desire."

And the saints standing by added their no less burning words: "Remain with us, our comfort, our sole joy in this world. O Mother leave us not orphans who have suffered on thy Son's account. May we have thee as a refuge and refreshment in our labours and weariness. Thou canst remain if thou so willest, even as thou canst depart hence. if thou departest, O dwelling-place of God let us go too, if we are thine through thy Son. Thou art our sole consolation on earth. We live as long as thou livest, and it is bliss to die with thee. Why do we speak of death? Death is life to thee, and better than life-- [185] incomparably exceeding this life. How is our life--life, if we are deprived of thee?"

The apostles and all the assembly of the Church may well have addressed some such words to the blessed Virgin. When they saw the Mother of God near her end and longing for it, they were moved by divine grace to sing farewell hymns, and wrapt out of the flesh, they sighed to accompany the dying Mother of God, and anticipated death through intensity of will. When they had all satisfied their duty of loving reverence and had woven her a rich crown of hymns, they spoke a parting blessing over her, as a God-given treasure, and the last words. These, I should think, were significant of this life's fleetingness, and of its leading to the hidden mysteries of future goods.

This, it appears to me, is what they did at once and unanimously. The King was there to receive with divine embrace* the holy, undefiled, and stainless soul of His Mother on her going home. And she, as we may well conjecture, said, "Into Thy hands, O my Son, I commend my spirit. Receive my soul, dear [186] to Thee, which Thou didst keep spotless. I give my body to Thee, not to the earth. Guard that which Thou wert pleased to inhabit and to preserve in virginity. Take to Thyself me that wherever Thou art, the fruit of my womb, there I too may be. I am impelled to Thee who didst descend to me. Do Thou be the consolation of my most cherished children, whom Thou didst vouchsafe to call Thy brethren, when my death leaves them in loneliness. Bless them afresh through my hands." Then stretching out her hands, as we may believe, she blessed all those present, and then she heard the words "Come, my beloved Mother, to thy rest. Arise and come, most dear amongst women, the winter is past and gone, the harvest time is at hand.* Thou art fair, my beloved, and there is no stain in thee. Thy fragrance is sweeter than all ointments." With these words in her ear, that holy one gave up her spirit into the hands of her Son.

What happens? Nature, I conjecture, is stirred to its depths, strange sounds and voices are heard, and the swelling hymns of angels [187] who precede, accompany, and follow her. Some constitute the guard of honour to that undefiled and immaculate (panagia) soul on its way to heaven until the queen reaches the divine throne. Others surrounding the sacred and divine body proclaim God's Mother in angelic harmony. What of those who watched by the most holy and immaculate (panagiw) body? In loving reverence and with tears of joy they gathered round the blessed and divine tabernacle, embracing every member, and were filled with holiness and thanksgiving. Then illnesses were cured, and demons were put to flight and banished to the regions of darkness. The air and atmosphere and heavens were sanctified by her passage through them, the earth by the burial of her body. Nor was water deprived of a blessing. She was washed in pure water. It did not cleanse her, but was rather itself sanctified. Then, hearing was given to the deaf, the lame recovered their feet, and the blind, their sight. Sinners who approached with faith blotted out the handwriting against them. Then the holy body is wrapped in a snow-white winding-sheet, and the queen is again laid, upon her bed. Then [188] follow lights and incense and hymns, and angels singing as befits the solemnity; apostles and patriarchs acclaiming her in inspired song.

When the Ark of God, departing from Mount Sion for the heavenly country, was borne on the shoulders of the Apostles, it was placed on the way in the tomb. First it was taken through the city, as a bride dazzling with spiritual radiance, and then carried to the sacred place of Gethsemane, angels overshadowing it with their wings, going before, accompanying, and following it, together with the whole assembly of the Church. King Solomon compelled all the elders of Israel in Sion to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord from the city of David, that is Sion, to rest in the temple of the

Lord, which he had built, and the priests took the ark and the tabernacle of the testimony, and the priests and levites raised it. And the king and all the people sacrificed numberless oxen and sheep before the ark. And the priests carried in the ark of the testimony of God into its place, into the Holy of Holies, beneath the wings of the cherubim. So is it now with the [189] dwelling-place of the true ark, no longer of the testimony, but the very substance of God the Word. The new Solomon, the Prince of peace, the Creator of all things in the heavens and on the earth, assembled together to-day the supporters of the new covenant, that is the Apostles, with all the people of the saints in Jerusalem, brought in her soul through angels to the true Holy of Holies, under the wings of the four living creatures, and set her on His throne within the Veil, where Christ Himself had preceded her. Her body the while is borne by the Apostles' hands, the King of Kings covering her with the splendour of His invisible Godhead, the whole assembly of the saints preceding her, with sacred song and sacrifice of praise until through the tomb it was placed in the delights of Eden, the heavenly tabernacles.

Perchance, Jews also were there, if any, not too reprobate were to be found. It will not be beside the mark to mention here a thing that is asserted by many. It is said that when those, who were carrying the blessed body of God's Mother, had reached the descent of the opposite mountains, a certain Jew, the slave of [190] sin, and pledged by his folly, imitated the servant of Caiphas, who struck the divine Face of Christ our Lord and Master, and made himself the devil's instrument. Full of wicked passion and malice, he rushed at that most divine tabernacle, which angels approached with fear, and impiously dragged the bier with both his hands to the ground. This was prompted by the envy of the arch enemy, but his labours were in vain, and he reaped a severe and fitting reminder of his deed. It is said that he lost the use of his hands, which had perpetrated his malicious deed, until faith moved him to repentance. The bearers were standing near. The wretched man placed his hands on the wondrous and life-giving tabernacle, and they again became sound. Circumstances had made him wise, as often happens. But let us return to our subject.

Then they reached the most sacred Gethsemane, and once more there were embracings and prayers and panegyrics, hymns and tears, poured forth by sorrowful and loving hearts. They mingled a flood of weeping and sweating.* And thus the immaculate (panagion) [191] body was laid in the tomb. Then it was assumed after three days to the heavenly mansions. The bosom of the earth was no fitting receptacle for the Lord's dwelling-place, the living source of cleansing water, the corn of heavenly bread, the sacred vine of divine wine, the evergreen and fruitful olive-branch of God's mercy. And just as the all holy body of God's Son, which was taken from her, rose from the dead on the third day, it followed that she should be snatched from the tomb, that the mother should be united to her Son; and as He had come down to her, so she should be raised up to Him, into the more perfect dwelling-place, heaven itself. It was meet that she, who had sheltered God the Word in her own womb, should

inhabit the tabernacles of her Son. And as our Lord said it behoved Him to be concerned with His Father's business, so it behoved His mother that she should dwell in the courts of her Son, in the house of the Lord, and in the courts of the house of our God. If all those who rejoice dwell in Him, where must the cause itself of joy abide? It was fitting that the body of her, who preserved her virginity unsullied in her [192] motherhood, should be kept from corruption even after death. She who nursed her Creator as an infant at her breast, had a right to be in the divine tabernacles. The place of the bride whom the Father had espoused, was in the heavenly courts. It was fitting that she who saw her Son die on the cross, and received in her heart the sword of pain which she had not felt in childbirth, should gaze upon Him seated next to the Father. The Mother of God had a right to the possession of her Son, and as handmaid and Mother of God to the worship of all creation. The inheritance of the parents ever passes to the children. Now, as a wise man said, the sources of sacred waters are above. The Son made all creation serve His Mother.

Let us then also keep solemn feast to-day to honour the joyful departure of God's Mother, not with flutes nor corybants, nor the orgies of Cybele, the mother of false gods, as they say, whom foolish people talk of as a fruitful mother of children, and truth as no mother at all. These are demons and false imaginings. They usurp what they are not by nature to impose upon human folly. For how can what [193] is bodiless lead the wedded life?* How can that be god which, not being before, is present only after birth? That devils were bodiless is apparent to all, even to those who are intellectually blind. Homer somewhere testifies to the condition of the gods he honours:

They eat not barley, and drink not ruddy wine,
So they are bloodless and are called immortal.

They eat not bread, he says, neither do they drink fiery wine. On this account they are anaemic, that is, without blood, and are called immortals. He truly and appropriately says, "are called." They are called immortals. They are not that which they are called. They died the death of wickedness. Now we worship God, not God beginning His being, but who always was and is above all cause and argument or created mind or nature. We honour and reverence the Mother of God, not ascribing to her the eternal generation of His Godhead. For the generation of God the Word was not in time, and was co-eternal with the Father. We acknowledge a second generation in His spontaneous taking flesh, and we see and know the cause of this. He [194] who is without beginning and without body takes flesh for us as one of ourselves. And taking flesh of this sacred Virgin, He is born without man, remaining Himself perfect God, and becoming perfect man, perfect God in His flesh, and perfect Man in His Godhead. Thus, recognising God's Mother in this Virgin, we celebrate her falling asleep, not proclaiming her as God--far be from us these heathen fables--since we are announcing her death, but recognising her as the Mother of the Incarnate God.

O people of Christ, let us acclaim her to-day in sacred song, acknowledge our own good fortune and proclaim it. Let us honour her in nocturnal vigil; let us delight in her purity of soul and body, for she next to God surpasses all in purity. It is natural for similar things to glory in each other. Let us show our love for her by compassion and kindness towards the poor. For if mercy is the best worship of God, who will refuse to show His Mother devotion in the same way? She opened to us the unspeakable abyss of God's love for us. Through her the old enmity against the Creator is destroyed. Through her our [195] reconciliation with Him is strengthened, peace and grace are given to us, men are the companions of angels, and we, who were in dishonour, are made the children of God. From her we have plucked the fruit of life. From her we have received the seed of immortality. She is the channel of all our goods. In her God was man and man was God. What more marvellous or more blessed? I approach the subject in fear and trembling. With Mary, the prophetess, O youthful souls, let us sound our musical instruments, mortifying our members on earth, for this is spiritual music. Let our souls rejoice in the Ark of God, and the walls of Jericho will yield, I mean the fortresses of the enemy. Let us dance in spirit with David; to-day the Ark of God is at rest. With Gabriel, the great archangel, let us exclaim, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Hail, inexhaustible ocean of grace. Hail, sole refuge in grief. Hail, cure of hearts. Hail, through whom death is expelled and life is installed."

And you I will speak to as if living, most sacred of tombs, after the life-giving tomb of our Lord which is the source of the resurrection. [196] Where is the pure gold which apostolic hands confided to you? Where is the inexhaustible treasure? Where the precious receptacle of God? Where is the living table? Where the new book in which the incomprehensible Word of God is written without hands? Where is the abyss of grace and the ocean of healing? Where is the life-giving fountain? Where is the sweet and loved body of God's Mother?

Why do you seek in the tomb one who has been assumed to the heavenly courts? Why do you make me responsible for not keeping her? I was powerless to go against the divine commands. That sacred and holy body, leaving the winding-sheet behind, filled me full of sweet fragrance, sanctified me by its contact, and fulfilled the divine scheme, and was then assumed, angels and archangels and all the heavenly powers escorting it. Now angels surround me, and divine grace abounds in me. I am the physician of the sick. I am a perpetual source of health, and the terror of demons. I am a city of refuge for fugitives. Approach with faith and you will receive a sea of graces. Come, you of weak faith. All you [197] that thirst, come to the waters in obedience to Isaias' commands, and you who have no money, come and buy for nothing. I call upon all with the Gospel invitation. Let him who longs for bodily or spiritual cure, forgiveness of sins, deliverance from misfortune, the possession of heaven, approach me with faith, and draw hence a strong and rich stream of grace. Just as the action of one and the same water acts differently on the earth, air, and sun, according to the

nature of each, producing wine in the vine and oil in the olive-tree, so does one and the same grace profit each person according to his needs. I do not possess grace on my own account. A tomb given up to corruption, an object of sorrow and dejection, I receive a precious ointment, and am impregnated with it, and this sweet fragrance alters my condition whilst it lasts. Truly, divine graces flow where they will. I have sheltered the source of joy, and I have become rich in its perennial fountain.*

What shall we answer the tomb? You have indeed rich and abiding grace, but divine power is not restricted by place, neither is the Mother [198] of God's working. If it were confined to the tomb alone, few would be the richer. Now it is freely distributed in all parts of the world. Let us then make our memory serve as a storehouse of God's Mother. How shall this be? She is a virgin and a lover of virginity. She is pure and a lover of purity. If we purify our mind with the body, we shall possess her grace. She shuns all impurity and impure passions. She has a horror of intemperance, and a special hatred for fornication. She turns from its allurements as from the progeny of serpents . . . She looks upon all sin as death-inflicting rejoicing in all good. Contraries are cured by contraries. She delights in fasting and continence and spiritual canticles, in purity, virginity, and wisdom. With these she is ever at peace, and takes them to her heart. She embraces peace and a meek spirit, and love, mercy, and humility as her children. In a word, she grieves over every sin, and is glad at all goodness as if it were her own. If we turn away from our former sins in all earnestness and love goodness with all our hearts, and make it our constant companion, she will frequently visit her servants, bringing all [199] blessings with her, Christ her Son, the King and Lord who reigns in our hearts. To Him be glory, praise, honour, power, and magnificence, with the eternal Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever.