

Psalms, Sermon III

Renovation Sermon

Octave of the Epiphany

Delivered 13 January 1494[5]

*Ecce gladius Domini super terram cito et velociter.*¹

Our intention this morning is to repeat all that we have said and preached in Florence over these past years about the renewal of the Church, which will happen *all at once* and soon. We will go through this repetition so that those who have not heard [these things] in the past may understand and know that [this] renewal must certainly occur and soon. And may those who have heard it before and believe be confirmed this morning [in their belief]; may those who have not believed or do not believe be converted; and may those who will not believe, ever obstinate as they are, at least be left blankly confounded by the reasons we shall adduce.

In every creature, its creation is limited, both its being and its power; eternity has no limit or end, *quia aeternitas est interminabilis vitae perpetua possessio.*² Time is not all joined together, while eternity is, because time is partly past, partly present, and partly future. But God, Who can do anything, is eternal and embraces all time because everything is present to Him; what has been and what is and what will be are always present to Him, and He sees and understands everything in the present. And just as we have said, God can do everything and understands everything, so a creature, the more it rises above materiality, the more it is able to do and the more it understands; for this reason, man is more capable and understands more than any other animal. So, then, the angel, elevated above the material even more than man, understands and knows more than man and is capable of more. Therefore, angels know the order of the whole universe, but future things, which are contingent, which can be or not be, and which depend upon man's free will, neither angel nor any other creature knows them, for God has reserved to Himself alone this knowledge of the future and communicates it to whomever He pleases, however much and whenever He likes. Indeed, it is true that angels know those future things which come about through a necessary cause, just as the astrologer does who predicts a future eclipse by the necessary motion of the heavens. Angels also see and assess things

1. "Behold, the sword of the Lord [will be] over the earth soon and swiftly."

2. "Because eternity is the perpetual possession of unending life."

through causes *quae contingit ut in pluribus*,³ such as, for example, that the olive tree will bear olives, that wheat will make wheat, for this almost always happens *et contingit ut in pluribus*, though at times, the opposite happens *et contingit ut in paucioribus*.⁴ On account of this, it can obviously be concluded that divination and that branch of astrology which seems to divine *de futuris contingentibus*⁵ are utterly false, for future things and those things which depend upon free will, which can be or not be, only God and any creature to whom God wants to reveal them know, as we have said. Therefore, I say that astrology, since it tries to divine the future, is the cause of much superstition and heresy.

Why such astrology is altogether false I can prove to you as follows: either philosophy is true or it is false; if it is true, astrology is false, for philosophy says that *de futuris contingentibus non est determinata veritas*,⁶ if philosophy is false, then astrology is also false, because philosophy demonstrates those things which the astrologer presupposes *tamquam principia*.⁷ If, then, philosophy is false, and it demonstrates the first principles of astrology, then they will be false; if the principles of the astrologer are false, then whatever follows from them will also be false.

In the second place, I [will] prove it to you: either our faith is true or it is false. If it is true, then astrology is false, for the canons of the faith reprove it; if the faith is false, then astrology is also false because the faith of Christ—which began *a principio mundi*,⁸ because then they believed that Christ would come, while we believe that He has come—according to the astrologer, comes from the inclination of a fixed star which inclines men to this faith, but this faith is false. Therefore, astrology is false, because these stars, which incline [men] to falseness and on which astrology is founded, are a false thing; therefore, astrology is false.

Item, if the faith of Christ is false, in which there is more goodness, justice, and morality than in any other faith, then every other faith is false; therefore, it follows that astrology is false, since it inclines [men] to believe

3. "Which happen most of the time." The *quae* refers back to a singular *causa*. Statements on the angels' knowledge of futurity derive from Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, part 1.1, quest. 57, art. 3. The analogy of the astrologer comes from quest. 86, art. 4 and quest. 95, art. 1.

4. "And it may happen very rarely."

5. "Future contingencies." Savonarola's following *reductio ad absurdum* of astrology, though he does distinguish between the astronomical and divinatory aspects, is peculiarly apposite for the season of Epiphany.

6. "The truth concerning future contingencies has not been determined"; *Summa*, part 2.2, quest. 171, art. 3.

7. "As first principles."

8. "From the beginning of the world."

this falseness. You must conclude, then, from what has been said above, that divination and suchlike astrology is false, and that future things which depend on free will are uncertain to every creature, but they are certain to God and to those to whom He reveals them.

Moreover, first principles are more certain than their conclusions, which are inferred from them by our intellects, but for God there is no such intervention because He does not know causes through their effects; to Him conclusions are known from their principles and effects from their causes without reasoning it out. Angels also partake of this light, for they understand without reasoning it out. The prophets also had some of this light from God, and so David has said in the psalm: *In omnem terram exivit sonus cornu*⁹ [Ps. 18:5], meaning the Apostles, who would come many, many years after David; and *nonetheless*, he, with that light, already saw their works as accomplished fact. Through this light, also, the holy prophets understand from external signs what they mean intrinsically, as Daniel did when, at the time of King Baltasar, that hand wrote those signs on the wall, that is, *Mame, Thecel, Phares*; he understood the sense and intrinsic significance of those signs and extrinsic letters [Dan. 5:25–26]. Therefore, this light is a participation in eternity, which God communicates to whomever He wants.

"Come now, brother, what do you mean by this? Where did you get these things which you have predicted here for four years?" I do not need to tell you this, because the mind is not disposed to understand it. I have shared it with some of my friends, one or at most two. But I want to tell you that you must believe, for I am not mad, and I do not exert myself for no reason. In the past, I, too, would laugh at such things, but God allowed this [to happen] to me so that I would feel compassion for you when you disbelieved like this. But, truly, you ought to believe, because you have already seen a great many of the things I have preached here verified, and I tell you that the rest will also be verified, and not one iota will be lacking; I am more certain of this than you are that two and two make four, more certain than I am that I touch the wood of this pulpit, because this light is more certain than the sense of touch. But I want you to know that this light still does not justify me; Balaam, who prophesied, was nonetheless a sinner and wrongdoer even though he had this light of prophecy [Num. 22:32–35]. I say to you, Florence, that this light has been given me for your sake, not mine, for this light does not make a man pleasing to God. I also want you to know that I began to see these things more than fifteen, maybe twenty years ago, but I began to speak of them only in the last ten years; first in Brescia, when I preached there, I said some things; later God allowed me

9. "The sound of them has gone out through all the earth." The Vulgate has *universam terram*.

to come to Florence, which is the navel of Italy, so that you might give notice of them to all the other cities of Italy.

But you, Florence, have heard with your ears not me, but God. Other [cities] of Italy have heard only from what others have said, so you will have no excuse, Florence, if you are not converted; believe me, Florence, it is not I, but God, Who says these things. This is understandable because you have seen this nation, which was headed down an evil path, turn back to penitence; do not suppose that such an effect could be brought about by a poor little friar if God had not worked in him. Believe, then, Florence, and be converted; do not think that your scourge has passed away, for I see the sword turning back.

The stone, by its nature, is drawn downward and knows not why; the swallow makes its nest on the ground and knows not why, for they do so by natural instinct, and they do not know the reason why they act in this way. But man is guided by free will. Similar to this are those who, in their simplicity, have foretold many things without knowing why. Some others have foretold many things not from simplicity, but knowing the cause and the reason why. And so, in whichever of these two ways you want to say that a thing can be predicted, I have predicted this: that all Italy will be turned upside down, and Rome, and afterward the Church, must be renewed. But you do not believe; however, you should believe, because God has told you so, rather than I.

Let us now begin with the reasons I have been citing for many years gone by, which demonstrate and prove the [coming] renewal of the Church. Some reasons are probable, and, so, they can be contradicted. Others are demonstrable and, so, cannot be contradicted because they are founded upon Holy Scripture. Those which I will tell you are all demonstrable, all founded on Holy Scripture.

The first is *propter pollutionem praelatorum*.¹⁰ When you see a good head, you say that the body is well; when the head is bad, woe to the body. So, when God allows ambition, lechery, and other vices to be [found] in the head of government, believe that God's scourge is near. I [will] prove it to you: go, read IV Kings about Sedecias' end, where it says: *Dominus irascebatur contra Jerusalem*.¹¹ [IV Reg. 24:20]. *Item*, in I Kings, where it says that God allowed David [*sic*; Saul?] to sin in order to punish the people. One reads the same about Manasses [IV Reg. 24:3]. So, when you see God permitting the heads of the Church to overflow with wickedness and simony, say that the scourge of the people draws near. I do not say that it is [now] in the heads of the Church; I say *when* you see it.

10. "On account of the uncleanness of prelates."

11. "The Lord was enraged against Jerusalem."

The second is *propter assumptionem*¹² of the good and the just. Whenever God takes away the holy and the good, say that the scourge is near. This can be proved: when God wanted to send the Flood, He removed Noe and his family [Gen. 6]. *Item*, He rescued Lot from Sodom when He wanted to burn it [Gen. 19]. Consider how many men can be found nowadays whom you can call just and good, and so, say that the scourge is near and that the wrath and the sword of God has moved.

The third is *propter exclusionem iustorum*.¹³ When you see that a lord or leader of government does not want the good and the just near him, but banishes them because he does not want the truth to be told, say that God's scourge is near.

The fourth is *propter desiderium iustorum*.¹⁴ When you see that all men of good life desire and call for the scourge, believe that it has to come soon. Look today and see if everyone cries out for the scourge; believe me, Florence, your punishment would already have come if it were not for the prayers and devotions of the good; believe me that today you would be a wasteland.¹⁵

The fifth is *propter obstinationem peccatorum*.¹⁶ When sinners are obstinate and do not want to be converted to God and neither value nor appreciate those who call them to the good way, but always go from bad to worse and are obstinate in their vices, say that God is angry. This reason and the two preceding can be proved by what God did to Jerusalem, when He sent so many prophets and holy men to try to convert that people, but they remained obstinate and hunted down the prophets and stoned them, while all the good seemed to be crying out for the scourge. Likewise, many miracles were sent to Pharaoh, but He remained obstinate [Ex. 7-10]. And so, Florence, expect the scourge, since you know how long you have been told to be converted, and yet you have remained obstinate. And you, Rome, Rome! You, too, have been told, and yet you remain in your obstinacy, and so expect the wrath of God.

The sixth is *propter multitudinem peccatorum*.¹⁷ Because of David's pride the plague was sent [II Reg. 24]. Consider whether Rome is full of pride, lust, avarice, and simony! Consider whether her sins are continually multiplied, and say, therefore, that the scourge is near, and the renewal of the Church is near.

12. "On account of the removal."

13. "On account of the exclusion of the just."

14. "On account of the desire of the just."

15. The word used is *gitarino*, "garden," but the sense is obviously negative.

16. "On account of the obstinacy of sinners."

17. "On account of a multitude of sinners" (*sic*).

The seventh is *propter exclusionem virtutum primarum, scilicet charitatis et fidei*.¹⁸ In the time of the early Church, no one lived without complete faith and complete charity. Consider how much of these are in the world today. You, Florence, want to look after your ambition instead, and everyone promotes himself. Believe that you have no remedy but penance, for the scourge of God is near.

The eighth is *propter negationem credendorum*.¹⁹ Consider that today it seems that no one believes and has faith any more, and everyone, in effect, says, "So what?" When you see this, say that the scourge is near.

The ninth is *propter perditum cultum divinum*.²⁰ Go, see what is done in God's churches and with what devotion people attend. Today divine worship has run to ruin! You will say, "Oh, there are so many religious and so many priests, more than there have ever been before! Would that we had fewer!" O clergy, clergy, *propter te orta est haec tempestas!*²¹ [approximates Ion. 1:12] You are the cause of all this wickedness! And yet, everyone thinks himself blessed if he has a priest in the house. But I tell you that the time will come, and soon, when they will say, "Blessed is that house without a tonsure in it!"

The tenth is *propter universalem opinionem*.²² See, everyone seems to be preaching and waiting for the scourge and tribulations, and everyone seems to feel it would be just that punishment for such great iniquity should come. The abbot Joachim [da Fiore]²³ and many others preach and announce that this scourge has to come at this time. These are the reasons why I have preached to you about the renewal of the Church. Now let us talk about symbols which demonstrate it.

In order to discuss the figures of Holy Scripture, it has to be borne in mind that Scripture has two senses: first, a literal one, which is what the one who composed and wrote the letter understands by it; the second is a mystical sense, which is conveyed in three modes: allegorical, tropological, and anagogical.

We will take the allegorical sense. Understand that in order for any writing to have an allegorical sense, three things are necessary: first, that it have a literal sense; second, that it be historical and not fictional—therefore, poems do not have an allegorical sense; third, that it be Holy Scripture; fur-

18. "On account of disregard for the primary virtues, that is, charity and faith."

19. "On account of the denial of belief."

20. "On account of the decay of divine worship."

21. "Because of you this storm has arisen!"

22. "On account of universal opinion."

23. 1132?-1202; Cistercian mystic, whose prophecies were condemned in 1236 by Pope Alexander IV, largely because of their appropriation by the radical Franciscan Spirituals.

thermore, allegorically speaking, the Old Testament signified and figured the New.

Item, there was a cherub on the Ark of the Law, and he faced another cherub [Ex. 25:19; 37:8-9]: they figured the Old and New Testaments.

Item, *rota erat in rota*²⁴ [Ezech. 1:16; 10:10]: the two wheels signify the same thing.

In another place it says: *Et factum est verbum Domini et vidi*.²⁵ This message begins from "et" (for it is customary with the prophets, in whom the Spirit of God begins first to speak within them, and later they utter the words and join the words within to those without), and continues to say: *et vidi virum cum funiculo venire et mensurare Hierusalem, et postea tacuit*²⁶ [Zach. 2:1-2]; the prophet saw someone, and this figure Christ, Who came to measure Jerusalem—*that is*, the Church and how great the charity of the Church was—and He measured it with a cord, *that is*, with the wisdom of God, which measures everything. And after He measured the breadth, he remained silent, that is, from the breadth He also knew the length, which must be proportioned to the breadth. And so, He knew how great was the Church's charity, which must be broad and long, because it is broadened and extended to one's neighbor, and even to one's enemy. But when I expounded this prophecy to you, I told you that the Church has two walls: one is the prelates of the Church, the other, the secular princes, who also have to support the Church. But when God comes to measure the Church, He will find neither of these walls, because one has fallen on top of the other in such a way that both are ruined, and all the squared stones of these walls have been broken and are no longer square, that is, they do not have the breadth of charity, and they have become round stones, converted to their own welfare and gathered within themselves. With these stones they have

24. "A wheel was within a wheel." The Vulgate has *quasi sit rota in medio rotae* ("as if there were a wheel in the middle of a wheel").

25. "And the word of the Lord was done and I saw." This conflates two prophetic locutions: *et factum est verbum Domini ad me dicens* ("and the word of the Lord was directed to me, saying") and *et levavi oculos meos et vidi* ("and I lifted my eyes and saw").

26. "And I saw a man with a cord come and measure Jerusalem, and afterward, he was silent." This significantly differs from the Vulgate: *et levavi oculos meos et vidi et ecce vir et in manu eius funiculus mensurum/et dixi quo tu vadis et dixit ad me ut metiar Hierusalem et videam quanta sit latitudo eius et quanta longitudo eius/et ecce angelus qui loquebatur in me egrediebatur* (Zacch. 2:1-3; "And I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold! a man and in his hand a cord for measuring; and I said, 'Where are you going?' and he said to me, 'To measure Jerusalem, and I shall see what may be her latitude and what her longitude.' And behold! the angel who was speaking within me went forth").

bombarded the city, that is, with their bad example they have corrupted and ruined the city and its citizens. The scourge, however, is near, as it was and came to be in Jerusalem.

The second figure I explained to you was the one in which no one in Jerusalem was allowed to possess weapons for any reason, and no blacksmith could make any weapons; even goads for pricking oxen had to be blunted²⁷ [I Reg. 13:19-22]. The smith, who is always at the fire, signified the fire of charity, which must always stay and burn within us. The hammer, which pounds, is constant prayer, which must always pound away at God: "*Perussate et aperietur vobis*"²⁸ [Matt. 7:7; Luc. 11:9]. The blunted goad was philosophy, which does not prick as forcefully as does knowledge of Holy Scripture. But King Nabuchodonosor came and cruelly scourged that people, which had no weaponry²⁹ [IV Reg. 24:14, 16], that is, charity. The same will soon happen to the Church, in which there remains today no single speck of charity.

The third figure I explained to you was that of the Apocalypse, in which he said he saw four horses, one white, the second red, the third black, and the fourth pale [Apoc. 6:1-8]. And I told you that the white signified the time of the Apostles; the red signified the time of the martyrs, which was the second stage of the Church; the black signified the time of the heretics, which was the third stage of the Church; the pale signified the time of the lukewarm, which is today. Therefore, I told you that the renewal of the Church had to be undertaken, and soon. Otherwise, God will give His vineyard, that is, Rome and the Church, to others to cultivate, because in Rome there remains no charity at all, but only the devil. And this suffices for the figures. Now I will explain the parables which signify the Church's renewal.

The first parable is this. A citizen has a farm, on which two pieces of land touch each other, one full of rocks and thorns and weeds and everything unproductive, and this field the citizen does not plow or cultivate. The other field he plows and cultivates every year and prepares it with all solicitude, for it seems to be good land for producing crops; nonetheless, that citizen has never extracted any harvest from it. Tell me: what do you think that citizen will do with these two fields? Certainly, if he is prudent, he will take all those rocks and thorns which are in the first field and throw them all in this field. He will begin to plough and cultivate this other land. The citizen is Christ, Who has become a citizen, that is, a man like you, and has a stony and thorny field, that is, the land of the infidels, full of hardness, like rocks,

27. Conditions imposed by the Philistines.

28. "Knock and it shall be opened to you."

29. Another conflation; Nabuchodonosor scourges the people before taking away their smiths, but this is a separate incident from the one above.

and of heresy, like thorns; He also has the land of the Christians, which He has cultivated till now, and yet, it yields no harvest. However, He will convert the infidels and sow His law in that land, and this, which He has cultivated so much, He will abandon, and it will be left full of heresy. At last, the renewal of the Church will come about, and many who are here at this preaching will see it.

The second parable: a fig tree was planted, which, in the first year, produced many figs without any leaves; the second year, it again produced many figs and some leaves, but very few; the third year, it produced as many figs as leaves; the fourth year, it produced more leaves than figs; the fifth year, it produced very few figs and very many leaves. As time went on, it came to produce nothing but leaves in such abundance that it not only produced no fruit, but with its excessive foliage it overwhelmed the other plants, which were unable to grow. What do you think the gardener should do to that fig tree? Indeed, he will cut it down and give it to the fire. This fig tree is the tree of the Church, which, although at its beginning it produced much fruit and no leaves, has today come to the point that it produces no fruit at all, but only leaves, that is, ceremonies, pomp, and superfluities, with which they overshadow the other plants of the earth; that is, with their bad example, the prelates of the Church make other men fall into many sins. The gardener will come, that is, Christ, and cut down this fruitless fig tree; then the Church will be renewed.³⁰

The third parable: a king had one only-begotten son. He found a poor woman, ragged and covered with mud; the king, moved to compassion, took her and led her into his house and raised her up to be his legitimate spouse. With her he had two daughters, whom he gave as wives to his only-begotten son. The king's lady, having lived in this way for some time, became amorous and began to commit many evils with her courtiers and servants. The king learned of this; he seized her and threw her out and sent her back into poverty and mud, as she was at first. After awhile, one of his daughters began to sin in the same way as the mother had done and much worse; the king, angered by this, sent her away and drove her off from him and his son and ordered that no bread be given to her. The other daughter, taking no warning from the sin and punishment of her mother and sister, began to sin likewise and to behave much worse and much more wickedly than they. Tell me, you who are wise, what does she deserve? Surely, she deserves much more punishment than her mother and sister.³¹

Now I want to explicate this parable for you. The king is God, Who

30. Compare with Christ's parable of the fig tree (Luc. 13:6-9). See also Matt. 21:19; Marc. 11:13-14.

31. Cf. Ezech. 23.

took that poor woman for His spouse, that is, the Synagogue of the Jews as His Church. She sinned, and you know how God drove her away from Him and sent her back into the mud where she first was; that is, He sent her into the slavery, misery, and blindness [she had known] before. The two daughters are the Eastern Church of the Greeks and the Roman Church, given as spouses by God to His only-begotten Son, Christ Jesus crucified. In this [Church] we have to serve under the faith of His Son, Christ Jesus. The Eastern Church sinned in her heresy, and so God has driven her off from Himself and His Son, Jesus Christ, and has commanded that no bread be given to her, so that no preacher or anyone else goes there any more to give her the food of the soul, spiritual food, nor to enlighten her. The other one is the Roman Church, full of simony and wickedness, who has sinned much more than [either] the first or the second. What do you think she deserves? Do you not suppose that God wants to punish her? Surely, you believe it is so, and even more harshly than her mother and sister, for they would rightly complain to God, saying, "When we have sinned, You have made us bear the penalty, but this other one, who has sinned more than we, why don't You punish her?" Therefore, be assured that the Church will be renewed, and soon.

Having told you these parables, we shall speak of the renewal of the Church insofar as we have seen, known, and predicted it. And so that you may better understand, you should know that there are two [kinds] of knowledge. The first is when we know by some external sign what that sign means intrinsically. The second [type of] knowledge comes through mental images.³²

With regard to the first: when Pope Innocent died, something happened on account of which you used to amuse yourselves about things I had done, since I had said that the Church had to be renewed, and you believed, because of that sign, that I was in great error and that what I had predicted could not come to be. But I, because of that external sign, saw that, *yes, indeed*, the renewal of the Church had to be carried out, and I based this on what you used to say, which was against me.

With regard to the second, which is that of mental images, I saw, through the power of the imagination, a black cross above Babylonian Rome, on which was written: *Ira Domini*,³³ and upon it there rained swords, knives, lances, and every [other sort of] weapon, a storm of hail and stones, and long, awesome streaks of lightning in dark and murky skies. And I saw another cross, of gold, which stretched from heaven to earth above Jerusa-

32. The term used is *per immaginazione*, though one may conclude that they are not idle imaginings, but sent with a purpose, i.e., visions.

33. "The wrath of the Lord."

lem, on which was written: *Misericordia Dei*,³⁴ and here the skies were calm, limpid, and clear as could be; wherefore, on account of this vision, I tell you that the Church of God must be renewed, and soon, for God is angry, and afterward the infidels have to be converted, and this will be soon.³⁵

Another image: I saw a sword over Italy, and it quivered, and I saw angels coming who had a red cross in one hand and many white stoles in the other. These angels gave this cross to be kissed to everyone who wanted it and also handed them the white stoles.³⁶ There were some who took these stoles; others did not want them; still others not only did not want them, but also encouraged others not to take them and acted in such a way that many, because of their persuasion, did not take them. After this, when these angels had left, more angels returned with chalices in their hands, filled to the brim with good sweet wine, but with very bitter dregs at the bottom. These angels offered the chalice to everyone, and those who had willingly taken the stoles willingly drank the wine, which was sweet at the top, and enjoyed its taste. To the others they gave the very bitter dregs, because they did not have the stoles, and they did not want it and would twist and turn, but they had to drink it. All of a sudden, I saw that sword which quivered above Italy turn its point downward and, with the greatest tempest and scourge, go among them and scourge them all. But those who had taken the white stoles felt the scourge less and drank the sweet wine from the chalice. The others were forced to drink the most bitter dregs, and in [the midst of] that scourge, they begged those who had the stoles and said, "Give me a bit of your stole, so that I won't have to drink these bitter dregs," but they were answered, "There is no longer time for this." This is why I tell you that the renewal will happen, and soon.

I will explicate it for you. The sword which quivered—I must say this to you, Florence—is that of the king of France, which is appearing all over Italy. The angels with the red cross, the white stoles, and the chalice are the preachers who announce this scourge to you; they give you the red cross to kiss—that is, martyrdom—so that you might bear up under this scourge which has to come during the renewal of the Church. The stole signifies the purification of her [the Church's] conscience, cleansing her of every vice, so that she may be white with purity. The chalice, full to the top with good

34. "The mercy of God."

35. This vision (datable to Good Friday 1492) and the following are all repeated in slightly altered form and in a different order in Savonarola's *Compendium of Revelations*, readily available in Bernard McGinn, ed. and trans., *Apocalyptic Spirituality* (New York: Paulist, 1979), pp. 192–275; see esp. pp. 206–207. For the Latin text of the *Compendium*, see *Girolamo Savonarola: Compendio di rivelazioni e Dialogus de veritate prophetica*, ed. Angela Crucitti (Rome: A. Berliandetti, 1974).

36. White robes are given to the martyred just in Apoc. 6:11.

wine, signifies the passion of which everyone ought to drink; those who have taken the stoles and cleansed their consciences will drink the sweet wine, that is, they will feel only a little of this scourge, which is signified by the sweet wine at the top of the chalice, that is, they will be the first to be scourged, but it will be sweet because they will bear it patiently, and if they die, they will go to eternal life. Those others drink the very bitter dregs under duress because it will seem bitter to them, as it surely is. This sword has not yet turned its point downward, even though it has appeared throughout all Italy, because God still awaits your repentance. Be converted, Florence, for there is no other remedy for us but penitence. Clothe yourselves with the white stole while you have time; do not wait any longer, for later there will be no room for penitence.

Now I shall speak about this renewal with respect to the intellectual part, and this is in two modes. First, I have spoken about this renewal with formal words and with informal words. The formal words I spoke, understand that I did not draw them from Scripture, nor did I find them in any [other] place, nor have I composed them out of my own fancy, nor did I get them from a man come down from heaven, but from God. I cannot say it any clearer: understand me, Florence, God says these words. Now then, I say that I have spoken them, Florence; understand me well; the words are these:

*"Gaudete et exultate, iusti, veruntamen parate corda vestra ad temptationem lectione, meditatione et oratione et liberamini a morte secunda. Vos, servi nequam, qui in sordibus estis, sordescite adhuc: ventres vestri impleantur vino, lumbi vestri dissolvantur luxuria, et manus vestrae sanguine pauperum polluantur; haec enim est pars vestra. Sed cito brene tempus corpora vestra et animae vestrae in manu mea sunt, et post igni perpetuo tradam."*³⁷

The other formal words were these:

Audite, omnes habitatores terrae, haec dicit Dominus: "Ego Dominus loquor in zelo sancto meo, ecce dies venient et gladium meum eva-

37. "Rejoice and exult, you just, yet prepare your hearts against temptation with reading, meditation, and prayer, and you will be freed from the second death. You, you vile slaves, who dwell in filth, wallow as you will: let your bellies be full of wine, your loins loose in lechery, and your hands stained with the blood of the poor, for this is your portion. But know that your bodies and your souls are in My hand, and after a short time, your bodies will be scourged to a pulp, and your souls I will hand over to the everlasting fire." The divine messages recorded in this sermon are also found in the *Compendium*; for the foregoing, see McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, pp. 197-198.

*ginabo super vos. Convertimini ergo ad me antequam compleatur furor meus. Tunc enim angustia superveniente requiretis pacem et non invenietis.*³⁸

Concerning the words which are not formal, remember when I said, three years ago now, that a wind will come, as in that figure from Elias [III Reg. 19:11], and that this wind would shake the mountains. This wind has come, and this has been the report which has spread throughout Italy for a year; it was told concerning this king of France, and this report has flown all over like the wind and has shaken the mountains, that is, the princes of Italy, and it has kept them vacillating this past year between believing and not believing that this king would come. And, behold, he has come, [although] you were saying, "He will not come; he has no horses; it is winter," and I would laugh at you, for I knew how things had to turn out. See now, he has come, and God has made summer from winter, as I said then. Remember that I also said to you that God would go beyond the mountains, and that He would seize him by the bridle and lead him over here, in spite of and against the opinion of everyone, and behold, he has come. Remember also that I said to you that great fortresses and walls would be of no avail; see whether all has been verified. Tell me, Florence: where are your fortresses and strongholds? And of what avail are they to you? Remember, also, that I told you that your wisdom and prudence would be of no avail and that you would get everything back to front; you would not know what to do or what to take hold of, like a drunk out of his senses. Now he has come, and it has been verified, and *even so*, you never wanted to believe me, and still you do not believe. I say to you, obstinate as you are: you will not believe the rest either, for God will not give you the grace to believe, because your obstinacy does not deserve it. Remember that at times during the past three or four years, when I preached to you, I used so much breath and fervor and vehemence in speaking that it was doubted whether a vein in my chest would not rupture. You did not know, my child, why it could not be otherwise.

Remember the Sunday of Lazarus three years ago,³⁹ when the arrow fell on the dome,⁴⁰ what I told you that morning, that I had not been to sleep that night, and that I had wanted that night to take up the Gospel about

38. "Listen, all you inhabitants of the earth, the Lord says these things: 'I, the Lord, speak in My zeal; behold, the days are coming, and My sword will wave over you. Therefore, be converted to Me before My fury reaches full strength. For when distress overcomes you, you will search for peace and not find it.'" Ibid., pp. 198-200.

39. Second Sunday of Lent, 1492.

40. Of the cathedral Santa Reparata/Santa Maria del Fiore.

Lazarus in order to preach from it, but it had not been possible to get a hold on it in my imagination. Know, then, that this saying came out of my mouth at that time: *Ecce gladius Domini super terram cito et velociter*. So I preached to you that morning and told you that God's wrath was stirred up and that the sword was ready and near at hand, and so I tell you again; you simply must believe.

Remember also that it was three years ago that I began reading Genesis, but I did not then know the reason why. I did everything to rework the old topic a bit, but when I came to the Flood, it was impossible to go any further, so abundant was the material; afterward, it was appropriate to preach about something else. Then, last Lent, I began again where I had left off, at the Flood, and I began to gloss the Ark, which I thought I would finish, but suddenly there was so much material that I could not possibly finish that Lent. When later I resumed it, before I had a chance to finish it, I could not, because I had to go on your behalf to the king of France. Two sermons, as you will recall, remained to finish it and close, and no sooner were they finished than the flood came, and everything was upside down here that day because of the French. I infer from this that this was a divine work and mystery and no ordinary thing, nor an arrangement conceived by me, and to a certainty, you simply must believe, Florence, and try not to be so hardened in your unbelief.

Remember also that I told you that in the past I had been a father to you and God had been a mother, because I had reproached you bitterly and bitterly and cried out loudly that you must be converted, as a father does when he diligently reproaches his children, and that now I wanted to be the mother and God wanted to be the father. So, just as a mother, when she sees her child erring, threatens and shouts and says she will inform the father when he comes and have him punished, and later, when the father has come, she does not report him but says, "If you ever again lapse into this error, I shall have your father punish you," so, although I reproach you now, I do not reproach you with that vehemence and harshness I used in the past, because I see that the father, that is, God, has come to punish you. Yet I say to you and beg you in a low and humble voice: my children, do penance, do penance.

Remember also, Florence, that I told you that I have given you an apple, as the mother does when she gives an apple to her child, when he cries, to quiet him, and then, when he still cries and she cannot quiet him, she takes the apple away from him and gives it to another child. So I say to you, Florence: God has given you an apple, that is, He has chosen you as His own; if you will not do penance and be converted to God, He will take the apple away from you and will give it to another; truly, it will be so, as surely

as I am up here. And so, Florence, do these four things I told you, and I promise you that you will be richer than ever, more glorious than ever, more powerful than ever. But no one believes that the angels take part in men's lives today and hold converse with them, nor that God speaks to any man. And I say to you *quod similitudo est causa amoris*,⁴¹ that is, "similitude is the cause of friendship." So, the closer one draws near to God and the angels through faith and charity, the more he becomes a friend of God and His angels, and they speak to him and hold converse with him.

I am not saying by this, nor have I ever told you, that God speaks to me; I say neither yes nor no; you are so far from the faith that you do not believe; you would sooner believe in some devil who spoke with men and foretold future things. You are devoid of sense and outside [the bounds] of the faith. Tell me, if you believe that Christ became incarnate through the Virgin and that He was crucified, which is more difficult to believe than [what I say], you should also believe this, which is easier, that is, that Christ speaks to men. *Moresover*, if you are a Christian, you must believe that the Church has to be renewed. Daniel says that the Antichrist has to come and has to persecute the Christians in Jerusalem⁴²; it follows that there must be Christians there; therefore, those who are there must be baptized. But to effect this, there is a need for other men than those the Church has today. *Therefore*, the Church has to be renewed so that men may become good and go there to convert the infidels to Christianity. Go and read the Fathers on that passage in the Gospel of Matthew where He [Christ] says: "*Evangelium hoc praedicabitur in toto mundo et tunc erit consummatio*"⁴³ [Matt. 24:14]. Believe me, Florence! You simply must believe me because, from all that I have told you, you have not seen a single iota lacking up to now, and in the future as well, you will see nothing fail.

I predicted, quite a few years ago, the death of Lorenzo de' Medici and the death of Pope Innocent. *Item*, [I predicted] the turn of events here now in Florence concerning this recent change of government. *Item*, I said that

41. "That likeness is the cause of love." Aquinas, *Summa*, part 1.2, quest. 27, art. 3. Savonarola uses *amicizia* ("friendship") rather than *amore* ("love").

42. In *A Dialogue concerning Prophetic Truths*, bk. VI (below), Savonarola says: "It is also written in Daniel concerning this: *Introibit in terram gloriam* (without a doubt Jerusalem) *et multi corrudent. Haec autem solae salvabuntur de manu eius: Edom et Moab et principes filiorum Ammon*" (Dan. 11:41; "He shall enter into the glorious land, and many shall fall. These only, however, shall be saved from his hand: Edom and Moab and the princes of the sons of Ammon").

43. "This Gospel will be preached through all the world, and then will come the consummation." The Vulgate has: *Et praedicabitur hoc evangelium regni in universo orbe in testimonium omnibus gentibus et tunc veniet consummatio*.

on the day when the king of France should arrive in Pisa, there would be a renovation in the government here. I did not say these things up here *publicly*, but I said them to some who are here at this sermon—I have witnesses here in Florence.

I know that this morning I am crazy *et quod omnia haec insipientia dico*⁴⁴ [II Cor. 11:21], but I want you to know that this light does not make me just; rather, if I am humble and have charity, I will be made just. And this light has not been given to me for my own sake, nor on account of my merit, but for you, Florence. And so, Florence, this morning I have told you these things so openly, having been inspired by God to say them to you in this way, so that you might know the whole and have no excuse later when the scourge comes and cannot then say, "I did not know." I could not say it more clearly, and I am aware that I shall be considered crazy this morning, for many have come here to point at me. If you say that I am crazy, I will have patience. I have spoken to you in this way because God wanted me to speak to you so. Since I began on this Apocalypse, we have had many contradictions. You understand some of them, God [only] some, and His angels some.

It is necessary to fight *contra duplicem sapientiam*,⁴⁵ that is, against those who have both the Old and New Testaments; *contra duplicem scientiam*,⁴⁶ that is, against philosophy and against astrology and the "science" of the Holy Scriptures; and *contra duplicem malitiam*,⁴⁷ that is, against the evil done today by the lukewarm, who know that they do evil and want to do it. This was not so at the time of Christ, for then there was only the Old Testament, and although they erred, they thought they were acting properly. Thus, I tell you that if Christ were to return here today, He would once again be crucified. I say, I have revealed next to nothing, because if I were to reveal everything, I would be here at least a week.⁴⁸ Believe me, several times already I have been in mortal danger.

I have declared to you: *Gladius Domini super terram cito et velociter*. Believe me that God's dagger will strike, and soon. And do not make a jest of this *cito*,⁴⁹ do not say that it is one of these Apocalyptic *citos*, which take hundreds of years to occur. Believe me, it will be soon. Believing does you no harm; rather, it helps you in that it makes you turn to penitence and

44. "And that everything I say is foolishness." The Vulgate has simply *in insipientia dico*.

45. "Against duplicitous wisdom."

46. "Against duplicitous knowledge."

47. "Against duplicitous malice."

48. "Almanco sei di."

49. "Soon."

makes you walk in the way of God. Not believing could harm you and does you no good, so believe that the time is near. One cannot say exactly when, for God does not allow it, in order that His chosen ones may be always in fear and in faith and in charity, and keep always in the way of God. This is why I have not told you of a set time, so that you might always do penance and make yourselves pleasing to God, because if, for example, I were to say to men, "The tribulation will come within ten years," everyone would say, "I can still wait a bit to be converted." It would be tantamount to giving license to evildoing in the meantime, which would be detrimental. Therefore, God does not want a fixed time to be preached. So, I say this: now is the time for penance. Do not make a jest of this *cito*, for I tell you: if you do not do what I have told you, woe to Florence, woe to the people, woe to the great and the small!

Finally, I will conclude: I have been crazy this morning, this is what you will say, and I knew you would say it before I came up here. God willed it so, yet I say—and take this as my conclusion—that God has prepared a great dinner for all Italy, but all the dishes are bitter. I have given only the salad, which was a bit of bitter lettuce. Understand me well, Florence: all the other dishes are yet to come, and they are all bitter and plentiful, for it is a grand dinner. Thus, I conclude, and keep it in mind that Italy is now on the verge of her tribulations.

O Italy, and princes of Italy, and prelates of the Church, the wrath of God is upon you, and you have no remedy but to be converted! *et a sanuario meo incipiam*⁵⁰ [Ezech. 9:6]. O Italy, O Florence, *propter peccata tua venient tibi adversa! Ob, nobiles, ob, potentes, ob, plebei, manus Domini est supra vos, et non resistet potentia, sapientia, vel fuga!*⁵¹ And it will come about not because you do not know how things have been ordered. O princes of Italy, flee the land of the North; do penance while the sword is not yet out of its sheath, and while it is not yet bloodied, flee from Rome! O Florence, flee from Florence, that is, flee from sin through penitence and flee from the wicked!

50. "And I will come forth from My sanctuary." The verb in the Vulgate is the imperative plural, *incipite*, because this is God's instruction to the "men." He sends to destroy all who do not have a *tau* (Greek T, symbolic of the Cross) on their foreheads. Cf. Savonarola's vision described in his Good Friday sermon above.

51. "On account of your sins adversity will come upon you! O nobles, O princes, O commoners, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and power cannot resist it, nor wisdom, nor flight!" From the *Compendium*; see McGinn, *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, p. 202.

This is the conclusion. I have said all these things for reasons both divine and human, with moderation and tempering my tongue. I have begged you; I cannot command you, for I am not your lord, but your father. Do it, Florence; I pray to God for you, that He may enlighten you, *Cui est gloria et imperium per infinita saecula saeculorum. Amen.*⁵²

52. "To Whom is glory and power forever and ever. Amen."